THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
25 Years
HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!
Remember: No Newsletter in August.
VOL. 26 ■ NO. 7 ■ ISSUE NO. 280 ■ July 2, 2011 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,500 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council • 4123 Broadway, PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94611 • 869-4200

RCPC and Rockridge NCPC Co-Host July Town Hall Meeting

by Karen Ivy, NCPC secretary and information officer, and Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen, treasurer

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils (NCPCs) are part of Oakland's Community Policing program. In 1996, the City Council established a community policing strategy of creating "a working partnership between the community and the police... to analyze neighborhood problems, set priorities, develop strategies, and work together to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods."

NCPCs provide forums for all individuals and neighborhood groups (including block clubs, neighborhood watch programs, community-based organizations, merchant associations, citizen associations, houses of worship), to participate in making their communities better, safer, and stronger. They are organized and run by local citizen volunteers, and supported – but not controlled – by the Oakland Police Department (OPD). OPD

▸ NCPC-RCPC, page 5

21 AGENDA

July RCPC Town Hall Meeting

- **Joint Meeting**: RCPC and NCPC discuss crime and crime prevention in Oakland and Rockridge.
- Jane Brunner's aide and an OPD representative discuss budget impacts. See page 2.

Thursday, July 21 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College at Manila

Docent Volunteers Invited to Join Kitchen Tour Fun

RCPC Kitchen Tour October 2

Get the Inside Scoop on Rockridge Kitchens

by Natalie Mehta, chair, RCPC Kitchen Tour

Come join the fun and get the inside scoop on Rockridge's recently renovated kitchens by volunteering to be a docent for the 2011 Rockridge Kitchen Tour. Docents, who guide guests in the tour's featured kitchens, receive a pre-tour that offers a behind-the-scenes look at the elements and stories that impressed our selection committee. In addition, docents receive a complimentary ticket to visit the other kitchens on the day of the event.

If you enjoy "back-stage" access and have a few hours to contribute to your community on October 2, please contact Nancy Sale at 510/655-4625 for more information about volunteering.

▸ *More on the Kitchen Tour, page 3*

RDA Brings Art to College Avenue



PHOTO: CHRIS JACKSON

Strollers study a photograph from 1930s Oakland displayed on College.

by Chris Jackson, RDA operations mgr.

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) invites you to enjoy a window display of photos of the early days of Rockridge, North Oakland, and the Bay Area.

RDA, the Masonic Lodge and John Bosko of Bosko's Framing Gallery have teamed up to fill the street-front bays of the now-vacant dance studio space in the lodge building at 5451 College Avenue with photos and camera memorabilia, providing a window into our past.

▸ Storefront Art, page 10

Residents to Give Neglected Off-Ramps Cleanup/Facelift


PHOTO: PETER LUND

Three area residents seek to landscape Highway 24 on- and off-ramps along Claremont Avenue at Hudson Street and at Clifton Street. Above: the bedraggled off-ramp at Clifton and Claremont. *Story, page 8.*

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2011
POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

'When Neighbors Know Each Other, Neighborhoods Are Safer.'

▸ Learn how to participate in National Night Out activities, page 10.

Details: July Special Co-Hosted Town Hall Meeting

- **RCPC and NCPC Report on Crime**
- **Impacts of New City Budget**

Thursday, July 21 | 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Rockridge Library Meeting Room

Mayor Jean Quan and the City Council worked feverishly to approve a city budget for the coming year prior to the June 30 deadline.

Come to the **July Joint RCPC/NCPC Town Hall Meeting** and hear what happened when the dust settled, and what it will mean for Rockridge.

Zac Wald, Councilmember Jane Brunner's chief of staff, will tell us how the deal finally went down and what we can expect in Rockridge as a result. A representative from OPD will then describe how OPD is maintaining public safety and community policing with severely limited resources.

There will be time to ask questions, make comments, and discuss what it will mean for our community.

— *Stuart Flashman*

Report: June Town Hall Meeting Continues 'Land Use for the Rest of Us'

RCPC's June town Hall meeting featured the second of three talks to explain Oakland's land use decision process. This is something that affects all of us in Rockridge, but is usually put in a mixture of legalese and mysterious phrases and acronyms. RCPC Land Use Committee Chair Stuart Flashman presented the subject in straightforward rather than bureaucratic language. He started with a brief review of his previous talk, which had covered the city's general plan and zoning. He then discussed what happens with an individual project, the administrative, as opposed to the legislative aspect of land use approvals. Subdivision maps, conditional use permits, and variances were each covered, along with their general rules and some quirks peculiar to Oakland's process. He also explained some of the state law requirements that must be met in considering approving a development project.

The third and final segment, to be presented at a future Town Hall meeting, will discuss what happens when things haven't been done right — land use litigation, and why it sometimes can provide relief, and sometimes not. — *Stuart Flashman*



AC Transit Makes Changes in 51B and 851 Schedules

AC Transit reports several service changes on many bus lines, including the 51B and 851 lines serving Rockridge:

■ **51B:** Northbound: trips departing Rockridge BART before 5:30 a.m. and after 12:05 a.m. discontinued every day. Southbound: trips departing either Berkeley Marina or Berkeley Amtrak after 12 a.m. discontinued. Other schedule adjustments to improve transfers between lines 51A and 51B at Rockridge BART were made.

■ **851:** Trips departing Alameda at 5:15 a.m. on weekdays, and Berkeley BART at 5:05 a.m. on weekends, discontinued.

View the new schedules at http://www.actransit.org/maps/.

Sign-up for AC Transit's e-News: http://www.actransit.org/customer/subscribe-to-e-news/. Receive timely schedule updates.

Route and Web information issued by AC Transit Marketing & Community Relations department..

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
CLOSED: *Sundays and Mondays and Tues., 7/5*
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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- 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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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
☛ **September 3, 2011 (No issue in August)**
☛ **September deadline is August 18, 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.)***

The 3 Rs of Kitchen Renovation; After-Use Opportunities

by Natalie Mehta, chair, RCPC Kitchen Tour

Reduce – Reuse – Recycle. We sort our weekly items into the grey, brown, and green bins, but can these principles be applied to a kitchen renovation? There are many options available that are kinder and gentler to both the environment and the pocketbook – and it takes just a little planning and consideration.

■ **Reduce** – Renovation project waste can be substantial, but can be vastly reduced by considering "deconstruction" rather than "demolition." The former is a precise approach that carefully dismantles building elements such as trim, windows, and cabinets, ensuring the items are still usable. While it may take a little more time, the amount of landfill waste can be greatly diminished, and the salvaged items may be reused in your project or donated/sold to a variety of organizations.

In addition, kitchens and their appliances are notorious energy hogs, but good design can drastically improve efficiency. Carroll Moore, a design expert and owner of Right Design Lab, applies his 25 years of sustainable design experience in a two-phased approach. First, he limits toxicity levels by selecting paints, adhesives, insulation, and other products with low to no off-gassing properties, ensuring a healthy environment for the inhabitants. Second, he specifies products that maximize energy savings. Insulation, double paned windows, LED lighting, tankless hot water heaters, and radiant heating are just a few of the available options. With new products coming on the market all the time, Moore is enthusiastic about the large variety of options, and more accessible price points that are available to owners.



■ **Reuse** – Many elements of your existing kitchen can be reused. Rob Ades, owner of M&C Construction, specializes in kitchen and bathroom renovations, and suggests preserving not only existing windows and trim, but even the wall studs. Original studs were full 2x4s, not the "nominal" versions sold now, and are generally old growth wood that is denser, stronger, and drier, making it less susceptible to the twisting and warping of new wood.

Ades recommends that windows inappropriately placed in the current space can be moved to add natural light to other areas of the home. Also, existing cabinets can be refaced to update and improve their appearance, or can be moved to the garage or basement to expand storage. And if you don't need the latest model appliance, the "greenest" alternative is to retain functioning appliances, keeping them out of the landfill while keeping money in your pocket.

Put your imagination to work and envision a new life for old parts. An old window could be backed with mirror and used as a design element in the front entry. An old cabinet could be retrofitted with a stone top and made into a new bathroom sink cabinet.

■ **Recycle** – if you can't imagine a new use, get in touch with resources like Urban Ore, Ohmega Salvage, or Habitat for Humanity's ReStore. Individual guidelines differ, but most of them happily accept old cabinets, appliances, fixtures, and even construction surplus (grout, tile, trim, windows). They may even give you store credit to apply to purchases.

Ideas for applying these principles are endless, so plan to see many of these ideas in action on the Rockridge Kitchen Tour — Sunday, October 2, 2011.

The Zoning Counter

5855 Chabot Road

Proposal: To establish a common driveway between two existing residential properties by increasing an existing driveway to 19-ft. in width to create a new open parking space.

Applicant: Ben Bargellini; Phone: 206/604-1261

Owner: PDR Properties LLC

Planning Permits Required: Minor Conditional Use Permit to establish a Common Driveway between two existing residential properties per Planning Code Sec. 17.102.090

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP);

Survey Rating: D2+

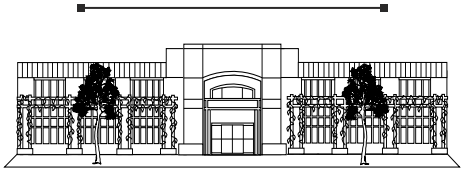
Case Planner: Jason Madani, 510/238-4790, or jsmadani@oaklandnet.com

RCPC Land Use Committee

The Land Use Committee held no meeting in June. Plan to attend the next meeting to be held August 24.

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: August 24. *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.



Labor Day Library Grounds Clean-Up

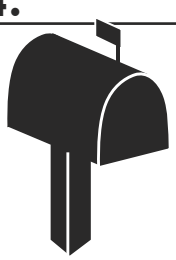
In time for the start of the school year, Jennifer Kaplan of Rockridge Home, 5418 College Avenue, is organizing her third annual Labor Day weekend clean-up of the library grounds.

Put September 4 on your calendar, 10 a.m., and come ready to help weed-whack weeds, trim rangy bushes and chat with other library helpers. Bring your own gloves and tools: weeders, pruners, etc. We provide bags for green waste and trash. Refreshments will be supplied.

If you can't make it this time, watch for other clean-up days in the future.

— Carol Bieri, Friends of the Rockridge Library





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.

Thirty Years of Loving Care Make My Back Yard Pleasant, Peaceful

Editor:

So we finally elected a new RCPC board, and it only took us two tries. [Rockridge News, June 2011.] The candidates were unopposed; all we had to do was show up and give them our okay. But we couldn't even manage a quorum in the first attempt. A pretty namby-pamby effort for a so-called NIMBY neighborhood.

I'm embarrassed to say that I was one of those residents too "busy" to vote the first time around. I figured things would just happen, like they always do. The neighborhood would take care of itself. Isn't that what makes Rockridge one of the most popular spots in the Bay Area? I could stay home and mind my own back yard.

And it's a nice back yard, after thirty years of loving care. (Before this yard, the wife had a nice back yard two blocks away, but somebody built a freeway through it.) We've got an ancient lemon tree planted by a previous owner. The plum tree where the kids had their treehouse is long gone for firewood; now the grandkids pick the fruit and eat the jam that comes from its many offspring. We grow tomatoes and squash from sprouts carried home from the Temescal Farmers' Market.

Am I a NIMBY if I say good neighbors make good fences? On every side, our good neighbors shared the cost and the labor to build the fences around our back yards. We cleared the ivy where the rats lurked, and we welcome the patrols by the orange tomcat next door. Lately some two-legged rats have been climbing the fences and scratching at the back doors. Now our block is getting together again to revive our Neighborhood Watch.

Our back yard is pleasant and peaceful enough, in spite of the trains and traffic roaring above. We didn't want more from a fourth bore, but that's the price of progress, we're told. Maybe sound walls will make things quieter. But we wouldn't even get the chance to find out if the neighbors hadn't stood up and made some noise of their own.

No, our back yard didn't just happen, and it doesn't take care of itself. Neither does any other Rockridge back yard. It takes work. It takes planning, and it takes a community. So when someone is willing to do the work of the Rockridge Community Planning Council, the least I can do is get up and vote.

Thanks for the wake-up call; sorry I was caught napping in my back yard.

— Chuck Afflerbach

Fogies Seek to Preserve Rockridge Amenities for All

Editor:

As an Old Fogie and life-long resident of Rockridge (66 years), I have to speak up for the others here who have been accused recently of NIMBY-ism [Letters, The Rockridge News, June 2011] and harping about The Olden Days. Many of these folks are the very people who have spent hundreds, even thousands, of hours, and a fair amount of their own funds at times—for decades—to keep this neighborhood vibrant and livable. It's these people who helped bring this neighborhood back from a years-long decline during and after the construction of BART and Highway 24.

Those who pay high rent, mortgages and property taxes to live here do so because those old fogies have:

- gotten the Rockridge Library built, maintained and supported by a special Rockridge owners' property tax assessment,
- kept out the likes of Cigarettes for Less, which tried to open across from the library, as well as other chain businesses,
- prevented a factory and high rise construction from destroying the neighborhood,
- worked to preserve and build park space,
- renewed the mural under the freeway overpass at Claremont and Hudson,
- worked with countless businesses, year after year, to get support for neighborhood activities and improvements.

For more recent projects, many not mentioned here, younger and newer residents have been major contributors as well.

Large commercial interests have been trying to expand their footprints in Rockridge for decades because there's money to be made here. But, their interests are not necessarily our interests.

The "Old Fogies" and their younger colleagues may well not represent the thinking of many in the neighborhood, but they have worked hard and fought many battles to keep Rockridge the place we choose to live in, the place that many choose to pay a fortune to live in. They deserve a lot of credit for this place we call home.

— Claire Lomax

Support a Community-Based Environmental Review of Safeway's College Avenue Proposal

Editor:

Safeway's corporate management is lining up support for a radically expanded College Avenue store complex to become a major destination shopping center in our neighborhood even before the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Review [DEIR] of the project's effects.

A mailer from Safeway in Pleasanton shows representations of their design, with a link to an impressive Web site, but neither realistically portrays the scale of the multi-story store or auto traffic congestion. Safeway asks for our support before any indication of how their proposal will affect traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety, air and water quality, noise and aesthetics, as well as our long-term local merchants (who directly generate income and tax dollars that stay in our city in ways that Safeway's profits do not).

Instead, I hope my neighbors will support a community-based

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Letters

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review of the yet-to-be released Environmental Impact Report before being tempted to declare support for Safeway's proposal. Look for details of the Rockridge Community Planning Council's [RCPC] plans for a professional response to the forthcoming EIR. And contribute to the matching fund to pay for this expertise. Visit http://www.rockridge.org/Safewayfunds.html.

I fear that a magnet center of nearly triple the square footage of the current store will significantly increase traffic on our main and residential side streets as motorists travel to or from this complex, or detour around it to avoid the College/Claremont six-way intersection.

Read The Rockridge News, follow the work of your RCPC representatives, and of FANS (Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue) at their Web site: http://www.fansco.org/

— Don Stone

Soundwalls? Be Careful What You Wish For

Editor:

Having lived next to Highway 13 for approximately 35 years and near Highway 24 for about five years, I appreciate the Rockridge News series on soundwalls.

The crux of the matter is to clearly discern for one's self the difference between "sound" and "noise," as stated in the first article. Sound from Highway 13 has increased over the years; a houseguest declared that the sound reminded her of a waterfall and that has worked well for me. I can honestly say that I no longer "hear" the freeway sound. However, freeway sound from the north (Highway 24) increased dramatically at our property in the early '90s when hard surface soundwalls were installed along the north side of Highway 24.

So, be careful what you wish for; sound is never destroyed, just displaced by a soundwall to someone else's home. Sound waves bouncing off those Highway 24 soundwalls have spread down the small canyon created by Lake Temescal and now bounce merrily along all the homes on either side. The mathematical models used by Caltrans that purport to "predict" sound levels before and after soundwall construction are based on the assumption of a flat surface. Therefore, model predictions are inaccurate (and thus fairly useless) for the complicated hilly terrain prevalent in our area. I caution against hasty implementation of soundwalls. One cannot escape some aspects of an intensely urban environment. Better to make peace with it.

— J.W. Yager

RCPC chair Stuart Flashman responds: *Sound, noise, and noise protection—including soundwalls—are complex, technical subjects. RCPC is publishing a series of articles explaining these subjects before residents have to make decisions. To address two specifics, sound is not only reflected; it can also be dispersed and absorbed. Advances in soundwall technology over the past 20 years mean soundwalls from 1990 don't define what's possible now. Also, models no longer assume a flat surface, but can be very sophisticated. Those models are used at later stages, once their cost is justified.*



Quiet the Freeway with Redwoods

Editor:

I would be interested in the use of trees as soundwalls, and especially redwood trees.

Whenever I walk in a redwood forest, I am struck by how quiet it is. Not only the leaves, but also the bark on the trunks and branches, and the forest floor, are absorbing sound.

Rather than driving through a masonry canyon when you shoot out of the Caldecott, wouldn't it be neat to find yourself surrounded by big trees? It sure would say: "Welcome to Oakland – a pretty cool place to live."

— Molly Baier

NCPC-RCPC

from page 1

works with the NCPC to develop strategies and allocate resources to address problems. OPD also reports back to the NCPC about progress on specific issues.

Recent OPD staff reductions have changed the way the police interact with the NCPCs. For example, NCPCs can no longer count on having a Problem Solving Officer (PSO) or a Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC) at every meeting. There are still 57 NCPCs representing the original 57 community policing beats, but OPD has consolidated its operations into 35 beats. The Greater Rockridge NCPC shares its PSO for Beat 12Y with Beat 12X (Temescal) and its PSO for Beat 13X with Beats 13Y and 13Z. A single PSO may now have to cover multiple NCPC meetings.

The NCPCs communicate by e-mail with the PSOs and the NSCs, and work with OPD to attack outbreaks of burglaries, or suspected criminal activity.

An important message the Greater Rockridge NCPC tries to convey is: If you don't report a crime, any type of crime, it's like it never happened. Reporting gives OPD a reason to allocate its resources to Rockridge.

In July only, NCPC will join RCPC for the Town Hall Meeting, Thursday, July 21, 7:30-9 p.m., at the Rockridge Library. Regular NCPC meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., upstairs in the library. Because of uncertainty about library hours, confirm future meetings by checking the NCPC website: rockridgencpc.com.

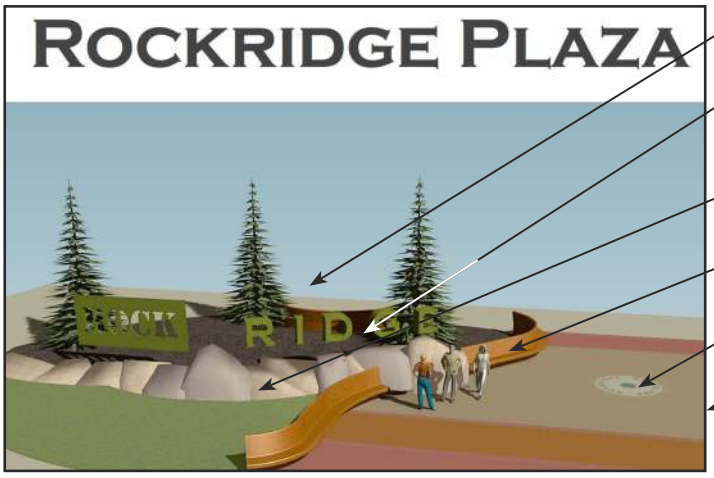
Plaza Design Out for Bid; Project Moves Closer to Reality

by Bob Franklin, BART board president

Plans to redesign Rockridge Plaza, the area at the base of the escalators leading to the Rockridge BART station, are finally moving forward. Working with the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), the Rockridge District Association (RDA), and the city of Oakland, BART put the proposal for the plaza redesign out for public bid in May; bids were due at the end of June. If the bids prove to be responsive and reasonable, a contract will soon be awarded to rework the plaza.

The plaza will meet the criteria established in a community survey completed in 2003-4, and in numerous public meetings since then, where the community sought an improved waiting area with better lighting.

Landscape designer Greer Alley volunteered her time to translate the community's vision into a colorful proposal that conformed to BART's specifications. About 35 percent of the present ivy planter will be removed, opening up the plaza and providing a more direct route to and from BART. The remaining ivy will be replaced with drought-resistant plants. More seating, colored pavement, redwood tree uplights, and relocated bike racks and garbage cans will make the plaza much more community friendly.



At the May RCPC Town Hall meeting, landscape designer Greer Alley presented several conceptual representations of her ideas implementing publicly solicited criteria for the development of Rockridge Plaza at the intersection of College and Keith avenues. The graphic above broadly depicts proposed design elements. (Descriptive labels have been added for clarity.) Graphic courtesy of Greer Alley

Lastly, a row of large boulders – a rock ridge – will be placed in the planter, to invoke the namesake of the community.

After the construction is complete, some artistic elements will be added to the plaza, including a sign over the boulders reading "Rockridge." This metal sign will be part of a separate follow-up bid, which will be a design-build contract open to any contractor or artist.

Overall, this redesign will make this

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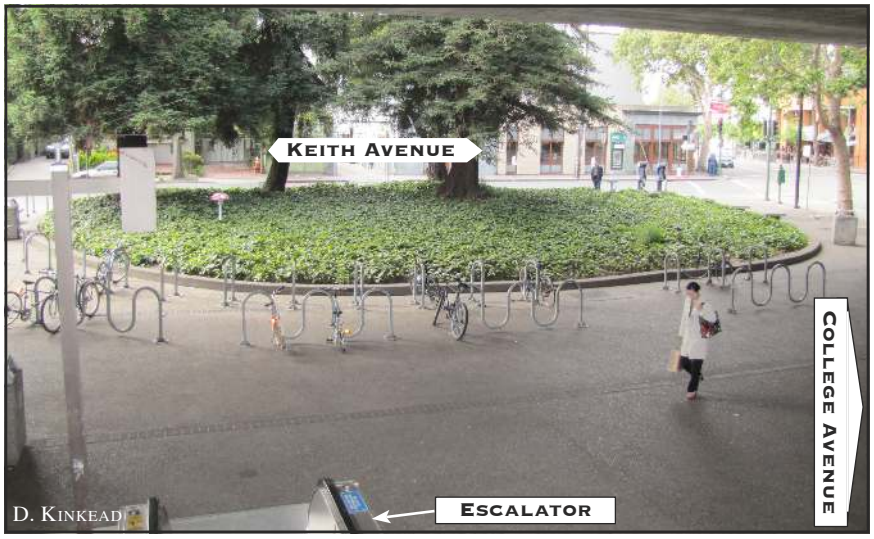
from page 6

area more welcoming, and will serve as inspiration to improve and make accessible the other three corners of College Avenue intersections under BART and Highway 24.

These other ivy patches will present new opportunities for community garden projects or other ideas that community members may have.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns via my cell phone at 510/684-0026, or e-mail me at BobFranklinBART@aol.com.

Bob Franklin is a Rockridge resident and president of the BART board of directors.



Above: Rockridge Plaza as it now appears, viewed from BART's escalator.

Keith Avenue

Landscape Designer Greer Alley's plan for the plaza was followed by BART architects and engineers as they prepared project development plans. The graphic at left is an adaptation of a plan view graphic prepared by BART, and oriented to the photo above. Technical nomenclature in the original BART graphic has been replaced by more generic descriptions of the site's design. The descriptions have not been reviewed or approved by BART and are intended for informational use only. The adapted graphic is intended to give a sense of the project; it is not an official project document. ***— Editor***



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Neighbors Unite to Renovate Unsightly Rockridge-Temescal Gateway

by Peter Lund

Three area residents, Holly Drabal, a local landscape architect and certified Master Gardener; Chris Jackson, operations manager with the Rockridge District Association (RDA); and Peter Lund, local homeowner, have joined forces to landscape Highway 24 on- and off-ramps along Claremont Avenue at Hudson Street and at Clifton Street. Known as Scenic Streets, the newly formed, all-volunteer group of neighbors is working with Caltrans and the city to renovate these two high-traffic areas in the coming months.

The group's work will be done in three phases. The off-ramp at Claremont and Clifton will be landscaped this summer. Next, the on-ramp a block north at Hudson will be landscaped in the fall. The group then plans to renovate the Claremont Avenue median beneath the highway and BART tracks next spring.

These public lands have long been eyesores, despite serving as popular gateways for visitors to the neighborhood.

According to Scenic Streets, our community deserves a better first impression. The Claremont Avenue ramps off Highway 24 are perhaps the most popular routes to access Rockridge and northern Temescal, but they look terrible – usually covered with weeds and litter. A sight like that can hold down property values and encourage people to disrespect the area.

Funding for the project must come from the community because Caltrans is not able to provide funding. Scenic Streets has begun door-to-door fund-raising and reports steady traffic on its web site at www.ScenicStreets.org where residents can "buy" a plant for as little as $10.

District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner saw the value to both the Rockridge and Temescal neighborhoods and was able to provide the seed money for work to begin on schedule. Local businesses are also being solicited for support. Major donors will receive publicity in the group's fund-raising materials.

Scenic Streets is off to a strong start and the work is on schedule. Over 100 California native shrubs will be planted along the final 80 feet of the off-ramp by late July. When all phases are complete, it is estimated that over 300 drought-tolerant shrubs will be planted. The project will coincide nicely with continuing improvements to the nearby Frog Park.

The group is also negotiating with DaVita Corporation of Denver, operators of the dialysis clinic in the former Safeway building on Claremont Avenue at Clifton Street. Scenic Streets has proposed simple upgrades to the site's chain-link fenced parking lot, including removal of the 30-foot-tall rusting sign post unused since Safeway vacated the building decades ago. The group is optimistic DaVita will do its part to support the area's renovation.

If neighbors chip in just a little, together they can make a big difference. But without financial support from residents and area businesses, some of the bigger improvements, such as the median that parallels Frog Park, may have to wait for years, and that would be a shame.

Scenic Streets continually updates its plans and progress on its web site to keep neighbors informed. Volunteers can visit www.ScenicStreets.org to help plan, plant and donate.



Help Celebrate Frog Park's 10th Anniversary!

by Theresa Nelson, FROG Chair

It was just 10 years ago this October that more than 1,300 volunteers came together over 10 days to build two play structures at what was to become Frog Park, the neighborhood park in the lower Rockridge-Temescal area.

Since then, we've added swings, the Lily Pad Plaza area, a drinking fountain, pathways and artworks. We restored the *Oceanus* mural, renovated basketball courts, restored the creek, welcomed the Farmer's Market, and soon, we'll open a new restroom.

Have you enjoyed Frog Park? Help us plan a suitable celebration of the first decade of this important resource. Everyone is welcome to bring ideas and get involved in a celebration this fall. Contact Frog Chair Theresa Nelson at chair@frogpark.org.

Restroom Almost Ready

As of press time, the new Frog Park restroom is expected to officially open in early July. Watch the Frog Park website — http://www.frogpark.org/ — for continuing details.

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Our City, Up Close and Personal

This summer, discover Oakland and our marvelous Regional Parks by walking, hiking, bicycling or jogging. It's inexpensive, healthy and just a real treat. There are numerous organized tours out there to join, many of them free. Or make up your own experience. For us, it was a biking trip to Angel Island recently. It was a wonderful outing, but, honestly, stick to hiking on the Island unless you are a strong cyclist.

Tooling down to Jack London Square on our bicycles to catch the ferry to Angel Island early Father's Day Sunday, it seemed like we had the whole of downtown Oakland to ourselves. All was quiet and yet so alive. The air was cool and clear. Wide empty streets and tall buildings shimmered in glorious morning light. In the distance, white boats bobbed gently, quietly on sparkling blue Estuary waters. Painter Anthony Holdsworth has spent many years capturing just this magic light and mood in our city. I thought he had made it up, but it's really there, if you take the time to see it.

Regional Parks

We are so privileged. Not only do we have state and federal parks to enjoy here, but we also are home to an amazing regional and city park system. Did you know that the East Bay Regional Park District, spanning Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, is comprised of 108,000-plus acres, including 65 parks and 1,150 miles of trails? It is the largest and best managed regional park system in the country, offering a true refuge for wildlife as well as recreation for us humans in this crowded Bay Area. Check out their Web site at www.ebparks.org and head for your favorite local beach, lake or redwood grove to create your own memories. It's just a few miles away and likely free or very inexpensive.

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The Rockridge Muse

by Ortrun Niesar and Annalee Allen, Rockridge resident and City Historian

City Walking Tours

Join experienced volunteer tour guides and discover downtown's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high-rises on one of the free tours conducted by the Oakland Tours Program, sponsored by the city's Cultural Arts and Marketing Department.

Tours are on Wednesdays and Saturdays through October and include Chinatown, Jack London Waterfront, and Uptown to the Lake. For a description of all the tours with maps, dates and starting places, visit the Web site at www.oaklandnet.com/walkingtours. All tours start at 10 a.m. and last 90 minutes. Reservations are recommended but not required. To request a brochure and schedule, leave a message on the 24-hour tours Hotline, 510/238-3234.

There are other tours, as well. Visit the Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA) Web site, www.oaklandheritage.org, to see the schedule for their summer walks. The nonprofit OHA got its start in Rockridge 30 years ago and has been hosting tours in the neighborhoods in July and August ever since. Their phone number is 510/763-9218.

Save the Date. It's been 20 Years. Almost!

Plans are under way for the Day of Remembrance and Preparedness in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Oakland/Berkeley Hills Fire. Your ideas are invited now. To participate, contact Annalee Allen at 510/238-3234, or e-mail aallen@oaklandnet.com.

Projected activities and events for Saturday, October 22, start at 9 a.m. • An informal gathering at the Rockridge BART Station Firestorm Tile Wall under BART on the west side of College Avenue, and an opportunity to reflect on the losses from the disaster, look at the tiles, and sign a guest book, to be filed at the Oakland Library History Room. • From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Gateway Exhibit Center, near the intersection of Highways 24 and 13, Oakland Mayor Jean Quan and Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates will offer brief comments, as will other dignitaries, including Councilmember Jane Brunner and Acting Fire Chief Mark Hoffmann. The names of the 25 fire victims will be read. • From noon to 4 p.m., a Disaster Preparedness Fair at Lake Temescal's North Meadow, with exhibits, fire equipment, and activities for kids, and an opportunity to make a keepsake remembrance tile.

For more information, e-mail firestormanniversary@oaklandnet.com.

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

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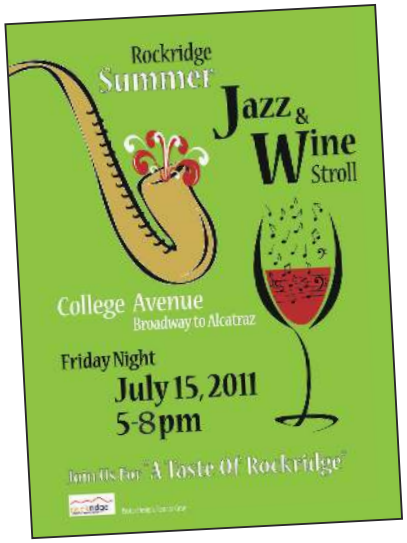
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RDA Presents a Summer Jazz & Wine Stroll



The Rockridge District Association (RDA) invites you to support local merchants Friday evening, July 15, from 5 to 8 p.m. Stroll College Avenue; enjoy your favorite shops; visit one or two that are new to you; and enjoy live entertainment. Then, stop in at one of the many restaurants for a snack or dinner. Look for merchant specials and offers; there's something on the Avenue for everyone.

For the second year of what we hope will become a long tradition, we are looking forward to another fun-filled evening on College Avenue. Our spring event was well received, with over 12 musical venues for enjoyment, great shopping and dining.

Coming Dates

Mark your calendar: This year the "Out and About" street fair is Sunday, October 9. We're looking forward to an interactive, fun-filled day with activities, music and good food for all ages.

It's National Night Out (NNO) Time Again!

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2011
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NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2011

It's time to organize your Block Party!
Tuesday, August 2, 2011 • 7–9 p.m.

Organize a block party, barbeque, ice cream social, or other outdoor event that brings your neighbors together.

Last year, Oakland had 452 block parties; this year's goal is 500.

Register early to receive give-away items for the kids, and a special gift for the host.

When neighbors know each other, neighborhoods are safer.

For more information, or to register online: www2.oaklandnet.com/nno.
Contact: Patricia Rose, 510/238-3091, Neighborhood Services Coordinator.

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Storefront Art

from page 1

In a series of rotating displays, Bosko, located at 6038 College Avenue, will present selections from his personal collection of black-and-white photos and vintage camera equipment.

The RDA presents this display to the neighborhood as a way to bring art to the Avenue and to show what can be done to liven up a vacant storefront. Studies show undressed storefronts are detrimental to a business district.

The RDA strives to make and keep College Avenue one of the most vibrant districts in the East Bay. Soon, approximately 13 new trees will be planted in vacant tree wells as part of our ongoing beautification of College Avenue.

There's a new broker in town.

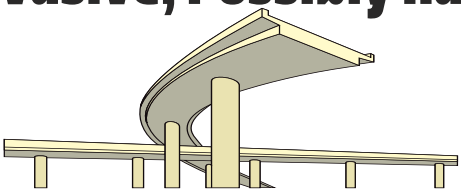
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Freeway Sound: Pervasive, Possibly Harmful If Unmanaged

by Andrew Charman, chair, RCPC Transportation Committee



Noise is one of the most pervasive pollutants in our environment, and, in Rockridge as in many communities, much of it originates from surface transportation: cars, trucks, trains, and motorcycles. This noise can be difficult or expensive to block in older homes, and nearly impossible to block in yards outside the homes.

Noise is unwanted sound and can be harmful at certain levels. The most obvious problems involve hearing loss from exposure to loud noise. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a limit of 70 dB (decibels) to avoid the risk of hearing loss with long-term exposure. But persistent noise pollution at lower levels can have less obvious health effects on our nervous systems, often causing a general decrease in a sense of well-being and interference with communication, relaxation, and recreation.

Levels as low as 30 dB can interfere with sleep, and can impair the ability to concentrate in classrooms. Research suggests that learning is affected starting at background sounds levels as low as 35 dB. Above about 50 dB, people express moderate annoyance in outdoor settings, such as when talking with a neighbor, playing with a child, or trying to enjoy a barbecue. At about 55 dB, people begin to express serious annoyance in outdoor living areas, and also moderate annoyance indoors or on school playgrounds.

The ambient levels of around 60-70 dB, regularly measured near Rockridge homes fronting the freeway, are significantly higher than any of these thresholds.

Until the late 1960s — after SR 24 (State Route 24, the freeway through Rockridge) was planned and mostly constructed— there was little awareness that people should be protected from the adverse effects of environmental sound. This changed in 1969 with passage of the National Environmental Policy act (NEPA); creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970; passage of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970; passage of the Noise Control Act (NCA) of 1972; and publication of the WHO Guidelines for Community Noise released in 1980 (and most recently updated in 2000). These regulatory acts began to inform traffic noise regulations adopted by the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA), and now must generally be considered by agencies eligible for federal transportation funding, such as the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Alameda County Transit Commission (ACTC).

Given what we know about the present noise levels from SR 24, the freeway could not have been built in its current configuration, at least not without noise barriers or other mitigating measures.

Today, sections of SR 24 may be eligible for noise barriers if the sound level at nearby households reaches, or is predicted to reach, 65 dB or higher without a barrier, and a feasible sound wall is predicted to lower the noise level by at least 5 dB at a sufficient number of residences to make its construction cost effective.

The information above is more fully presented in the collection of soundwall articles on the RCPC Web site at www.rockridge.org.

Tired of Managing Your Rental Property?



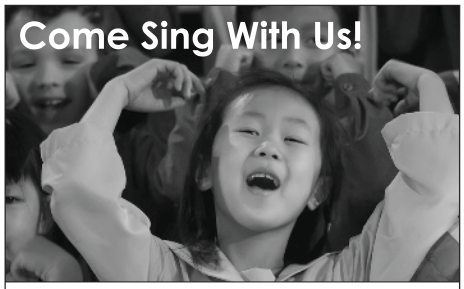
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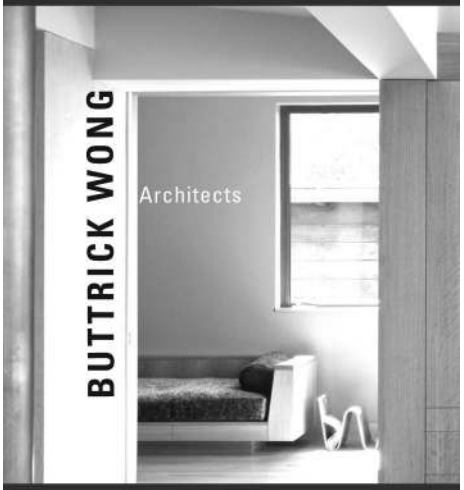
Sales volume has increased in Rockridge over 2010!

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05/24/11	3	2.5	6403 Benvenue	56	$995,000	$995,000	$975,000
05/25/11	3	3	5925 Manchester	12	$1,375,000	$1,375,000	$1,375,000
06/01/11	5	4+++	5630 Margarido	85	$1,950,000	$1,650,000	$1,500,000
06/10/11	2	2	5290 Broadway	26	$399,000	$399,000	$390,000
06/10/11	3	1	6460 Hillegass	17	$729,000	$729,000	$820,000
06/10/11	4	2	5760Oakgrove	16	$825,000	$825,000	$840,000
06/10/11	2	1	5339 James	29	$719,000	$719,000	$710,000
06/16/11	2	1	400 Avon #4	143	$369,000	$369,000	$359,000
06/16/11	2	1	400 Avon #1	134	$369,000	$369,000	$360,000
06/16/11	2	1	474 Hardy	23	$699,000	$699,000	$705,000
06/16/11	3	2	5957 Keith	13	$799,000	$799,000	$815,000

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Innovative Dover Street Park Worth a Visit

by Susan Parker, Dover Street Neighbors

Are you a Rockridge parent looking for a green space to take your kids besides Big Frog, Little Frog, and Colby parks? Or are you an urban green thumber interested in viewing an innovative, communal garden?

If so, look no further than nearby Dover Street Park, located between 57th and 59th streets on Dover Street, just behind Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute and the North Oakland Senior Center.

The size of a large city block, this playground, created in 2004, has a small, paved oval track ideal for teaching little ones how to use a scooter, skateboard or bicycle, and for older kids and adults to perfect their one (yes, there are unicycles here!) two, three, and four-wheel skills. A well-tended grass field is great for soccer, a game of catch or tag, or just lounging around. Outside the circular walkway is an enormously popular play structure with slides, monkey bars, rings, a tire swing, and soft landing pad. There are picnic tables, benches, water fountains and a new, brightly colored mural on the back fence depicting Mayor Quan and other Oakland notables. The Dover Street Neighborhood Group, composed of volunteers from the surrounding blocks, host many seasonal events within the park, including a celebration of Cesar Chavez Day, Summer Movie Nights, and National Night Out. Less structured, but still fun, is the annual Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by candy-loving nearby residents.

But perhaps the most interesting aspect of this park is the Healthy Hearts Youth Garden, a communal patch of green created by the combined efforts of the Dover Street Neighborhood Group, Phat Beets Produce, a local non-profit whose mission is to provide equal, affordable access to healthy food for North and West Oakland families, and the Healthy Hearts Obesity Prevention Clinic, which serves Alameda County children at risk for obesity. Together, these three organizations have turned a weed-choked, neglected corner into quite possibly the only public garden of its kind in the nation. Starting two years ago with the consent of Oakland's Office of Parks and Recreation and the Public Works

Dover Street Park, page 13

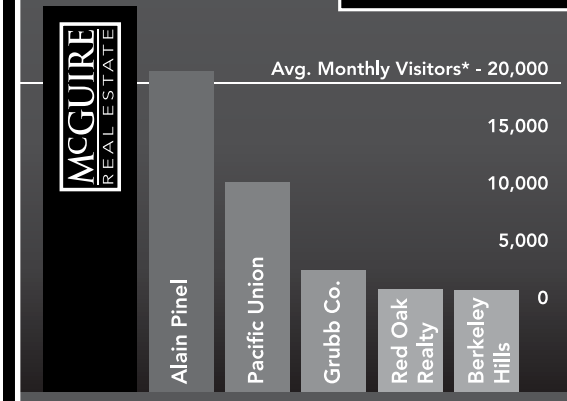


"The area now hosts raised boxes and neat rows bursting with vegetables and herbs that are shared with neighbors, visitors and participants in the Healthy Hearts Obesity Clinic." In the center of the park is a large oval grassy area and a play structure.

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Dover Street Park

from page 12

Agency, and with encouragement from Councilwoman Jane Brunner's office (and subsequent generous contribution of permit fees), the scrappy volunteers created a beautiful 4,000-square foot garden along the park's perimeter. An area once filled with Bermuda grass and trash, the area now hosts raised boxes and neat rows bursting with vegetables and herbs that are shared with neighbors and visitors. More than 20 fruit trees have been planted along the park's fence line, and in between are roses and other flowering bushes.

Interested individuals and families are encouraged to drop by and help out every Wednesday afternoon from 3 to 6 p.m. and the first Sunday of every month, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

More information about Dover Street Park can be found on Facebook (Dover Street Neighborhood Group), YouTube (Dover Street Garden Oakland), and at the following web and blog sites: http://doverparkconnection.blogspot.com/ and www.phatbeetsproduce.org

Join the Rockridge News Team

Needed: Two Block Captains, One District Captain

by Susan Montauk

Lower Rockridge is experiencing a sudden Rockridge News volunteer drain. District Captain Dawn Borchordt, who has been delivering bundles in the area below Clifton for several years, is moving with her family to Chicago and Block Captain Rachel Rusting, of Miles Avenue, is already in Bangalore, India, where she will be working for the next two years. Her husband suggested they could fly back monthly to deliver the Rockridge News but we didn't take him up on it. Margaret Pinter, also of Miles Avenue, has been Block Captain for the 5100 block of Miles for many years. She is taking a break to spend more time with her family. Many thanks to these stalwart volunteers.

If you live in the areas described below and would like to fill the shoes of these volunteers – about 20 minutes, once a month — please contact Susan at smontauk@gmail.com or 547-3855.

Block captains deliver door-to-door and district captains deliver bundles to the block captains. Here are the routes:

Block Captains	
16B	Both sides of 5100 Miles from Cavour to 51st Street.
16D	Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment at 5248.
District Captain	
Areas 16 & 17	Seven bundle drops along Cavour, Miles, Avon, Shafter & Lawton

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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. **July: joint Town Hall mtg with RCPC, Thurs, 7/21, 7:30 – 9pm at Rockridge Library (see p.1).** Future mtgs: 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. At this printing, library hrs.are uncertain. Confirm mtgs at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

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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:

NOTE: The annual OPL **Summer Reading Program** runs at all locations through Saturday, August 13th. 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. **Kids ages 11-16 still needed to volunteer for Summer Reading Program. Contact Erica at 597-5017 or just drop by.**

Summer Reading Program Special performances:

- **Timothy James Magic Show:** 7/19, 7pm.
- **The Bubble Lady:** 7/26, 7pm.

Stories and Crafts (for all ages) at 7pm:

- Africa and the Middle East, 7/12.
- North and So. America, 8/2.
- Europe & Antarctica, 8/9.

Paper Craft Series (ages 3 – 10): Drop in to make pinwheels, origami, booklets, planes and more. Every Thursday, 3:30pm, from 7/7 to 8/11.

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 (12 and up) see Susy to sign up to read to and with children, ages 1 to 7. Saturdays, 2 – 4 pm, through Aug., 31.

- **Temporary Henna Tattoos:** Lasts 8 to 10 days. **Must have signed permission slip (pick up at library).** 7/ 30 from 3 to 4:30pm.
- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Ages 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month **(August mtg 3rd Tues, 8/16)**, 5 to 6:30pm.
- **Teen Advisory Board** (ages 14-18): 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. Through 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.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice and referrals. No July session**. Next mtgs 8/2 and 9/13, 5 to 7pm (advance sign-up starts 4:45pm). **Note:** lawyer leaves before 7pm, if no more people are present.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

- July: **Irving Wiltshire:** photography.
- Aug: **Jamie Treacy:** paintings on paper.
- Sept: **Marsha Bolian:** mixed media figurative paintings.

Lobby Display Case:

- July: **Rockridge Teen Advisory Board display**.
- Aug: Library display in honor of Ramadan.
- Sept: TBA.

LIBRARY HOURS

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

Closed: Sundays and Mondays. Also 7/5. **Note: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates after mid-July.**

Diesel Book/Readings and Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Sun., 7/10, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Atsuro Riley** and **Alexandra Teague**.
- Mon., 7/11, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month):** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Sun., 7/17, 3pm. **Apogee Press** reading to celebrate the publication of new books by **Valerie Coulton, Tsering Wangmo Dhompa** and **Edward Smallfield**.
- Sun., 8/7, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Xochiquetzal Candelaria** and **Robin Ekiss**.
- Thurs, 8/11/, 7pm. Publication Party for local author **Stacy Carlson**: *Among the Wonderful*.
- Sun., 9/11, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Maxine Hong Kingston** and **James Ragan**.

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

Rockridge Summer Jazz & Wine Stroll

Friday, July 15 from 5 to 8pm. Live street music, merchant "specials", wine and food tastings. Stroll College Ave. from Alcatraz to B'way. More info: chris@rockridgedistrict.com. **See article p.10**.

Woodminster Summer Musicals 2011

45th season of musical theater under the stars in beautiful Joaquin Miller Park. Rockridge resident **Kelsey Ventner** plays the lead in "Oliver!" July 8-17. Other shows: "My Fair Lady" August 5-14, and "Finian's Rainbow" September 2-11. "Kids Come Free" program provides about 3,000 free tickets each season to children and teens 16 or younger.

More info: www.woodminster.com or harriet@woodminster.com.

Temescal Street Cinema

Free outdoor films by Bay Area artists and filmmakers Through July 14. 49th & Telegraph (side of the Bank of the West Building). Details at http://temescalstreet-cinema.com/2011-program/.

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.

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.

Enjoy Our Local Events.

See You In September.

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