THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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The Rockridge Kitchen Tour is October 2: Tickets are on Sale Now

by: Natalie Mehta, Rockridge Kitchen Tour chair

The 2011 Rockridge Kitchen Tour, set for Sunday, October 2, is nearly here. This year marks the 9th biennial of this popular fundraising event, first held in 1995, which again offers guests a rare look inside nine beautifully remodeled residential kitchens in our historic Rockridge neighborhood.

Architects, designers, and contractors will be available in many of the kitchens, along with tour docents, to answer questions and elaborate on those special details that make these projects unique and successful. Come see how the professionals weave together the latest appliances and technology with classic design features, and learn what value-conscious

Kitchen Tour Tickets, page 3



Be a Tour Docent: Have Fun and Visit Kitchens. See page 3

15 AGENDA
September RCPC Town Hall Meeting

■ *PANEL Presentation:*

☞ **Maximizing Value in Your Kitchen Remodel**

Join your friends and neighbors at RCPC's Town Hall meeting presenting a real estate broker, a home remodeler and a homeowner who recently completed a kitchen remodel and whose home is on the RCPC Kitchen Tour. Hear their ideas about remodeling solutions in a time of economic challenges.

☞ **Article & details, top of page 3.**

Thursday, September 15 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College at Manila

City's Consideration of Safeway College Avenue Shopping Center Continues to Roll Forward

by the RCPC Land Use Committee

Despite summer vacations, Oakland's approval process for the Safeway College Avenue Shopping Center Project has continued to move forward. The draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the project was released the Friday before the July 4 weekend, and the comment period closed August 16, 46 days later. Despite the pleas of RCPC and many others (including the city of Berkeley, whose city council is in recess until September), Oakland planning staff and the Planning Commission refused to extend the comment period.

The commission did make one concession. The public hearing to accept oral comments on the DEIR, scheduled for July 20, drew such a huge crowd that the hearing had to be moved from the usual hearing room to City Council chambers. With well over a hundred people submitting speaker cards, it was clear the commission could not hear everyone's comments that night. The commission opted to hear some speakers, but also to continue the hearing to its August 3 meeting.

The August meeting was also packed. By the time the commission plowed through all the speaker cards submitted at both

College Safeway DEIR, page 3

How Are Kitchen Tour Proceeds Used?



When the original entry gate to Claremont Middle School was discovered in storage a few years ago, a past RCPC boardmember suggested utilizing it in a display in front of the school. As the project progressed, fund-raising began, and RCPC pledged 10 percent of the 2009 RCPC Kitchen Tour proceeds, $1,753, to help with costs.

See story, page 3, for more Kitchen Tour details.

Rockridge Out and About
Sunday October 9

College Avenue will be closed between Manila and Alcatraz avenues from noon to 6 p.m., and transform into a street festival. Highlights include Market Hall's "Picnic in the Street" with food and wine tasting; a Main Stage with dance bands; demonstrations from top local chefs; Gourmet Street Food from local restaurant booths; Kids Court; Fashion Show; live music and more. Get more details at www.rockridgemarkethall.com and www.rockridgedistrict.com/out-about.html.

Chimes Name Gone After 101 Years

by Annette Floystrup, RCPC boardmember

The oldest name of a College Avenue shop disappeared into the history books on July 21 when Chimes Pharmacy was bought from independent pharmacist John Gelinas and taken over by Safeway, Inc. of Pleasanton. Chimes Pharmacy opened in 1909 and was the last surviving business with the Chimes name in the Rockridge-College Avenue area.

John Gelinas is only the third owner in the store's history, and still has the first tattered and yellowed prescription book from 1909. He grew up in Rockridge in the 1950s and '60s and began working at the store in 1967 at age 15 as a delivery boy for pharmacist Cy Cardiff. John worked there through high school and college, received his doctorate in Clinical Pharmacy in 1976, and became the owner in 1986. He is staying on as the pharmacy manager.



Pharmacist John Gelinas /D. Kinkead

Rockridge – Chimes – Rockridge: What's in a Name?

Many of us who lived here in the '60s recall the surprise we felt when BART named its newly built station on College Avenue "Rockridge." We thought we lived in the Chimes district, and that the name came from hearing the Campanile at UC Berkeley chime the hours, a pleasure the entire neighborhood enjoyed until the opening of the Grove-Shafter freeway and the resulting traffic noise pollution. Actually, the two names have gone back and forth over time, and had little to do with UC's Sather Tower carillon bells.

The area above College Avenue got the name Rockridge from a land development begun in 1910 and named Rockridge Place for a nearby large rock outcropping, now almost obliterated.

It is believed that the Chimes name was popularized by the opening of a very fancy movie theater in 1917, which stood about where Market Hall is today. It featured an open projecting bay 40 feet above the street housing a full set of chimes. The Chimes Theater was an immediate hit, and soon many other businesses adopted the name. By the 1920s, College Avenue was known as the Chimes district.

Rockridge DVD Project Enters the Home Stretch

Close to completion, project seeks donors to fill the collection

by Jon Gabel, co-chair, Rockridge DVD Project



Fundraising for the Rockridge DVD Project has achieved $9,370 of its $13,000 goal. Thanks to everyone who has made a donation!

Two-thirds of the DVDs, rescued last year from the former Videot's video rental store in Berkeley's Elmwood district, have been delivered to the Oakland Public Library (OPL) for cataloging. These DVDs are scheduled to be on the shelves of the Rockridge Branch Library by October 31. Thanks again to the OPL for funding the cataloging and security cases for the donated DVDs.

That leaves just under $4,000 to be raised by October 31 to complete the DVD Project. Donations can be made online via PayPal at www.RockridgeDvdProject.org. No donation is too small – we have received amounts ranging from $1 to $1,000.

Please help double the DVD collection at the Rockridge Branch Library with a great selection of titles, which can be reviewed by a search on our website.

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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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- Want to volunteer to be a ***Rockridge News*** block captain?
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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
☛ **October 8, 2011**
☛ **October deadline is September 22, 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.)***

Sept 15 Town Hall Panel: Maximizing Kitchen Renovation Value

by Natalie Mehta, chair, RCPC Kitchen Tour

Given the economic and financial woes of the past few years, the Kitchen Tour planning committee had concerns about the supply of recently renovated kitchens necessary to support the biennial tour. However, after speaking with homeowners, contractors, and architects, it became apparent that Rockridge neighborhood renovations have continued, though at a slower pace and with more focus on maximizing the "value" of a project.

But how is value defined in this context? Is it a tangible number teased out of home sales data? Is there an algorithm involving a Wolf range, inset cabinetry, and marble countertops? Or, is it an intangible value that, while real, is more difficult to quantify?

While value is defined individually, understanding a variety of perspectives may provide guidelines for project decision making. Please join us Thursday, September 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library for a panel discussion sharing these different perspectives on maximizing value in a kitchen renovation project. Hear from a number of local professionals and a home owner about the issues they face and trade-offs they make when maximizing value in renovation projects.

■ **Ron Kriss** is a broker with more than 30 years of real estate experience. Since he opened Lawton Associates in 1989, he has redeveloped more than 150 properties in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and has accumulated a wealth of experience through the process. Hear his perspective about what features maximize resale value.

■ **Eli Israel** is the owner of Integrity Remodeling, a local design/build firm. Originally from the East Coast, Eli has a degree in Landscape Architecture, a background in construction, and a passion for building. He has completed many renovation projects for clients in Rockridge, and recently completed the design/build of the fabulous home featured on our tour posters and postcards. Hear his perspective on what design decisions and material selections maximize renovation dollars.

■ **Albert and Sharon Flor** recently completed a kitchen remodel for their growing family. The Flors worked closely with a talented designer and builder who helped them develop creative options for building their dream kitchen, while also sticking to a budget and keeping resale value in mind. Clearly they managed to strike a beautiful balance, as the Flor's kitchen project is featured on the 9th Biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour Sunday, October 2.

Remember that our value-priced advance tickets for the Rockridge Kitchen Tour (reflecting a $5 discount) can be purchased through September 30 at www.rockridge.org or at Rockridge Home, 5418 College Avenue, 420-1928.

Kitchen Tour Tickets

from page 1

options are available in today's market. Whether your taste is modern or traditional, contemporary or transitional, the event promises to provide information and inspiration, particularly on the theme of maximizing value from renovations.

The 2011 Rockridge Kitchen Tour takes place Sunday, October 2, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Here's how you can get your tickets now!

§ Online: Advance Tickets ($35) may be purchased through September 30 online at www.rockridge.org

§ On the Avenue: Advance Tickets ($35) are also available at Rockridge Home, 5418 College Avenue, open daily 11 a.m to 8 p.m. Tickets are available here through September 30, and may be purchased via cash or check.

§ On site: For those who wait, $40 Day of Tour Tickets will be sold at the registration desk in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, beginning at 11 a.m., Sunday, October 2.

Docents Needed!

We are still in need of volunteer docents who will guide our guests through the nine stunning Rockridge kitchens. Docents, who are assigned a short shift at one particular home, will receive a pre-tour the weekend before the event, as well as a complimentary ticket to visit the rest of the homes before or after their shift. If you would like to be a docent, call Nancy Sale at 655-4625.

College Safeway DEIR Hearing

from page 1

meetings, some audience members had given up and gone home.

The majority of the speakers were there to criticize the DEIR and point out errors and omissions in its analysis. Many complained the report underestimated traffic impacts and failed to address effects on surrounding neighborhood streets. Speakers also found fault with the DEIR's analyses of air quality, land use, and visual impacts.

To be fair, Safeway had done an extensive job mobilizing its supporters, so there were speakers who extolled Safeway's expansion plans and urged the project's approval, despite Chair Vien Truong's initial plea that speakers restrict themselves to comments on the DEIR, not on the merits of the project. At the second hearing, Commissioner Michael Colbruno interrupted the stream of speakers to complain that almost all the topics raised by speakers had been addressed in the DEIR. He said he wished speakers would restrict themselves to pointing out additional topics not already discussed in the DEIR. This prompted a rejoinder from RCPC Chair Stuart Flashman, who noted that the question was not whether the DEIR had a subject heading, or even some commentary on a topic, but whether there was substantial evidence in the DEIR to support its conclusions. He noted that many of the critical comments were about the DEIR's lack of factual evidence and the shortcomings in

DEIR Hearing, page 6



RCPC boardmember Ronnie Spitzer presents her views of the Safeway EIR at the second hearing.

/D. Kinkead

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 at the editor's discretion. Views expressed in any letter are the writer's own, and may not necessarily be shared by the editor, or by RCPC.

Irony and Ageism in Rockridge

Editor:

In response to "Name Withheld" [Letters, The Rockridge News, June 4, 2011], we would like to comment on the irony (not to mention the ageism) in asking for fewer "cranky stories by old people complaining about change." It is precisely these "old" people, and long-time residents, who have worked so hard to make Rockridge the attractive place that it is today: a Rockridge that does not contain a Jack-in-the-Box, Cigarettes for Less, a huge Dreyer's complex and other inappropriate ventures that brought residents together over the years. Perhaps "Name Withheld" doesn't remember the Rockridge Library when it was housed in a trailer on College Avenue and how the cranky residents (old and young) came together to build the new one we have today? A little historical memory would perhaps help "Name Withheld" to put things in perspective.

— Christine O'Connor

— Margaret Wahlberg

BART Station is Not a Garden

Editor and [BART Board President] Bob Franklin:

I am writing concerning the design for Rockridge Plaza by the BART station (Rockridge News, July 2, 2011). My husband and I live on Shafter, use BART several times a week and frequent Market Hall on a daily basis. I am not in favor of a huge ROCKRIDGE sign that blocks the view of the trees and greenery. Incidentally, the serpentine bench would not be a good place for anyone to sit. However, it would make a great place to sleep if you are homeless. Also, as a woman, I would not sit where I could not see behind me. The plans indicate a high-backed bench that prevents anyone from seeing the boulders and anything behind them except the trees.

The BART station is a transportation hub, not a garden or park. I think the large sign is especially in poor taste and a total waste of money. I have degrees in fine arts, museum studies and garden design so I feel qualified to comment on the very impractical and un-aesthetic design for the Plaza. Spend money for more bike parking, get rid of the ivy and put in drip irrigation, and plant appropriate California native grasses!

— Julie Franklin

Safeway DEIR No Help to City in Required Findings

Editor:

Following is a portion of the letter and a presentation I made at the Planning Commission public hearing August 3 regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Safeway project:

The project includes a new Safeway of 51,150 sq. ft. which requires four major Conditional Use Permit (CUP) applications. To approve these permits, the Planning Commission must make mandatory findings for each that includes a finding that the proposed project will be compatible with, and not adversely affect the livability of the surrounding neighborhoods because of its size, bulk, harmony in scale, and traffic on the neighborhood's streets. The DEIR's lack of traffic impact analysis on 63rd Street, and on Hillegass, and Colby and their intersections with Claremont and Alcatraz will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the Planning Commission to make reasoned and thoughtful findings as required.

The CUP criteria also include mandatory findings that the proposed project complies with the General Plan (Maintain & Enhance), and Zoning (C-31) in all significant respects. Again, the DEIR does not assess the project's non-compliance with these policies and ordinances of the city's. It provides no assistance to the city in making these mandatory CUP findings. Moreover, the DEIR provides no assessment of the approval of this project in terms of the PRECEDENT its approval would have on the future development of College Avenue.

Approval of this project, which is 10 times the allowable area under current zoning, is equivalent to approving a 350-foot-high (35 story) office building somewhere in the CN-1 zone that controls development along College Avenue. The previous C-31 zoning had a project floor-area limit of 7,000 sq. ft. The City replaced it with the CN-1 zone with a limit of 5,000 sq. ft. This zone revision by the city was a carefully considered replacement for the C-31 zone. ***The city's intention is clear: any considered project should have less area than 7,000 square feet***. The DEIR does not assess the impact of the PRECEDENT this massive

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RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: September 28.
Subject to change. Check Rockridge.org for meeting updates.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ **Rockridge Shopping Center Reconstruction Project**
(Broadway and Pleasant Valley)

According to the latest word from Daren Ranelletti, the Oakland planner assigned to the case, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for this project, which would rebuild the entire shopping center in three phases, adding about 120,000 sq. ft. of developed space, is due for release in late September or October. RCPC, along with other North Oakland community organizations, has developed a series of alternative proposal for development of the site. The proposals, along with a critique of Safeway's plans, are available at RCPC's website, www.rockridge.org.

■ **College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center**
(College and Claremont Avenues)
See article, page 1.

■ **Rockridge Kids,** 5511 College Ave.

As some of you may have noticed, Rockridge Kids has put up blinds on their corner storefront and is advertising classes. At first glance, this would appear contrary to the requirements of C-31 [now CN-1] zoning, which requires a use permit for most non-retail uses on the ground floor of College Avenue frontage. After talking with owner Nishan Shepard, it appears Rockridge Kids won't be in violation. Shepard says Rockridge Kids has always conducted classes as an ancillary activity to their retail business. They make no money from the classes, hoping that attendees will follow up with retail purchases (e.g., of nursery furniture, toys, etc.). Once the remodeling is complete, the shades will disappear and the display windows and interior space will be used for retail sales. The room will also be able to house the store's classes. RCPC will check with the Planning Department, but it appears that, as a non-commercial ancillary activity, the classes wouldn't need a use permit.

■ **Zoning Update –** Phase II; Citywide

Now that the citywide general zoning update has been completed, the city will proceed with phase II. This involves updating some of the city's more detailed and specific zoning provisions – notably the city's parking regulations (see notice, page 9, about city parking workshops) and sign ordinance — and developing area-specific overlays to the general zoning. RCPC has not heard a specific timetable for this second phase, nor whether the planning department will convene one or more technical advisory groups to assist in the process. To serve on an advisory group, either parking or signage, e-mail chair@rockridge.org, or leave a message on the RCPC voice mail number: 510/869-4200.

Letters

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exception will have on the future development in the area if the CUPs are approved. Again, the DEIR provides no assistance in the mandatory findings.

The DEIR public review period ended August 16. The Final EIR will include the city's and Safeway's response to the comments and criticisms of the DEIR made by the public and public entities such as AC Transit and the city of Berkeley. The Final EIR should be available for public review in the next two or three months. Then, at a public hearing, the public will have an opportunity to comment on the Final EIR, the city's CUP findings, and the city's approval or denial of the project's CUP permit applications.

— Richard W. Smith, Ph.D, Architect

Safeway expansion: Increased Congestion Will Drive out Small Businesses

Editor:

Because College Avenue between Claremont and 63rd is already a very congested area, I am opposed to the Safeway expansion project. Traffic backs up all the time, making it difficult to drive through that area. Due to the congestion, I believe the small businesses in that area are suffering as many people avoid this area to shop in areas that are more accessible. Granting Safeway approval to expand will only increase that congestion and drive small businesses away from the College Avenue Area.

There is a large Safeway in the Rockridge Shopping Center, where street congestion and parking are less of an issue. I don't think we need another large Safeway store in the Rockridge area; this area is more conducive to smaller businesses. I would support Safeway remodeling and updating their store as they did on Grand Avenue in Oakland.

In short, I believe the Rockridge Business District should take a stand and oppose the Safeway expansion project.

— Dori Dubin

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Restored Tech High Steinway to Debut in Free Concert; Public Invited

by Camille Reed, Oakland Technical High School Class of 1961

Restoration of the 1917 Steinway grand piano, owned by Oakland Technical High School, is complete and the like-new instrument will be presented in a small concert performed by students of Tech's Performing Arts Division at 11 a.m. Saturday, September 17, in the school's auditorium.

The Oakland Technical High School Class of 1961 spearheaded the successful funding drive that raised over $25,000 for the project's costs. Scores of alumni from this class and other classes, friends of alumni and school supporters from the wider community made this restoration possible. Members of the Class of 1961 were touched by the support and, in many cases, the beautiful letters that accompanied the contributions. It was heartwarming to see how many people cared about our public high school, its music program and the importance of restoring this exceptional instrument for students and teachers. Many of these letters will be displayed in the lobby at the performance.

Everyone is cordially invited to this free event, scheduled to last for about an hour. An added benefit is the opportunity to see the wonderful auditorium restoration work, well along, a project of Tech's PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association).

The auditorium is directly behind the school at the 44th Street end of the school. Proceed from Broadway down 42nd Street. Enter the gate between the back of the high school and the front of the auditorium.

We look forward to seeing you!

Tech PTSA Seeks Auditorium Improvements

The performing arts are alive and thriving at Oakland Tech, and the community looks forward to hearing Oakland Tech students playing the school's renovated 1917 Steinway grand piano in concert September 17. (See article above.)

Many thanks to the Class of 1961 for restoring the piano to its original glory. Excellent programs are part of Oakland Tech's reputation. The school is also known for its roll-up-the-sleeves approach to school projects.

Now, Oakland Tech is focused on restoring the school's 50-year old auditorium to give students a 21st century auditorium that will benefit the community for decades.

Oakland Tech has raised $653,325 toward Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the auditorium project. We now need to raise $65,000 to complete Phase 2, which includes improved sound, acoustics and lighting, and we are turning to the community for support. Your tax-deductible contribution today will help us meet a $100,000 challenge grant.

You may contribute online at www.oaklandtech.com, or send a check payable to "Oakland Tech PTSA" to Oakland Tech PTSA, c/o 3708 Lake Shore Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610, with "Auditorium" in the subject line.

Thank you for your continuing support of Oakland Technical High School.

DEIR Hearing

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its analyses. These, he said, were legitimate concerns that should be taken seriously.

In his remarks on behalf of RCPC, Flashman (who noted that he practices land use and environmental law) laid into the DEIR as a "shoddy" piece of work with multiple deficiencies. He, along with many other speakers, urged the commission to withdraw the document for extensive revision. That plea went unheeded.

Nevertheless, at the hearing's close, several commissioners expressed concerns about the DEIR. Newly-appointed commissioners Chris Pattillo and Jonelyn Whales promised to submit written comment letters.

By the end of the comment period, more than 75 letters had been submitted, including a five-page letter from RCPC with attached documentation and separate comment letters from professionals retained through community contributions and a matching grant from the Rose Foundation for Community and the Environment, addressing the DEIR's analysis of toxics, air and water quality, and traffic and parking impacts. The RCPC comment letter is posted on the RCPC website at http://rockridge.org. Letters from the city of Berkeley and neighbor's letters on traffic, toxics and additional hot topics are posted on Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue (FANS) site at www.fansco.org.

The next step is for city staff and the EIR consultants (hired by Safeway) to review and respond to all comments. The Planning Commission then decides whether to certify the EIR as complete and final or to require its revision and recirculation for additional public review and comment.

Once the EIR has been certified, the project itself will be considered by the commission. If there is an appeal, the decisions on both the EIR and the project could go to the City Council. All this will likely take at least another three to six months.

LUCY ARMENTROUT



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What is Going on at Claremont Middle School?

by Shona Armstrong, Claremont Middle School PTSA member

Construction

With all the construction going on just off College Avenue, our local middle school has attracted extra attention this summer. Just what is actually going on?

As a part of the settlement to alleviate construction effects, exhaust fumes and an expected increase in traffic noise on Highway 24 resulting from construction of the new fourth bore in the Caldecott Tunnel, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), the Fourth Bore Coalition (FBC), and other groups ensured that Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School, both abutting the highway, would receive funds from CalTrans Urban Forestry and the Air Resources Board to pay for mitigating projects at the schools. Improvements now underway at Claremont include the following:

■ First and most visibly, after years of effort by a number of community members, an intricate, historic, wrought iron gate has been installed at College Avenue and Birch Court, across from Trader Joe's. RCPC also donated ten percent of the proceeds from its 2009 RCPC Kitchen Tour – a total of $1,753 – to help meet gate project costs. This project will resurrect the actual gate depicted on the "This school has been here since 1913" mural near the school entry. The gate was discovered languishing in storage. With its re-installation, the school regains a touch of historic stylishness lost when the school was partially rebuilt in the late 1970s.

■ A less glamorous but equally important project is to revamp the school's HVAC (heating and cooling) system. New and more effective HVAC units are being installed in the sixth and eighth grade wings of the school. As part of that work, sections of the school roof are being replaced.

■ Improvements to water drainage and water conservation efficiency are being installed: A 10,000 gallon holding tank will be buried underground to collect naturally filtered runoff water from a new bioswale and possibly also from the interior courtyard area, where permeable pavers will replace existing concrete.

■ Beautiful redwood trees will be planted along the side of the school yard parallel to Miles Avenue and on the east side of the campus near the fire station. The trees will help screen the school yard from traffic noise on Highway 24 and will enhance the "green" feel of the yard.

■ Construction plans originally anticipated adding a teacher parking area to the yard, but, because the city arranged for Claremont's teachers to receive Area C parking permits, this is no longer necessary.

■ Claremont has been blessed with a wonderful, inspiring, and effective garden teacher, Ms. Joy Moore. Although the tremendous garden she and the students nurtured and loved over the last few years was deconstructed during the construction project, the garden space will be reconstructed in a modified form. There is an effort underway to ensure an additional garden education and staging area will be reserved in the upper yard to help students understand how food comes from farm to table. Once school starts at the end of this month, Ms. Moore will help to lead her students (in cooperation with art students, parents, and community volunteers) in creating a new garden oasis.

In other news, the spring semester at Claremont last year wrapped up successfully. Some of the highlights of the spring semester included the following:

Major Field Trips

The Claremont tradition of educational field trips was sustained in style by energetic and dedicated teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Over 40 sixth graders enjoyed a three-day outdoor education adventure at Point Bonita where they studied plants, animals, geology and history. Thirty-six seventh graders spent five days camping at Yosemite. Most of the students had never seen this amazing natural wonder. Then, in a grand finale, a group of twenty-one eighth graders participated in a three-day trip to Washington D.C. with their history teachers.

Math and Science

■ **The Claremont MathCounts Club continued to challenge students and exceed expectations**. The team, in its second year of existence, reflects both the diversity and academic excellence of Claremont Middle School. The club tied for 5th place in the MathCounts Regional Competition, mixing it up with over one hundred Alameda County public and private middle school teams. One Claremont student went on to compete at the state level. In a series of four Oakland-wide all-star Mathlete competitions, the Claremont MathCounts club consistently placed first among public middle schools (and second overall, behind just one private school). The math club, coached by parent Rick Prime, inspires students to have positive feelings about their future and potential.



Shrouded in its construction-in-progress wrapping, the gate to the original Claremont Middle School entry is beginning a new life as a stunning local landmark. /D. Kinkead

■ **NASA's Traveling Space Museum chose Claremont to host a fun and informative "in-house field trip" day in March**. Claremont was one of only a handful of schools in the Bay Area selected to host NASA scientists, who brought with them 15 exhibits, including a space toilet, a flight simulator, a lunar rover, and other space attractions. NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, an event co-sponsor, selected Claremont as a reward to the students for their dramatic improvements in math and science over the past two years. The school's science scores on state standardized tests have shot up 37 percent. Math scores are up 21 percent. For more information, see: http://articles.sfgate.com/2011-03-23/bay-area/29176753_1_claremont-students-space-toilet-science-scores.



Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

FOOD AS ART

What's a home chef to do? At the Culinary Academy, we were constantly admonished by our chef instructors that presentation was as important as preparation. Recently, it appears that presentation has trumped the actual dish being served; the serving plate has become a canvas for a chef's artistic presentation.

Some high-end chefs use tiny tweezers and small paintbrushes to arrange a single ingredient. Whereas a few years ago the architectural tower presentation was all the rage, today it's all about color and composition. Chefs and food stylists work hand-in-hand to create original food art. It is no longer enough for a home chef to prepare and serve an elegant meal. Each dish requires an eye-pleasing visual experience.

Food styling is something you develop over time. Professional chefs are trained in the art of the *garde manger*. The *garde manger* is the chef in charge of salads, hors d'oeurves, canapés, and, most important, garnishes. Modern *garde manger* and food styling is all about minimalism and composition.

The first place to begin is with the plate itself. A bone-white china plate with a simple rim design is the accepted canvas. The plate should be large enough to hold all elements of the food and have a fairly large outer rim for sauce designs.

As in all visual art, composition is everything. As you think about your dishes, keep in mind size, color, shape, and most important – eye appeal. Before the food is placed, lightly spread finely chopped herbs, nuts, or spices on the rim of the plate. For dessert plates you can sprinkle cocoa or powdered sugar. Combine hard and soft textures, smooth and rough types of food.

When arranging the food, don't leave too much space between the items; by the same token, do not overcrowd it.

You need not arrange all the items in the center. Place the main part of your dish at the front of the plate. If you have different sizes of food items, place the tallest at the back and follow it in a descending way. While serving vegetables like asparagus, arrange the stalks in a criss- cross pattern on the plate, then add the meat on the top.

For garnishing, use a plastic squeeze bottle such as those used for ketchup or mustard. Garnishing is all about contrasting colors. Paint or drizzle or stripe across the plate using the squeeze bottle. Use chocolate for desserts and barbecue sauce for meats.

Color, texture, shapes, and arrangements work together for the art of plate presentation. However, make sure that the food tastes good. Modern presentation is a union between taste and aesthetics. Feast your eyes and your palate for that wonderful dinner experience.

Here's a great crowd-pleaser dessert.

Grilled Fruit Kebabs (8 kebabs)

1 ripe cantaloupe, rind removed, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 ripe honeydew melon, rind removed, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 ripe pineapple, rind removed, cut into 1-inch cubes
8 strawberries, leave whole
2 tablespoons brown sugar
4 tablespoons lime juice
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

If using wooden skewers, soak for 30 minutes.
Combine sugar, lime juice, and cinnamon; stir to combine until sugar dissolves.
Heat grill and clean grate thoroughly.
Thread fruits onto skewers, alternating colors for attractive appearance.
Brush fruit with sugar glaze. Grill, rotating the skewers frequently, to develop an even light brown surface.
Plate immediately with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on the side.

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

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New FROG Park Restroom Dedicated; Officially Open



/D. Kinkead

With construction of the FROG Park restroom completed late in July, FROG Chair Theresa Nelson presided over a dedication ceremony attended by other FROG members and Zac Wald (right foreground, back to camera), chief of staff to District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner.

FROG is grateful to the community volunteers who worked for seven years to get this bathroom built: Mike McDonald, Ronnie Spitzer, Jimmy Pedersen, Jennifer Cooper, Theresa Nelson, Barney Smits and Carol Behr.

We also deeply appreciate the assistance of Councilmember Jane Brunner and staff members Zac Wald, Justin Horner, Kate Whitlow and Nila Kim, as well as Public Works staff Jim Ryugo, Denise Louie and Lily Soo Hoo. The new restroom replaces the long-used Porta-Potty, pictured at right. – ***FROG Park Committee***



rockridge • temescal frog friends of the greenbelt

Fall Maintenance Day at FROG Park.



September 10 is our annual maintenance day at FROG Park and the park play areas will be closed all day.

We will be cleaning and sealing the structures' wood, replacing plants, sifting sand, clearing the creek and other general cleaning. The College Preparatory School freshman class and their advisors and teachers are helping again this year. Adults in the community are also welcome to help out. As usual, we will be using a sealer so children are not being asked to help with this work.

We will begin at 8 a.m. and finish at 4:30 p.m. Bring gloves, smoothing rakes, and pruners if you can.

Contact Howard Ferrier, volunteer coordinator, for details: hwferrier@sbcglobal.net, or leave a message at 510/220-4249. See you there!

Community Workshop on Off-Street Parking

Thursday, September 15, 6–8 p.m.
Oakland Main Library,
West Auditorium, 125 14th Street

The City of Oakland is updating its off-street parking regulations. This introductory workshop is the first step in the process of updating the City's off-street parking regulations.

Come and learn about off-street parking and provide feedback on what should be considered during the parking update process. The City will not be presenting any new regulations at this community workshop. Proposed new regulations will be presented at future public meetings.

What will be discussed?

- Overview of off-street parking update project
- Parking in Oakland
- Break out stations to discuss and get feedback on specific issues
- Open question and comment period at the end of the meeting

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Scenic Streets of Oakland

Landscaping Volunteers Now Aim for On-Ramp Improvements

by Peter Lund, Scenic Streets volunteer

The Highway 24 off-ramp at Claremont Avenue got a much-needed facelift last month as Scenic Streets, the local volunteer group dedicated to landscaping Claremont Avenue near Highway 24, completed its renovation of the perpetually blighted area.

Over 100 drought tolerant shrubs, a complex irrigation system and three truckloads of recycled wood chips were installed in just two weekends. However, project leaders are not taking a break. Plans for their next phase in October, the highway on-ramp just a block north at Hudson Street, have been submitted to CalTrans, who has final say on what can be accomplished.

"Improving the on-ramp will be a bit trickier," says Holly Dabral, the group's landscape designer. "It's three times larger and has some steep slopes, but we think we've developed a plan that will make the area look fantastic for years to come."

Funding for this next phase must be raised among local residents, since the city and state are strapped for cash. Over 200 supporters have donated so far to insure the work continues.

The group's web site, www.scenic-streets.org, requests donations starting at just $10, which pays for a small shrub.

Beyond renovating public lands, Scenic Streets is also negotiating with DaVita Corporation, who operates one of its 300 dialysis clinics in the former supermarket directly across Claremont from the renovated off-ramp. Neighbors complain that the facility's prominent chain-link fenced parking lot is an eyesore that could be minimized with modest landscaping upgrades. To date, the Denver-based company has not committed to matching the community's efforts to improve the area.



Neighborhood volunteers, landscapers and project organizers take a breather during a full day's mulching and planting formerly neglected open space next to the freeway off-ramp at Claremont Avenue and Clifton Street. Wendy Lea, CalTrans crew chief, left; Peter Lund, Scenic Streets; Chris Jackson, Rockridge Business District; Marvin Alvarez, landscaper; Holly Dabral, Scenic Streets landscape designer; Sergio Arita, landscaper. /D. Kinkead

More to Come...

Improving the off- and on-ramps helps to improve our neighborhood and to establish the area as a gateway to Rockridge, College Avenue shopping, and Temescal's shopping and neighborhoods.

Future plans include the coming on-ramp work, signage to define the gateway, and landscaping the area's center median.

Corporate neighbors, commercial districts and real estate professionals will be invited to contribute to the modest costs projected for the proposals.

— Chris Jackson, RDA

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PC World Magazine

*Based on evaluations of output from the HP Photosmart C5180 printer, inks from third-party challenger Cartridge World earned scores identical to those awarded to HP's own ink, including an overall rating of Good." PC World Magazine Article, 2008.

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Shopping? Shop Oakland, First



Joining a record number of Oakland neighborhood National Night Out parties — 560, according to the city's count — this group of neighbors on Oak Grove Avenue got an early start at 6 p.m. and carried on until well after dark, getting acquainted and chatting with new and long-time friends and neighbors. /D. Kinkead

Join the Rockridge News Team

Become a Block Captain for the Rockridge News

After summer break, the Rockridge News is back but a few blocks will not be getting their September issue; their block captains have moved or retired. Thanks to Margaret Pinter, Rachel Rusting and Gary Binger for their service as block captains. Now we need volunteers to replace them. It usually takes about 15 minutes to walk a route once a month — good exercise and a way to get to know your neighbors better. Let us know if you can pitch in.

Call Susan Montauk at 547-3855, or e-mail smontauk@gmail.com.

16B	Both sides of 5100 Miles from Cavour to 51st Street.
16D	Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment at 5248.
05K	Even numbers along Chabot from and including St. Albert's to all the shops to 5830 College, Claremont Nursery.

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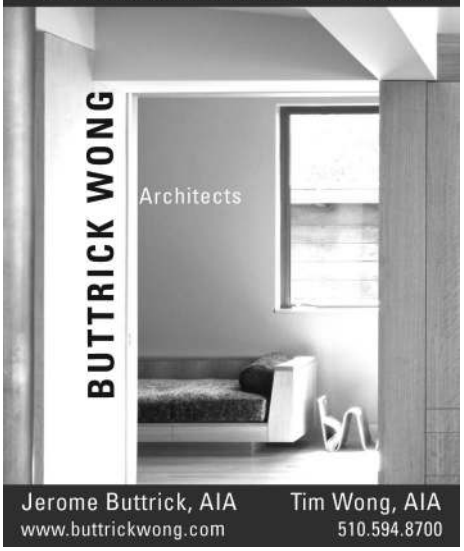
Rockridge Supply and Demand Holds Steady!

Closing Date	BR	BATH	Address	Original Price	List Price	DOM	Selling Price
8/02/11	3	2	6201 Brookside Avenue	$629,000	$629,000	12	$680,000
8/03/11	3	2	5506 Carlton Street	$1,020,000	$1,020,000	6	$675,000
8/09/11	2	1	429 Hudson Street	$689,000	$689,000	12	$675,000
8/16/11	4	2	5909 Ocean View Drive	$1,250,000	1,175,000	6	$1,155,000
8/16/11	2	2	5207 Desmond Street	$769,000	$769,000	7	$811,000
8/17/11	3	2	6236 Rockwell Street	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	8	$1,100,000

• Rockridge currently has just over a 2-month supply of inventory • Average list-to-sell to date August of this year was 99% vs. 102% last year • Average market time for August closings was 19 days in Rockridge – compared to an average of 21 days a year ago • Median sales price for August was $924,000 vs $690,000 last year • Sales are down from 11 last year to just 6 this year

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Oakland Art Association Fosters Visual Arts and Juried Venues

by Yin Marsh, interim membership chair

OAA is a non-profit group of about 60 members, several of whom have been active over most of its 50 years. The association is primarily involved in arranging about 10 juried shows each year in Alameda and Contra Costa counties for its members. Members are invited to show original work which is competitively judged, and cash prizes are awarded.

Presently, OAA has a juried show open to public viewing at the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, 475 14th Street, downtown. The Association also sponsors a number of "Satellite" shows, usually featuring a single artist. Four Satellite shows are being displayed in Oakland at:

- Jack London Square in various store fronts
- First Federal Savings Bank, 6058 College Avenue
- Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street
- Salem Lutheran Retirement Home, 2361 East 29th Street

Art work in all OAA shows must be offered for sale, and OAA withholds 30 percent of the sale price as a commission.

Membership in OAA costs $50 per year, and is open to artists who would like to have their work shown in local venues.

For more information, visit our website at www.oaklandart.org or directly contact interim membership chairman Yin Marsh at yinmarsh@gmail.com.

Stormwater: Plan Now for the Rainy Season

OAKLAND RAIN BARREL PROGRAM
CITY OF OAKLAND WATERSHED AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Oakland Watershed and Stormwater Management Rain Barrel Program is a three-year initiative to build healthier urban communities by providing reduced cost rain barrels to Oakland residents in an effort to reduce urban stormwater impacts. (As per city grant requirements, purchasers of rain barrels must be Oakland residents).

Funding for this project has been provided in full or in part through an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Rain barrels can offer many benefits to Oakland homeowners and renters. By installing a rain barrel, or barrels, you can reduce flooding, runoff and erosion; conserve water; improve landscape aesthetics; and protect infrastructure.

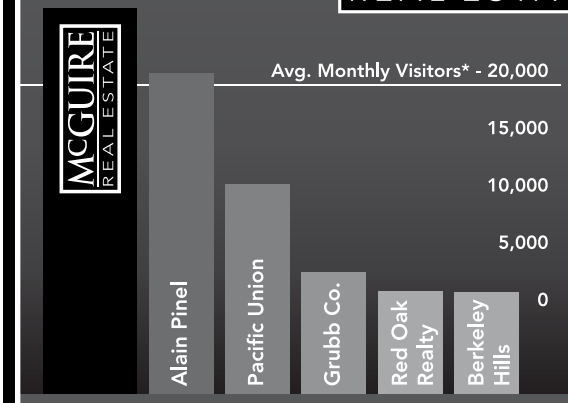
Systems must be planned so they do not cause erosion or allow water to concentrate near structures or another person's property. For design assistance, contact an appropriate professional. Also, for planning help with your rain barrel system, see www.oaklandpw.com/creeks.

Visit the city of Oakland's website to purchase barrels and tanks and for more information: www.oaklandpw.com/rainbarrel.

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Events Planned to Remember, Honor and Prepare

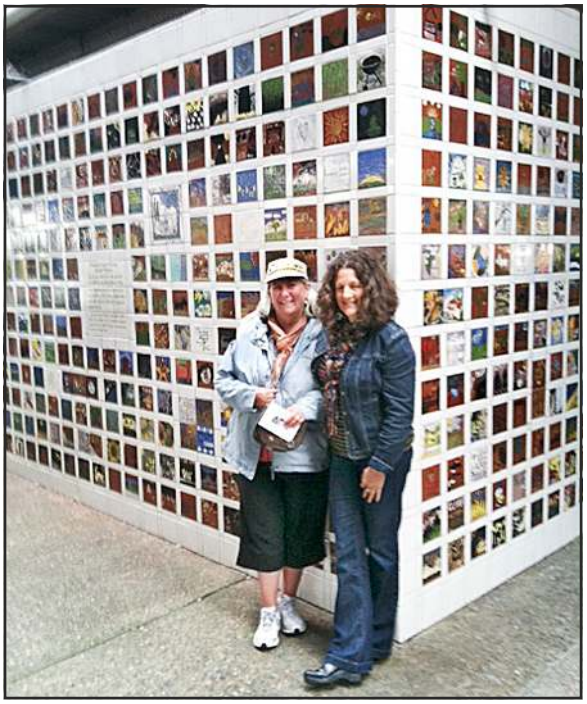
Commemorating the '91 Firestorm

On October 20, 1991, Diablo winds fanned a wildfire through the Oakland/Berkeley Hills, killing 25 people, injuring 150 and destroying more than 3,000 homes. Oakland had faced what was then the worst urban fire disaster in the nation's history.

Residents rebuilt homes and lives and launched a movement to support disaster survivors through the insurance claim and recovery process that is now a national model known as United Policyholders. Oakland, Berkeley and surrounding communities formed the Hills Emergency Forum and strengthened their mutual aid, disaster management and standards for fighting urban wildfires.

In recognition of the perseverance and community spirit that grew out of that frightening event, the city of Oakland and local groups and agencies will hold workshops, events and ceremonies between October 12 and 22. Among other events, on October 22, 9 a.m., there will be a Reflection at the Rockridge BART Firestorm Tile Wall, for individual expression of those affected by the Firestorm. Then, at noon, during a Preparedness Fair at Lake Temescal, Rockridge resident Annalee Allen will provide tile-making materials — tiles, brushes, paints — for those who wish to make a keepsake tile.

Adapted from a press release issued by the office of Mayor Jean Quan.



Pictured at the Firestorm Memorial Tile Wall located under the BART station overpass are Annalee Allen, left, and Brooke Levin. Annalee coordinated the painting and installation of completed tiles. Brooke conceived of and found funding for the tiles and their installation.

/B. Levin

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Chabot Science Center Seeks Volunteers

'Sharing the excitement with kids about viewing a crescent phase planet Venus through our telescopes in broad daylight, or watching sun spots larger than the earth using our sunspotter, are some of the most rewarding parts of the job," says Rockridge resident Steve Matthews. He is referring to his volunteer work as a Telescope Operator and School Guide for the Chabot Space and Science Center. Steve is one of approximately 140 adult volunteers at the center who are trained to serve in roles from special event ambassadors, to exhibit guides, to classroom teacher aides.

Volunteer at Chabot Space and Science Center in the beautiful Oakland hills. The next volunteer orientation is Saturday, October 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Visit our website for a description of volunteer opportunities. You are invited to attend our next orientation meeting to learn more about being a volunteer. Visit http://www.chabotspace.org/adult-volunteers.htm or e-mail volunteers@chabotspace.org.

Volunteer opportunities are also available for middle and high school students (grades 6-12). Visit http://www.Galaxyexplorers@chabotspace.org.



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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 this printing, library hrs. are uncertain. Confirm mtgs. at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

NOTE: Library will remain open during construction of the new TEEN ZONE during Sept. and early Nov.

FOR CHILDREN

- **Family Story Time:** Stories, songs and rhymes (kids to age 5). Every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** (ages 2 to 5) 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am.
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time:** (kids to age 2) 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am, upstairs.

FOR TEENS

- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Ages 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month 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. 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 (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**. For **Sept. only** (because of Labor Day holiday) mtg. on **2nd Tues.** (9/13), 5 to 7pm (advance sign-up starts 4:45pm). Future mtgs. on 1st Tues. each month. **Note:** lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people are present.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

GALLERY:

Sept: **Marsha Bolian:** mixed media figurative paintings.

Oct: **Karen Legault:** watercolor and Chinese brush art.

LOBBY DISPLAY CASE:

Sept: TBA.

Oct: **Malonga Casquelourd**.

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 9/6, 9/9 and 9/10. Note: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates.**

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs, 9/8, 7pm. Granta #116: Ten Years Later hosts a panel discussion with **Daniel Alarcon, Adam Johnson** and **Tom Barbash**
- Sun., 9/11, 3pm. **Poetry Flash with Maxine Hong Kingston** and **James Ragan**
- Mon., 9/12, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month):** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Thurs, 9/15, 7pm. **Keith Scribner:** *The Oregon Experiment*.
- Sun., 9/18, 3pm. Local author **Randy Kasten:** *Just Trust Me: Finding the Truth in a World of Spin*.
- Mon, 9/19, 7pm. **Jane Hirshfield:** *Come, Thief: Poems*.
- Sun., 9/25, 3pm. Publication Party for **Joan Lester:** *Black, White, Other: In Search of Nina Armstrong*.
- Wed, 9/28, 7pm. **Tony D'Souza:** *Mule: A Novel of Moving Weight*.

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

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Taarka: a blend of Western and Eastern folk traditions; jazz, gypsy; Celtic and more. Saturday, 9/10, 3pm (door opens 2pm). Sample sound clips at www.taarka.com. $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door).383 61st Street (**outside concert, wheelchair accessible**). Bring something to sit on, a hat, sunscreen and picnic. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Temescal Farmers' Market

Locally grown fruits and vegetables; fresh ranch eggs; sumptuous bakery items; fresh cut flowers; unique prepared foods, fresh locally caught fish, handcrafts and more. Sample the goods; develop a relationship with the grower; learn about unusual food varieties and cooking tips; greet your neighbors and listen to live music. **Open Sundays, 9am to 1pm (all year)**. Bring your own reusable bags. 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot. More info about Certified Farmers' Markets at www.urbanvillageonline.com.

3rd Annual Taste of Temescal

Enjoy an evening of food, drink, live music and fabulous prizes. Tues, Sept 20, 6 to 8:30pm on Telegraph Ave between 42nd and 51st Streets. **Dine out for our students:** Cost is $30 per ticket for 29 restaurants. Proceeds will benefit Claremont Middle School, Oakland Tech, Emerson Elementary, Lion's Center for the Blind, and Women's Cancer Resource Center. More info and purchase tickets at www.temescaldistrict.org.

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. Annual $12 membership entitles seniors 55 and older to get discounts on activities and trips.

Note new hours: Mon. – Fri., **9am to 3pm**. 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.

3rd Annual Volunteer Fair for Oakland Schools

Free event links community members to school programs that match their interests, abilities and schedules: reading and writing tutors, classroom aids and homework helpers, science enrichment and much more. Volunteers are fully trained before starting programs. **Mayor Jean Quan** and **OUSD Superintendent Tony Smith** will meet with prospective volunteers. Sat., 9/10, 1 to 4pm, Westlake Middle School Auditorium, 2629 Harrison St. (at 27th Street). Free parking lot on 27th St. just off Harrison or exit BART at 19th St. station. More info: www.VolunteeringForOakland.org, volunteerfaire@montclairaction.com or contact@volunteeringforoakland.org.

Chabot Space and Science Center Volunteer Orientation

Learn about the volunteer program structure, training and perks. Sat., Oct 1 from 10am to 2pm. Our volunteers learn how to make earth and space science come alive for visitors through interactive and hands-on experiences. 10000 Skyline Blvd., 336-7300. Get more info about the program and RSVP for orientation at www.chabotspace.org/adult-volunteers.htm or e-mail the Volunteer Department at volunteers@chabotspace.org. **See article p.14.**

American Red Cross

- **Volunteer Orientations:** Tour the Oakland Blood Center. Learn to assist blood donors; deliver blood; help with special projects. Wed, 9/7, 10am; Wed, 9/14, 3:30pm. 6230 Claremont Avenue (across from College Ave. Safeway). To learn more or sign up: Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.
- **Mobile Blood Drives:** Call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800/733-2767) or visit www.redcrossblood.org to find a location near you.

Coastal Cleanup Day: Saturday 9/17

Volunteer to participate at www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html.








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