THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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RCPC Makes Quorum; Board Election Valid

Failing to field a quorum of voters – 25 Rockridge residents – at its official annual meeting and board member election at the April town hall meeting, RCPC scheduled a new vote for the May meeting. Residents again cast their ballots for six uncontested board seats in an election some referred to as an affirming action. However, without the vote, the six board members could not have continued to serve in their positions. Board chair Stuart Flashman declared a qualifying quorum (and more) had voted at the May meeting and the election was valid.

Elected to continuing two-year terms on the RCPC board of directors were Cesar Angobaldo, Andrew Charman, Michael Kan, Bill Kaufner, Ronnie Spitzer and Ann Winterman. In a subsequent administrative action, the board elected the following as officers: Chair - Stuart Flashman; Vice-Chair - Ashley Etling; Secretary - Michael Kan; Treasurer - Cesar Angobaldo; At-large Executive Committee Member - Andrew Charman.

'Merchant' Sought for RCPC Board

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair

RCPC is still looking for a "merchant" member for its board of directors. RCPC has a one-year term appointed seat on its board of directors. The seat has traditionally been held by a merchant from Rockridge's commercial area. However, with the economic slump over the past couple of years, most merchants are just

Board Seeks Merchant, page 6

16 AGENDA

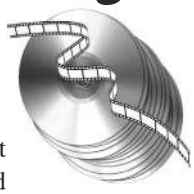
June RCPC Town Hall Meeting

■ **Primer, General Plan and Zoning Continued.** Welcome to the second of a series of discussions of basic elements of land use and planning.

RCPC Chair Stuart Flashman discusses use permits, variances and planning code enforcement as elements of the plannng process. How RCPC responds to these planning elements as affecting Rockridge will be explained, as well.

Thursday, June 16 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College at Manila

Library Offers Big Boost to Rockridge DVD Project



by Jon Gabel, co-chair, Rockridge DVD Project

A new agreement between the Oakland Public Library (OPL) and the Rockridge DVD Project that accepts a potential change in policy by OPL has resulted in the library's willingness to pay all the costs of cataloging the DVDs destined for the Rockridge Branch Library – and for the required security cases as well. The value to the DVD Project is $20,000, reducing the fundraising goal to $13,000, of which slightly over half has been raised.

DVD Boost, page 4

■ Soundwalls in Rockridge? ■

What might that be like? RCPC presents the first in a series of articles examining sound and soundwalls, page 3. Future articles will consider what soundwalls do and don't do; what they are made of; how their locations are planned and reviewed for approval, and more.

May Town Hall Meeting Report

Strong Feelings About Rockridge Safeway



Oakland Planner Darrin Ranelletti describes the factors involved in the review process for Safeway's Rockridge Center proposed redesign.

PHOTO: D. KINKEAD

by Don Kinkead, editor

"There is a lot of interest in this project," City Planner Derrin Ranelletti said, speaking of Safeway's expansion plans for the shopping center at Broadway and Pleasant Valley avenues.

"A lot of people hate it, a lot of people love it, some are in the middle; it's all over the place," he told audience members at the RCPC Town Hall meeting Thursday, May 19.

Following presentation of the plans to the Planning Commission's Design Review Committee in December, a divided committee voted to forward the plans and public comments to the full Commission for review. This set the stage for an environmental review now expected to be ready for public response by July or August, Ranelletti said.

Although people disagree on the most satisfactory design elements, Ranelletti said people broadly see two differing general goals for the project, goals he does not find mutually exclusive: "One view of the project is as an economic stimulator, generating sales tax for the city. The other view calls for a design that would extend nearby urban patterns into the project."

Regardless of one's point of view, however, Ranelletti said the project's size

Rockridge Center, page 12

Building a Neighborhood CORE

Annual City-Wide Earthquake Drill a Success

by Carol Strickman, CORE participant in Rockridge

After the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, Oakland's fire department formed CORE (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) to train groups of residents who could, following a disaster, provide emergency services and support for the first 72 hours or longer. They would be their own first responders until professional help became available. Operational since 1990, CORE is a free training program for individuals, neighborhood groups and community-based organizations in Oakland.

For six successive years, Oakland residents have participated in CORE's annual emergency response exercises. Sponsored by the fire department's OES (Office of Emergency Services), these neighborhood-based drills are generally held the last Saturday in April. Material prepared by the planners offered different levels of difficulty for the drill, so a beginning group could choose simpler components and more advanced groups could elect more challenging ones.

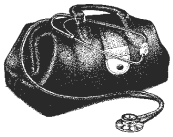
This year, 80 groups participated, more than double the number of any previous year. We're on a roll!

Each year, the program gets more elaborate and sophisticated. This year, we welcomed the participation of Berkeley's emergency response program, and 15 Berkeley CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) groups participated. CORE has a map of the organized neighborhoods and a way for all to be in touch with each other, both during the exercise and throughout the year.

Maintaining communication is an important feature of preparedness. How will the neighborhoods communicate their status and needs to the professional first responders in a major disaster when phone lines and cell towers may be down, or phone lines jammed? We practice using walkie-talkies and runners within the block, as well as sending bicyclists with handwritten notes to our local fire station. From there, volunteer ham radio operators communicate with the OES office in downtown Oakland. We were also prompted to phone our out-of-area contacts, involving them for the first time in this exercise. (Every family should select someone outside of the Bay Area as an emergency contact to facilitate communication between family members should they be separated when disaster strikes.)

There are now 10 Rockridge neighborhood groups officially registered with the city. Our Rockridge block (62nd Street between Colby and Hillegass) began its participation in 2007. We have taken free CORE classes; gathered and stored a variety of supplies in an accessible storage area; applied for and received free supplies from the city; created a map of our block showing utilities at each house; and held five block exercises. Working together on this ongoing project has brought our block together and we are definitely more prepared than we were when Hurricane Katrina hit – the impetus for many of us to get prepared. Even so, there is more we can do as individuals and as a block to ready ourselves for "the Big One." Our block is a mile from the Hayward fault. This is "Earthquake Country." We all need to do what we can to prepare. The more block groups that are trained, the safer we all will be.

For more information, check out the CORE website (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) at www.oakland-net/com/fire/core or contact the CORE office at 510/238-6381.



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Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News, founded in 1986 by Don Kinkead, is published monthly in Oakland and is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement, and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in ***The Rockridge News***?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Want to volunteer to be a ***Rockridge News*** block captain?
- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:
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www.rockridge.org
The Rockridge News, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611
RCPC Voice-mail: 510/869-4200

Articles submitted for publication may be e-mailed to the above address. Submissions are limited to 600 words; must include the author's name, phone number, e-mail address, and city or neighborhood of residence; and are subject to editing. To reprint a *Rockridge News* article, please contact the editor.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES
Publication date of the next issue is
☛ July 2, 2011
☛ July deadline is June 16, 2011.
Advertising rates are $26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. *RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)*

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: June 22. *Subject to change. Check www.rockridge.org for meeting updates.*

■ **Land Use Meeting Agendas:** Contact Stuart Flashman at 652-5373, or chair@rockridge.org for a copy of the current Land Use Committee meeting agenda.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

- **Rockridge Shopping Center Reconstruction Project;** (Corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley)
- **College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center;** (Corner of College and Claremont Avenues)

Both of these large and important projects are slowly moving forward toward release of draft environmental impact reports (DEIR) within the next month or two. According to Darin Ranelletti (238-3663, DRanelletti@oaklandnet.com), the planner assigned to the Rockridge Shopping Center Project, that project's DEIR will probably be coming out in July for a 45-day public review and comment period. (See article, page 1, for additional details.)

As of press time, Peterson Vollman, (pvollman@oaklandnet.com, 238-6167), the planner handling Safeway's College Avenue shopping center project, had not responded to recent inquiries, but Ranelletti said that the DEIR for that project will also likely be released some time in July. It looks like Rockridge residents will have plenty of vacation reading in August.

Both of these projects can be expected to have multiple impacts on Rockridge, ranging from traffic, to air and water quality, to overall quality of life. RCPC expects to be involved in commenting on both EIRs, and encourages Rockridge residents to participate in the public review process. Look for future updates on both projects on the RCPC website, http://rockridge.org.

On Soundwalls and Rockridge

technical research by Andrew Charman, chair, RCPC Transportation Committee; editing by Trish West, former Rockridge News editor

Since the 1970s, the transportation system comprised of Highway 24 and BART that bisects Rockridge has been both a boon and a bane to the neighborhood: It's convenient for getting around but often a negative in terms of both air pollution and noise pollution. Could the latter problem be addressed with the construction of noise barriers, or soundwalls?

As noted in the May issue of The Rockridge News, the settlement with CalTrans providing for mitigations of the construction effects of the 4th Bore of the Caldecott Tunnel includes funds to study the need for soundwalls at points along Highway 24. Soundwalls can be controversial for their esthetics, and often generate debate over their effectiveness and their potential to affect scenic views.

Decisions to place soundwalls along a roadway involve the wishes of people living near the road. RCPC and The Rockridge News present this and subsequent articles in the newsletter that will attempt to clarify the issues for those who may ultimately be affected by soundwall construction. Because of the topic's complexity, this month's article is presented in Q&A format. A more technical presentation is available at RCPC's website, www.rockridge.org.

■ **Q: What is the difference between "sound" and "noise," and how are they measured?**

A: *Sound* is vibrations in the air, and, basically, *noise* is any unwanted sound, obviously a subjective distinction. Sound vibrations move in waves through air and other materials. Sound is measured in decibels (dB), a logarithmic unit. Here are the measures of some common sounds: Pin dropping, 15 dB; normal conversation, 60 dB; hairdryer, 80 dB; a car passing at 10 feet, 80 dB; front seat at a rock concert, 130 dB. Government health guidelines suggest ear damage can occur at as low as 85 dB.

The decibel scale differs from the more familiar numerical scale used in weights and measures. For example, if a 100-pound person gains 10 pounds, his or her weight has gone up 10 per cent. By contrast, when a 100 dB sound increases to 110 dB, its intensity has gone up ten-fold. On the other hand, your ear will hear it as being twice as loud.

■ **Q: How do we characterize sound?**

A: Sounds have direction, intensity (loudness), and frequency. Sound waves typically travel in many different directions simultaneously, as does light from a light bulb. A sound's *intensity* is a measure of how much air pressure changes as the sound passes. *Frequency* measures how fast the variation in air pressure occurs, corresponding to what musicians call pitch.

■ **Q: What sounds make up freeway noise, and how does it change with distance from the source?**

A: The hum of tires, the growl of engines and transmissions, the hiss of air moving past vehicles, and the vibration of the roadway make up the cacophony. Sound traveling in open air from a single car drops by about 6 dB, a noticeable difference, when the car doubles its distance from the listener. A decrease of 10 dB makes a sound seem about half as loud. However, factors other than distance also have effects.

■ **Q: How can weather affect perception of freeway noise?**

A: Weather conditions, such as wind, can shift noise upwards or downwards.

■ **Q: How do surfaces affect perception freeway noise?**

A: Like light, sound can be absorbed by some solid materials but bounce off and be redirected by other materials. Sound can also "bend" as it passes through holes or around obstacles. These and many other factors help determine the usefulness and construction of a soundwall.

■ **Q: Are soundwalls the solution to freeway noise?**

A: Not always. Besides technical factors, other considerations arise, such as costs and visual impacts. These and additional issues will be addressed in articles to come.

Calling all Kitchen Tour Volunteers!

by Natalie Mehta

Thanks to an amazing community response, we have viewed dozens of Rockridge kitchens and are in the process of selecting the ones that will be featured on the Rockridge Kitchen Tour, scheduled for October 2, 2011. The tour has been a Bay Area favorite since its inception in 1995 and much of its success is due to the enthusiasm of the community volunteers who make this event possible. How can you help?

- **Publicity Leader** – Our publicity committee has many helping hands, but no leader. If you have publicity experience and can develop a strategy to maximize the event's exposure, we would love your help.
- **Docent** – Our team of volunteer docents makes the event a success by sharing their knowledge of the kitchens with tour guests. Volunteer a few hours of your time on the day of tour, and you can spend the rest of the day enjoying the other kitchens for free.
- **Spread the word** – Ticket sales are the primary form of fundraising, and each tour brings guests from all over the Bay Area. Help us publicize the event by sharing the date with your networks, family, and friends.

Many hands make light work, and we invite you to join our team. Please contact Natalie Mehta at 415/279-5148 or natalie.mehta@yahoo.com, for more information.



Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg greets Ride for a Reason cyclists in Sacramento. PHOTO: SARAH MAGES

Ride for a Reason: Cyclists Bike for School Funding

by Michael Napolitano, Claremont PTA

The 2011 Ride for a Reason from Oakland to Sacramento to publicize school funding needs drew 109 participants. Nathan Lee, the youngest rider at nine years old, rode 108 miles on a tandem with his dad, Kenton; 75-year-old Greg Thomas, the oldest rider and a graduate of Claremont and Tech, rode 65 miles and looked fresh at the end.

The ride ended with a rally at the Capitol where Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg expressed his strong support for public schools and called teachers "our greatest public servants." We concur, and dedicate *Ride for a Reason* to our teachers. You are our heroes. Thanks so much to all the volunteers who helped to make the event possible.

Over 500 individual donations totaling approximately $41,000 have been received. Proceeds will be split 50/50 between Claremont PTA and Oakland Tech PTSA.

DVD Boost

from page 1

There is one caveat: the remaining $6,000 must be raised by October 31 for the deal to be implemented.

The DVDs acquired through the DVD Project were destined for permanent housing in the Rockridge Branch Library. However, OPL recently suggested sharing DVDs and CDs across all library branches by "floating" these collections. Under this system, DVDs would go onto the shelves at whichever branch they were returned to and would not go back to their branch of origin unless requested by a patron.

Since a float of the donated DVDs was not part of the original agreement between the project and OPL, OPL proposed that in return for being allowed to float the donated DVDs, it would pay for the cataloging and the security cases.

Until a float system is in place, the donated DVDs will reside in the Rockridge Branch Library. If the float system is implemented, patrons will be able to place holds on DVDs and CDs located in any Oakland library branch and have them delivered to their branch of choice. Any donated DVDs that migrate to other branches could be delivered to Rockridge patrons upon request. Currently, holds on DVDs and CDs are not possible.

If you made a donation to the DVD Project, you will receive a letter offering to return your donation if this new arrangement is not acceptable to you. RCPC, which provides fiscal sponsorship for the DVD Project, and project co-chairs, Annette Floystrup and Jon Gabel, approved the change and encourage donors to stay the course. By reducing costs, this agreement will place the DVDs in the Rockridge branch sooner.

Go to www.RockridgeDvdProject.org for details on the new agreement and for information on how to make a donation.

DVDs: Small Collection – Big Impact

We have a deadline of October 31 to raise the remaining $6,500 under the terms of the recent agreement with OPL. We need your donations and we also need volunteers to staff a donations table at the library a few hours a week. Can you give two hours on Friday afternoons from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to solicit donations for the Rockridge DVD Project? Contact Annette Floystrup, 510/652-6794.

Completing the purchase and casing of the DVDs will strengthen the Rockridge Branch overall. Our Rockridge Branch library has over 91,000 items to lend, excluding ebooks and audiobooks online, which belong to the library system as a whole. Of these, the current DVDs number only 2,800, yet account for 20 per cent of the annual circulation.

The DVD collection already does yeoman duty drawing patrons to the library and boosting circulation numbers. Doubling the collection through the Rockridge DVD Project can only enhance both numbers and increase the chances of the Rockridge Branch Library remaining open if further budget cuts are made.

Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and city/neighborhood must be included for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity.

Rockridge News Fans, But: Too Much Nimby-ism

Editor:

My husband and I couldn't agree more with some of the comments printed in the Reader's Survey results in the latest Rockridge News [May 2011, page 8]. We are very appreciative of the fact that there is a local newspaper covering the concerns of our neighborhood.

We felt strongly about what we would like to see less of in the newspaper: "cranky stories by old people complaining" about change, "local residents being so over-reactionary about businesses wanting to come into Rockridge," and "less demonizing any organization" like CalTrans, BART or other businesses, and "RCPC posturing as being representative of Rockridge." Hallelujah!

We aren't big business boosters, by any means, but the nimby-ism that comes up in The Rockridge News can be ridiculous.

Thanks for letting us know what is going on in our neighborhood.

— A Rockridge Resident (Name Withheld)

Gains Made in College Avenue Blight Fight

by Don Kinkead, editor



In the June 2010 issue of The Rockridge News, the declining state of news racks on College Avenue was noted in an article on page 4 ("Battered News Racks Blight College"). The article reported "A recent informal survey of 130 news vending boxes on 22 modular racks on College Avenue between Alcatraz and Hudson avenues found that 99 have significant damage. Most others suffer from rough treatment and lack of maintenance." Calls made to the city at that time about the decay of the racks were unproductive.

Now, June 2011, progress! Two news rack assemblies at College and Shafter avenues have been tagged with a prominent yellow tag declaring, "Notice of Removal, Oakland Municipal Code 12.50" and dated May 24. A handwritten entry stipulates, "Entire Assembly."

According to Kenneth Gunari, Specialty/Combination Inspector for the city's Building Services Division, "I got a complaint about these boxes. It looked like a dangerous situation, so I put a tag on them." Gunari said rack owners have 30 days to respond to the notice. Gunari acknowledged damage and neglect evident in other racks on College Avenue and said he is considering further taggings.

The city phone line to report damaged and dangerous news rack boxes and ganged assemblies is 510/238-3381, Gunari said.

Chris Jackson, Rockridge District Association, contributed to this story.

An online form to report street repair problems and other hazards is available at: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/Connect/ReportaProblem/index.htm. General Public Works information, including a link to the report form, is available at: www.oaklandpw.com

Tastes of Tech

News from Oakland Tech

compiled by Ronnie Spitzer

Over the past several months, Oakland Tech students have triumphed in local competitions.

■ Orchestra Wins First Place

Tech's Orchestra joined ensembles from around the Bay Area at a grand performance at Milpitas High School Friday, May 6. The following day at Great America's Music in the Parks, Tech musicians were awarded the first place trophy for High School Full Orchestra. Congratulations to the musicians and to David Byrd, music teacher and conductor.

■ Oakland Tech Team Wins Robotics Competition

Oakland Tech Computer Academy students won first place in the Pioneers In Engineering High Schools Robotics competition held in April at UC Berkeley. Three Tech teams competed against high school teams from Acalanes, Albany, Berkeley, Head-Royce, Ralph J. Bunche, Bishop O'Dowd, Pinole Valley, and El Cerrito (with two teams). Congratulations to the first place Computer Academy team. Hats off to the second place Engineering Academy team.

Tastes of Tech, page 13

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Claremont Boosters Flip Over Pancake Breakfast

by Kevin Keck, Claremont Middle School

Over $5,000 was raised when Rockridge's Masonic Lodge hosted the Second Annual Pancake Breakfast in support of Claremont Middle School. Working closely with the Masons were the Claremont Middle School Dad's Club and the Rockridge District Association (RDA).

All proceeds from the event, held April 30, will be dedicated to help support school programs focusing on music, fine arts and the state-of-the-art computer lab as well as the 8th grade's field trip to Washington, D.C.

The event, both fundraiser and community builder, brought people from the school, residential and business communities together to eat, meet and mingle. A special treat was the Claremont School Jazz Ensemble performing in the Hall's second floor lounge under the direction of music teacher Renae Briggs.

This event could not have occurred without the efforts of so many who volunteered their time and energy. Graciously opening their beautiful facility to the community, the Masons put on a great feed again with three seatings that served over 325 hungry people.

Special thanks to: Chris Ellis and David Forsyth of the Rockridge Masonic Lodge; Julie Parker, Julia Marquez, Claudia Mills, Sam Martinez and Shona Armstrong, of Claremont Middle School PTA; Chris Jackson, from RDA; and participating local merchants, without whom the bounty would have been less generous: Strahan Insurance Services, Inc., Market Hall, Bosko's Picture Framing, Rockridge Rags, Fit, and to Stauder Automotive Service, who will donate five percent of a customer's invoice amount to Tech, Chabot Elementary, Claremont Middle School or Peralta School per the customer's direction. Thanks, too, to those merchants who displayed event posters.



Claremont School student musicians performed for diners at the second annual pancake breakfast, held at the College Avenue Masonic Lodge in support of Claremont School. Photo: Kevin Keck





Board Seeks Merchant

from page 1

scrambling to stay afloat, so we've had to stretch the definition. The seat is open to anyone who owns or runs a business in Rockridge, even if they don't live within Rockridge. Service on the board is not onerous, but does require attending one three-hour board meeting a month, plus attendance at monthly Town Hall meetings and service on at least one RCPC committee.

If you'd like to help keep Rockridge alive and well, and have a chance to provide direction to RCPC's many programs and projects, please submit a letter of interest. Include your address and contact information and a short statement about your background and why you would like to be appointed to the board.

Letters may be sent via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org, or via regular mail to RCPC, PMB 311, 4123 Broadway, Oakland, 94611. The deadline for applications is June 30, 2011.



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Art Installation Invites Discovery of Oakland's Hidden Watershed and Creeks

Watershed Markers – Creeks Beneath Your Feet

by Kristin Hathaway and Kristen Zaremba

Pedestrians in five Oakland neighborhoods including Rockridge are noticing a series of bronze markers embedded in city sidewalks. These new Watershed Markers identify the location of buried creeks that are part of Oakland's extensive watershed system. Designed by the artist team *Wowhaus*, each site features five markers arranged like stepping stones surrounded by undulating lines evoking water, and relief images of native fauna that inhabit the creeks.

The marker locations, identified by the name of the creek associated with each site, include Temescal (Creek) at 5655 College Avenue, Arroyo Viejo at 8501 MacArthur Boulevard, Sausal at 6110 La Salle Avenue, Lake Merritt at 3258 Lakeshore Avenue and Glen Echo at 230 Bay Place. The city hopes to increase the number of locations as funding or sponsorship becomes available.

Oakland is home to more than 15 main creeks and 30 tributaries, Lake Merritt and the Oakland Estuary. Underground culverts and storm drains connect to remaining open portions of creeks and are an integral part of the watershed system. Today, new environmental regulations safeguard Oakland's 100 miles of open waterways. The Watershed and Stormwater Management Program undertakes numerous water quality protection activities including creek and wetland restoration and stormwater pollution prevention through enforcement, development regulation, education, outreach, and support of community-based watershed stewardship organizations.



One of five bronze markers depicting creek scenes installed in the sidewalk at College and Shafter avenues next to Market Hall.

Funded through Measure DD – Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks – the project is a collaboration between the Public Works Agency's Watershed and Stormwater Management Program and the Community & Economic Development Agency's (CEDA) Public Art Program. By drawing attention

Oakland Creeks, page 12

FROG Steering Committee Sets June Meeting Agenda



Join with neighbors who care about FROG (Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt) at the upcoming meeting on June 23, 7 p.m., in the Rockridge Library. The agenda includes:

- debrief of Earth Day activities
- discussion of the fall maintenance day on September 10
- update on the bathroom and possible opening
- discussion of murals and public art
- review of the new signage.

Everyone is welcome.

Correction: Our thanks to graphic artist Mara Gendell, who created the festive graphics for our new Earth Day posters.

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

'Soul' Food, Old World Style

I grew up in a first-generation Jewish and Italian immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn. There were no supermarkets. Neighborhood families owned small specialized markets: green grocer, fish, live poultry, butchers, bakeries and, of course, the ever-present Jewish deli. I remember horse-drawn carts coming to our block selling fruits and vegetables. Women shopped daily to prepare evening meals and paid the shopkeeper on family accounts. Imagine: as a child coming home from school, I would stop by Rutta's bakery for some cookies and the charge would be put on my family's account. Visits to these shops were also opportunities to catch up on neighborhood gossip.

Apartments had small eat-in kitchens. Each meal was prepared as a special event. Many families had only an icebox to keep their food fresh. Ovens had no temperature calibration dial, measuring cups or spoons were not used, and I never saw a written recipe or cookbook. Yet, each meal was prepared with love and a sense of connectedness to past *balabustas* (Yiddish for a great homemaker). I once asked a neighbor for the recipe for a particular Jewish delicacy. She used the palm of her hand to suggest cup measure approximations and pinches of seasonings for teaspoons and tablespoons. Timing was never an issue; a dish was done when it was done.

When you married, arguments would ensue about whose mother or grandmother made the best stuffed cabbage or borscht – sweet or savory, with or without beef bones. Most of these arguments were based on where in Eastern Europe your family came from. Romanians always thought their dishes were more refined than Polish versions. And, if your family came from Russia, that was the *crème de la crème*. If you went to a Jewish restaurant, the comment was always the same: "Pretty good, but not as good as grandma's."

Recently, my daughter prepared a Romanian style sweet and sour stuffed cabbage. As we ate it, there was a collective shout from my partner and me: "You did it! You have channeled grandma's recipe to perfection."

As an ongoing feature of Rockridge Cornucopia, I will be celebrating the "soul-food" of our neighbors. The recipes will provide a link to our culinary history and sense of home. This month's offering is from my neighbor, Linda Schiavino. Linda writes:

"This recipe for Paska comes from a cookbook put together by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Latvian Relief Society of Canada. The cookbook was given to me by next-door neighbor, Ausma Uzans who lived on Oak Grove Avenue from 1954 to 2010, when she died at the age of 96. Ausma, her husband Arnold, and son Armand were refugees – displaced people. They always yearned for their country and its traditions." Linda submits this recipe in their honor.

Paska is a special Easter dessert, borrowed from an old Russian Orthodox tradition. Thank you, Linda, for this special gift to our Rockridge community.

Paska

10-12 hard-boiled egg yolks
1 Tbsp vanilla
1 Tbsp lemon zest
1-½ cups sugar
½ pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
1-½ pounds dry, small curd cottage cheese
¼ pound toasted ground almonds
½ pound golden raisins
½ pound apricots, finely chopped, sliced almonds and apricots to decorate.

Force yolks though a fine sieve or use a food processor to make a paste.

Add vanilla, lemon zest and half the sugar (3/4 cup) to yolks and beat well.

In a large bowl, combine butter and remaining ¾ cup sugar and beat well.

Add the yolk mixture (scrape the bowl thoroughly with a rubber spatula) and beat until smooth.

In a food processor, process the cottage cheese until very fine.

Beat the cottage cheese into the butter-yolk mixture.

Mix in the ground almonds, raisins and apricots.

Press mixture in bowl to give a firm shape.

Unmold from bowl onto a pretty serving platter.

As an Easter dessert, the traditional decoration was a cross made of nuts, dried fruits and sometimes leaves. You can also serve it any time with a simple decoration of sliced almonds and apricots.

Slice and serve with a cup of good coffee.

Rockridge readers: Please send or e-mail me your favorite family recipe and stories.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for cooking classes and tours of East-bay ethnic markets. His e-mail is kaufman42@earthlink.net

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The Rockridge Muse

Submitted by Ortrun Niesar

A Summer Of A Cultural Nature

Every month, as I sit down to bring you information on the latest local arts offerings, I find that, since so many of them take place in the first week of the month, by the time the paper is distributed, they are a thing of the past. It is a dilemma. We are a monthly newsletter, published and distributed the first week of each month. **Please, if your event is scheduled for the beginning of a month, send information to me six weeks ahead of time, if possible, so that I can include it in the prior month's edition.**

Following are some of the exciting programs currently offered locally to fill our collective summer months with experiences of a cultural kind.

Art

Pro Arts East Bay Open studios are upon us the weekends of June 4-5 and 11-12. You can go online to www.proartsgallery.org or, better yet, get a catalog, available at many locations along College Avenue or at the Pro Arts Gallery at City Center, and make a day of some really fun studio explorations. You have over 400 artists to visit, so put on your running shoes or you'll miss some of them. The catalog offers a sample of the artists' work along with studio locator and other information. You could plan a studio bike tour around that. Perhaps, too, this is the year that you will finally decide to become a "collector." Original art work is not necessarily inexpensive, but instead of buying cheap reproductions that have little lasting value, why not pool your "art money" and make a plan to purchase just one thoughtfully selected piece each year. Also, please hold on to the fabulous catalog Pro Arts produces each year. Included in it are: a calendar of cultural events taking place throughout the next year; directories; advertising for art-related services; great restaurants and much more.



Petals – Mixed media
Pro Arts East Bay cover piece
by Michael Cutlip

Music

If music is your passion, you need to check out **Avonova**, Jimmy Pederson's cool jazz mecca on Avon Street. On June 12, 3 p.m., Jimmy presents Amikaeyla and her Improvisoul! Series, a vocalist and spoken word program. Donations will go in part to the Haitian Children's Relief Fund; you will be doing good while having fun listening to this extraordinary performer. I tuned in to some of the music on the Internet and it is fabulous. Better make reservations right now. Children are welcome; it's all very informal. And Jimmy has many more programs scheduled for your listening pleasure this summer. You can go to www.avonovamusic.com for more information. I also want to mention **Wisteria Ways** here for a different but equally rewarding Rockridge musical experience. Call them at 510/655-2771 for upcoming programs, or go to www.wisteriaways.com.

Also, if you have not yet discovered the **Berkeley Jazz School**, it is fast becoming one more feather of fame in Berkeley's cultural cap. During the summer months the school offers instrumental, vocal, and music theory and composition programs for young and old. Get a list of scheduled performances at: www.jazzschool.com. June 17-18, you can hear the young musicians's year-end performance for free.

Music classes are also offered at **Musically Minded Academy**, Rockridge's only community music center. Free recitals June 5, 10, and 11. Information at www.musicallyminded.com.

Theater

Acting, singing, dancing; kids love musical theater. It is such a wonderful medium for self expression. Check out the theatre arts summer camp programs at the **Berkeley Playhouse** (located in the **Julia Morgan Center for the Arts**). Besides being immersed in the theater disciplines, the kids will also be learning material from "Seussical the Musical" for a final performance with costumes and props. See a full schedule at www.berkeleyplayhouse.org.

The **Berkeley Rep** also offers a full range of acting courses for young and old beginning July 5. The catalog can be found on www.berkeleyrep.org/school/index.asp or call 510/647-2972.

Dance

Here is something new for the East Bay: This summer, Zellerbach Theater on the UC campus, hosts a segment of the **World Arts West Ethnic Dance Festival** on June 11, 8 p.m., and June 12, 3 p.m. Presentations include the San Jose Taiko, Balinese dance and music, Flamenco and Philippine dance, among others. The festival runs from June 3 to July 3, with additional performances taking place at San Francisco City Hall and Yerba Buena Center. For more information, go to www.ethnicdancefestival.com.

Enjoy your summer, one and all.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@sbcglobal.net or 510/652-6664.

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Bites on Broadway: Dining à la 'Cart'

from a submission by Karen Hester

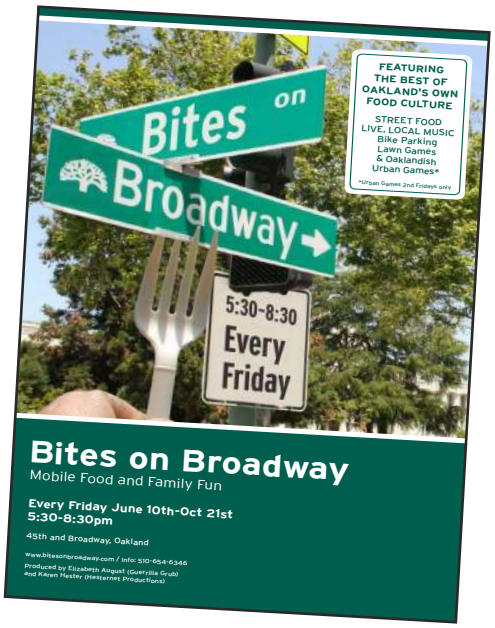
An adjunct to Oakland's burgeoning fine foods restaurant scene is Bites on Broadway, an organization convening a number of food carts offering a variety of foods not usually associated with mobile food vendors. Organizers said food cart vendors will be at 45th and Broadway every Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., beginning June 10 through October 21.

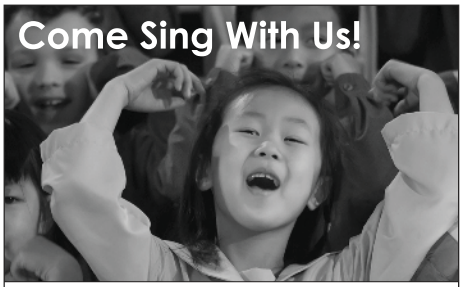
"Bites on Broadway is an effort to confront the blight on Broadway by jump starting a community gathering in the hopes of stimulating economic activity on a stretch of Broadway just starting to show signs of life with a new karate studio and New Style Motherlode (hip hop dance studio) opening up by June," according to Karen Hester, an organizer of the Oakland food "pod."

Hester reports that rotating food carts for the first month include Fists of Flour, Guerrilla Grub, 51st State, Tina's Tamales, GoStreeteary, Sue's Sassy Pies, El Tacobike, Boffo, Vesta Flatbreads and The Grilled-Cheeze Guy. Food served will be priced affordably, according to Hester, from $5-$9 for a dinner portion. Foods will be family fare using the freshest ingredients including pulled pork sandwiches, pizza, tacos, tortas, tamales, savory pies, mac and cheese, plus fresh juices such as agua frescas and lemonades.

While Bites on Broadway is the first mobile food pod in Oakland, pods have appeared in San Francisco and will begin in North Berkeley starting in June. Oaklandish, the Oakland arts support network, will provide urban games such as Capture the Flag and 4 Square on the second Friday of each month, she added.

Karen Hester of Hesternet Productions is a professional events organizer and produces large cultural events such as the Temescal Street Fair and Rockridge Out and About. Joining Hester in the venture is Elizabeth August, co-owner of Guerrilla Grub, an Oakland mobile food vendor started in February, 2010.





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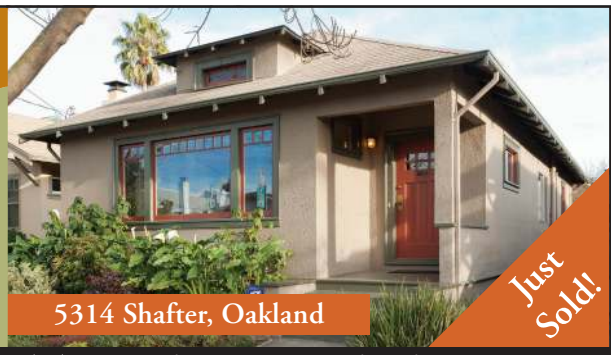
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Diesel Books Hosts Avid Readers

by Donald Carter, teacher, 2nd grade, New Highland Academy



Tim Horton, second grade teacher at New Highland Academy, discusses book selections with visiting students about to enter Diesel Books during a prior class visit. Photo: Donald Carter

For the third year in a row, Diesel Books on College Avenue will host a group of second graders from New Highland Academy in East Oakland's Elmhurst neighborhood. Using a grant from the BookPals Program (http://www.sag.org/branches/arizona/bookpals-program) that supports children's literacy throughout California, 50 second graders will journey via public transportation to the Rockridge District where they will select and purchase their choice of books at Diesel Bookstore.

This year's group will visit Diesel June 7. Each student will have $20 to spend on books selected from Diesel's children's section. The students are encouraged to select books that offer a challenge for emergent readers and fit within their budget.

Diesel manager Grant Outerbridge said the store was looking forward to the class's visit. "Last year's visit was wonderful," he said.

Outerbridge added, "These visits are good for the community and for readers, and offer a resource for communities lacking bookstores."

New Highland Academy teachers, given the opportunity to select a Bay Area bookstore for this outing, felt Diesel offered an opportunity to support a local merchant as opposed to a large chain book outlet.

More importantly, Rockridge provides an eye-opening opportunity for these students living just 15 minutes away yet experiencing poverty, violence, crime and deprivations difficult to imagine on College Avenue. Many of the students have never ridden BART, seen Lake Merritt or experienced a neighborhood like Rockridge.

More BookPals information at http://bookpals.net/

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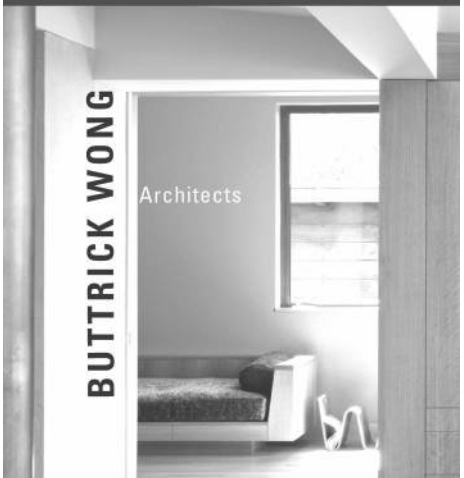
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5/3/11	3	2	5485 Taft Ave	$1,080,000	$1,080,000	0	$1,080,000
5/5/11	4	2	5823 Mendocino	$825,000	$825,000	43	$804,000
5/10/11	3	2	5265 Lawton Ave	$1,150,000	$1,095,000	57	$1,051,875
5/16/11	4	1	5931 Taft Ave	$859,000	$859,000	17	$900,000
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Oakland Creeks

from page 7

to Oakland's underground creeks, the artwork encourages discovery and sensitizes residents to the ongoing need to protect the city's watershed ecology.

"The Watershed Markers are an important reminder of Oakland's ecological resources that are hidden from view," said Mayor Jean Quan. "Our creeks and waterways are vital to a healthy urban environment, and this is an innovative way to use public art as a means to help people connect to our natural world. I really appreciate the interagency collaboration within the city of Oakland that led to the success of this project."

Wowhaus is the artist team of Scott Constable and Ene Osteraas-Constable. The artists gathered residents' input through public meetings and community dialogue before generating their designs. The creek stepping stones idea arose at a public meeting when one resident described his fond childhood memories of playing in and crossing Oakland creeks. Native fauna depicted on the markers include rainbow trout, Pacific chorus frogs, California newts and dragonflies. The imagery is rendered in highly detailed form, referencing the city's legacy of art deco and Craftsman architecture.

Oakland's Public Art Program commissions original works of art for public spaces, enriching the city's visual environment, integrating the creative thinking of artists into public construction projects and providing a means for citizens and visitors to enjoy and experience cultural diversity. For more information about the Public Art Program, visit oaklandculturalarts.org.

For more information on the Watershed Markers project and Oakland's creeks and watersheds, visit oaklandcreeks.org.

Kristin Hathaway, CSM, is a Watershed Program Specialist in the Watershed and Stormwater Management Program, Oakland Public Works Agency.

Kristen Zaremba is Senior Public Art Project Manager in the Cultural Arts & Marketing Department, Community & Economic Development Agency (CEDA).

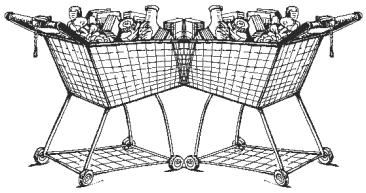
Rockridge Center

from page 1

and location mean it will have definite environmental impacts that regulators – the Planning Commission – will be ruling on as the proposal comes under review.

Ranelletti encouraged audience and community members to add their comments to the process, so the Planning Commission has as full a community response as possible.

Send comments to Darin Ranelletti, 238-3663, e-mail DRanelletti@oaklandnet.com.



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Library Offers Big Boost to Rockridge DVD Project

May Town Hall Meeting Report

Strong Feelings About Rockridge Safeway

16 AGENDA

Soundwalls in Rockridge!

The Rockridge News is looking for a Block Captain to deliver papers down Broadway from Ada to the College Avenue intersection. This once-a-month volunteer job (except in August, when the newsletter does not publish) should take 15-20 minutes. Call Susan at 547-3855 or e-mail her at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer.

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Tastes of Tech

from page 5

■ Tech Girls take 1st place in Technovation Challenge

This spring, 42 high-school girls took part in Google's challenge to build the most innovative Google Android mobile app. The Berkeley area winning team came from Oakland Tech, defeating teams from seven other schools. Congratulations to Salina Wittmer (grade 10), Carmen Zheng (grade 10) and Saleeha Bey (grade 9). The mission of the Technovation Challenge is to promote women in technology.

■ Tech Student Featured in Oakland Magazine

Senior Serena Ke is featured in the May-June edition of Oakland Magazine. The article, "The Way They Roll," highlights 10 inspirational Oakland graduating high school seniors who "have decided to give back now while keeping stellar grades and carving a path for success into adulthood." Serena's has served as president of an asthma peer health education program, and as a teen tobacco investigator, helping prevent cigarette sellers from selling to minors.

■ Oakland Tech Engineering Academy Builds Bridges

Each spring, students in Tech's Engineering Academy compete in a bridge-building contest, using balsa wood, string, and glue, to build their bridge. Parker Merrill, Engineering Academy founder, tests each bridge by hanging a bucket from the structure and filling it with sand until the model breaks. This year, junior Trey King's bridge was the strongest, holding 18.6 lbs.

■ Congratulations to Tech's Winning Sport Teams:

■ The varsity baseball team won the Transbay Tournament and Oakland Athletic League (OAL) Championship. It is Tech's third TransBay title in school history and the first time the Bulldogs have won back-to-back championships.

■ The Boys JV Lacrosse team won the Northern California Junior Lacrosse Association (NCJLA) JV Championship. In only its second year and with many first time players, this team triumphed against established Bay Area teams.

■ The Boys Tennis Team won the OAL title. Skyline had won the OAL Title for the past four years.

■ The co-ed JV ice kockey team won their first-ever division championship against the Tri-Valley Blues. In their second year on ice, this team has matured to their division championship game.

■ The girls basketball team won the OAL league title and championships, and advanced to the second round of the North Coast playoffs.

■ Boys JV basketball won the JV title for the second year in a row.

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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: *Rockridge News* Community Calendar, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. (at Manila). Info: chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

- **Toddler Story Time:** Every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am.
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am, upstairs.

Special Events:

The annual OPL **Summer Reading Program** begins at all locations on Saturday, June 18, ending on Saturday, August 13. Come by to sign up, get your reading log, pick out what you would like to read, and collect prizes for how many hours you read.

- **Summer Reading Program Kick-off Event:** bi-lingual Mexican and Caribbean folk music performance by **Cascada de Flores**. Sat, 6/18, 10:30am. (All ages welcome).
- **Stories and Crafts from Asia and the Pacific Islands:** (all ages) Tues, 6/21, 7pm.
- **Paper Craft Series:** (ages 3- 10) Every Thurs, 3:30pm. **June 23 thru August 11**.
- **Lawrence Hall of Science – Festival of Matter:** 8 science stations for ages 5 and up. Thurs, 6/30, 3:30pm.
- **Book Buddies:** kids ages 2-7; sign up in advance (or just stop by). Teen Volunteers will read to and with kids. Every Saturday, 2 to 4pm.

FOR TEENS

BOOK BUDDIES: Teen Volunteers see Susy to sign up to read to and with children, ages 1 to 7. Will take place on Saturdays, 2-4 pm, from June 18 to Aug. 31.

- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Ages 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month (6/14, 7/12), 5 to 6:30pm.
- **Teen Advisory Board** (ages 14-18): Help advise the library how to better serve teens. Get community service credit for school. **Snacks provided**. 1st Saturday each month, 4 to 5pm. **This summer, we meet weekly** and also volunteer outside of the library.
- **Teen Summer Program:** Pick up a passport at the library and earn stamps by exploring the Bay Area, writing book reviews, volunteering, and attending library programs. Great prizes all summer long. 6/18 - 8/13.

More info: Susy, 597- 5017 or smoorhead@oaklandlibrary.org.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 16 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (you're also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month, 1 to 5pm. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch. (www.berkeleywritersclub.org.) Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Randy Rutherford,** folksinger and storyteller reads from new work in progress. Tues., 6/7, 6pm, upstairs.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice and referrals.** First Tues. each month (6/7), 5 to 7pm (advance sign-up starts 4:45pm). **Note:** lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people are present. **No July session.**

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

- June: **Darril Tighe:** abstract watercolor.
- July: **Irving Wiltshire:** photography.

Lobby Display Case:

- June and July: **Rockridge Teen Advisory Board** display.

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm.
Closed: Sundays and Mondays

Gardening With Native Plants

"Native Life" in Rockridge. Free discussion with **Troy McGregor:** how to plan and implement a garden using the best native plants for the area; soil, irrigation and mulch; the impact on wildlife. Tues, 6/21, 6:30-7:30pm. Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave. Sponsored by the Calif. Native Plant Society, East Bay Chapter. Info: Ed Beggs, 653-5000.

Diesel Book: Readings & Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs., 6/9, 7pm. **The Free Beer Tour: An evening of pairing great books with great beer**. Readings by **Josh Wilker, David Anthony** and **Pete Nelson** with beer tastings featuring the Lagunitas Brewing Co.
- Sun., 6/12, 3pm. **Poetry Flash: Bruce Isaacson** and **Toni Mirosevich**.
- Mon., 6/13, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (2nd Mon. each month): All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed, 6/15, 7pm. Local author **Cary Groner:** *Exiles.*
- Tues, 6/21, 7pm. **Lama Surya Das:** *Buddha Standard Time*.
- Sun., 6/26, 3pm. Publication party for former Diesel bookseller **Charles McLeod:** *American Weather*.
- Wed, 6/29, 7pm. **Robert Gorter:** F*ighting Cancer: A Nontoxic Approach to Treatment*.
- Thurs, 7/7, 6pm. **Bay Areas Writers Project (BAWP) Young Writers Camp** share their work.

DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. More info (and other events and discussion groups): 653-9965 or events@dieselbookstore.com.

Marie Simmons Book Signing

Meet the Author of *Fresh and Fast Vegetarian: Recipes that Make a Meal*. Recipe samples and ingredient tastings. Sat., 6/18, noon to 2pm. The Pasta Shop, Rockridge Market Hall, 5655 College Ave. Info: 250-6055 or www.rockridgemarkethall.com.

Rockridge Artist Open Studio

Liz Maxwell: paintings, prints and drawings. Sat. and Sun., 6/11, 6/12 from 11am to 6pm. 5808 Chabot Road. lizmaxwell@prodigy.net. More about ProArts Open Studios 2011 events, see *The Muse*, page 9, or www.proartsgallery.org.

Wisteria Ways House Concerts

Award-winning **California Honeydrops**, as best R&B/Soul Band in the SF Bay Area. Saturday, 6/18, 3pm (door opens 2pm). Sample sound clips at www.cahoneydrops.com/listen/. $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door).383 61st Street (outside concert, wheelchair accessible). For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Singers Wanted

The Distaff Singers, the Bay Area's longest-running women's choral group, is seeking new members. No auditions necessary, just ability to match pitch. Practice Tuesdays, 7:15 to 9pm at Bishop O'Dowd HS, 9500 Stearns Ave. A benefit concert in the fall supports local K-12 music programs. Info: Carola Ingram, 547-1191 or carolaingram@mac.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Programs include: Arts/crafts; health insurance counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers support groups, computer classes and more.

- **Free group tour of the Fox Theater and lunch**: Wed., 6/8.
- **5th Annual Health & Resource Fair:** Thurs., 6/23, 1- 4pm. **Free services:** Pharmacy and prescription drug drop-off; vision test; bone density screening. Sojourner Truth Manor, 5717 MLK Way.

Mon. – Fri., 8:30am to 4pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times" for full schedule of classes/events, lunch menus, membership, and volunteer opportunities. Info: 597- 5085.

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