THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council • 4123 Broadway, PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94611 • 869-4200

RCPC and the Two Rockridge Safeway Projects

The Planning Department is studying two simultaneous construction proposals that could result in radically different Safeway stores for College Avenue and for the Rockridge Plaza at Broadway and Pleasant Valley. For different reasons, neither proposal in its present form is suitable for its proposed site.



"View from Coffee Shop." Plan rendering, ©Lowney Architecture/Safeway on College Avenue.

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair

Rockridge is unique, perhaps among all neighborhoods in America, in simultaneously having two proposals for expanded Safeway stores.

But these projects are not happening in isolation, and their simultaneity is far from random: Safeway has nationwide plans to expand stores to fit its "Lifestyle Store" model. That model calls for minimum 50,000 sq. ft. stores with departments, such as a full florist, deli, bakery, and butcher shop, that go well beyond a traditional supermarket. Safeway wants its stores, regardless of location and local conditions, to each be the grocery equivalent of a Walmart "superstore."

Nor are Safeway's Rockridge projects limited to larger supermarkets. Each is part of an even bigger shopping center project. The Broadway/Pleasant Valley store would be part of a rebuild-expansion that would add 119,000

RCPC & Safeway, page 10

20 AGENDA October RCPC Town Hall Meeting

■ ***Oakland School Board President Jody London* reports on the school district's strategic planning process, entitled "Thriving Students."**

Strategic planning now under consideration for the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)will set the stage for the future of public education in Oakland. Board President London will discuss what that could mean for Rockridge schools, among others. She will also report on the current school closure plan.

Thursday, October 20 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College at Manila



GRAB YOUR KIDS AND YOUR COSTUME: Halloween Parade Sunday, October 30

Continuing our neighborhood's great, ghoulish tradition, the Rockridge District Association (RDA) and the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) invite you to celebrate Halloween on College Avenue. From noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, October 30, participating merchants will host trick-or-treating along both sides of College Avenue, from Alcatraz to Broadway.

To join the costumed procession, meet at Halloween Central in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, at 11:45 a.m. At precisely noon, we'll kick off trick-or-treating, leading the first group along the avenue. Then, at 1 p.m., return to Halloween Central for spooky storytelling and silly, scary sing-alongs. Storytellers will spin yarns in front of the Presbyterian church.



A happy Halloween parader from a past event. *IRN file*

Don't miss this holiday fun for kids of all ages.

PROS AND CONS: LWV AND RCPC PRESENT A SPECIAL ELECTION FORUM

League of Women Voters© of Oakland & RCPC

Thursday, October 27, 7:30 – 9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library

Oakland Sets Special Vote-by-Mail Election

Early in October, Oakland voters will receive a ballot for the city of Oakland Special Vote by Mail Election. The ballot will include information about the three measures on the ballot.

To help Rockridge residents be as informed as possible, RCPC is sponsoring an election forum to be presented Thursday, October 27, 7:30–9 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library by the League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO). LWVO will conduct an

Pros & Cons, page 5

Pillars of Community Rebuild Community Pillars

Before Rockridge was a neighborhood, two hand-hewn stone pillars flanked the entrance to Regent Street at Alcatraz Avenue, a part of the area known then as Fairview Park. Over time, one pillar crumbled and the other was destroyed by a car. Late in 2010, neighbors, led by Jim Morgan and Emily Stoper, began a community fund drive to restore the pillars. Unforeseen obstacles were overcome with the assistance of Councilwoman Jane Brunner, her staff and the Department of Public Works. Last month, the new pillars were joyfully dedicated at a neighborhood ceremony.

Read the full story at http://oaklandnorth.net/2011/09/19/fairview-park-residents-rally-to-restore-stone-pillar/, an on-line Cal Berkeley School of Journalism publication.









Below, Emily Stoper addresses neighbors at the dedication ceremony. Center right, Chuy, stonemason with Hans Thiering Masonry of Alameda, works on the pillar. Lower right, Jane Brunner who helped move the project along.

Photos courtesy of Alexander Hauptman and Carole Howard

RCPC Announces Board Vacancies

Due to the recent resignation of a board member (Ashley Etling), the RCPC Board of Directors has a vacancy it seeks to fill. If you are interested, send an e-mail to chair@rockridge.org, or leave a messge with your contact information at 869-4200. RCPC is also looking for additional members for its land use committee. Again, send an e-mail or leave a message if you are interested.

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Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

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

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising/Deadlines

Publication date of the next issue is
☛ **November 5, 2011**
☛ **November deadline is October 20, 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.)***

Report: September RCPC Town Hall Meeting; Considerations in Renovation

Experienced Renovators Offer Project Advice

by Natalie Mehta, RCPC Kitchen Tour chair

Thanks to a knowledgeable panel of experienced renovators, those that attended the September RCPC Town Hall meeting walked away with some great advice for their next renovation project. If you missed the event in person, here are some of the key insights:

Be a steward of the house

Think twice before embarking on a project that doesn't consider your home's character. Al and Sharon Flor, owners of a home on this year's kitchen tour, consider themselves "stewards" of their house. It has been standing longer than they have, and will continue after they are gone, so their renovation projects are guided by a desire to preserve and enhance their home. While their project incorporated modern conveniences, their finish selections complement the original elements of the home, making it appear seamless.

Stay away from the "edges" of design

While shelter magazines are filled with inspiring ideas and the latest styles, it's important to realize that many elements of a kitchen are fixed and difficult to change once installed. Ron Kriss, owner of Lawton Associates and a seasoned developer, reminds us that today's current style could be tomorrow's avocado/harvest gold renovation candidate. If current styles and color palettes are important to you, incorporate them into your project through more easily changeable elements such as light fixtures, accessories, and wall paint. By keeping the basic elements timeless, you'll ensure the renovation will stand the test of time.



Town Hall panelists Ron Kriss, left, Michelle Medeiros, Al Flor, Sharon Flor, and Burt Alper discuss considerations for successful kitchen and home renovations.

PHOTO: S. FLASHMAN

Plan ahead

The easiest way to cut down the time span of a renovation is to have a specific plan in place before demolition starts, and to have all the materials on site. Michelle Medeiros, of Integrity Remodeling, counsels clients to invest the time up front to have a thorough and complete plan so that everyone is working towards a common goal. The straight path is always faster than the meandering one, so if your heart is set on having a pot-filler above the stove, don't wait until the counters are in and the tile is up to mention it. While it still may be possible to install, it will most certainly be time-consuming and much more expensive to put it in during a late stage in the project. By planning ahead, you ensure that your heart's desires are incorporated in the most timely and cost-effective manner.

Work only with professionals you trust

You know to ask friends for referrals and to check at least three references before hiring a contractor. And for safety and liability purposes, it's important to work only with licensed, insured, and bonded contractors who will get permits for your work. But you should also do a "gut-check" to see if you have a good personality fit with your contractor. This is someone you may be seeing first thing in the morning, before your shower and coffee, so make sure you feel comfortable with them being in your house, among your private possessions, and with your family. It's a complex and intense relationship, and one in which trust is a necessary element.

Schedule a major event

To avoid the "7 Stages of Done" where your project is always "just a few" weeks away from being complete, Ron Kriss suggests planning a big party or event in your home close to the deadline. There's nothing like a looming and definite deadline to keep a sense of urgency among all the parties involved.

Preliminary Report: The Rockridge Kitchen Tour a Total Success

Early indications are the 2011 Kitchen Tour was a great success. Creating a page for a fundraising cookbook, this recipe was mixed with one sunny Bay Area Sunday sprinkled with cooling zephyrs out of the west. With 500 or so good-humored Tour guests strolling through Rockridge neighborhoods stirred in, the event rose to the occaision, leavened by the organizing skills of Tour Chair Natalie Mehta.

Congratulations and thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talent.





Tour guests enter a Harwood Avenue home.

Guests discuss kitchen improvements and renovation ideas with Presley Way homeowner Jill Foley.

PHOTOS: 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.

Noise Level Findings in Soundwall Feasibility Study are Flawed

Editor:

You may have read my comments in the article "Sound Walls Bound for Rockridge?" in the August 3 East Bay Express, or heard them on the August 5 KPIX-5 6 O'Clock News. I now have a website that highlights some of the issues that the Rockridge News has not addressed in its series of articles on soundwalls. For example, your readers might be interested to know that the measured noise levels in most of Rockridge are below the threshold required for soundwall construction.

For details on this and links to lots of relevant sources of information, please visit www.RockridgeSoundwalls.org.

— Jon Gabel, Rockridge resident

Editor's Note:

On his web site, reader Jon Gabel questions the methodology and findings of the study of sound levels along Highway 24 completed in 2009 by acoustical and vibration consultants Wilson, Ihrig & Associates for Caltrans. RCPC Chair Stuart Flashman invited study author Steven Wolfe to comment on the assertions appearing on Gabel's web site. Wolfe's reply:

Dear Mr. Flashman:

This letter is to go on the record as far as Wilson, Ihrig & Associates's (WIA) position regarding soundwalls in the Rockridge area adjacent to SR 24 and on our Pre-NBSSR (Noise Barrier Scope Summary Report) Study that we completed for Caltrans in 2009.

There seems to be confusion by some regarding the basic purpose and particularly the results of the study. First, WIA has no interest whatsoever regarding the outcome of such a study. Second, we did not develop the methodology of the study nor provide input on the accuracy of studies using the methodology prescribed by AACMA or Caltrans. It should be understood that a Pre-NBSSR study is just a preliminary study to determine if soundwalls have any merit. Further study is certainly warranted and that is understood or should be understood by all involved parties.

The study basically entailed reviewing previous Caltrans studies from the Caldecott Tunnel to I-580, obtaining existing noise levels at a number of locations along SR 24, locating affected receptors, projecting peak hour noise levels to these receptors to determine the potential need for noise mitigation, estimating soundwall effectiveness (where warranted), estimating preliminary soundwall costs using Caltrans developed spreadsheets, and preparation of a report presenting the results of the study.

Our understanding is that there are both those who are in favor and those who oppose soundwalls adjacent to SR 24 in the Rockridge neighborhood. Ultimately, it is the community that will decide if such soundwalls are actually implemented after a more detailed and accurate study of the existing and future noise levels in the area is prepared, the technical justification for such walls is demonstrated and potential funding identified.

We stand by our report prepared in 2009 and encourage careful review of the assumptions and conclusions with the understanding that this was a very conservative study, to identify all areas where soundwalls can be justified based on the criteria specified by AACMA and Caltrans.

Wilson, Ihrig & Associates, Inc.
Steven L. Wolfe President and
Principal Consultant

Ed. Note: The Oakland settlement money [The Rockridge News: May, 2011, page 5] provides funds for the more detailed and accurate soundwall studies mentioned in Wolfe's response.



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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: October 26; it will include further discussion of the two Safeway projects. *Subject to change. Check* rockridge.org *the preceding week for the full meeting agenda.*

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ **College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center;** (Corner of College and Claremont Avenues)

The Planning Commission's design review committee has scheduled a public hearing on this project Wednesday, October 12, starting at 5 p.m. in hearing room #1 at Oakland City Hall. The three members of the design review committee are Madeleine Zayas-Mart (chair), Chris Patillo (vice-chair), and Michael Colbruno. This design review hearing is the time to talk about how Safeway's proposed project would look and function, *not* about how it doesn't fit the zoning or about the traffic it will generate. However, it *is* an appropriate time to talk about, for example, how it fits in (or doesn't) to the surrounding area, the wide driveway breaking up the College Avenue sidewalk, the blind wall and parking lot along Claremont Avenue, the (non)functionality of the second floor outdoor seating area overlooking the Claremont/College intersection, and whether having a grocery store on the second floor really makes sense.

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

This project is also proposed by Safeway, but by a different division than the one doing the College Avenue shopping center. It would rebuild the entire shopping center and add 119,000 sq. ft. of developed space. Release of the draft Environmental impact report for the project has again been delayed, probably at least until the end of October. We suspect that the cause may be problems with the traffic analysis, which was done by the same firm that did the traffic section on the College Avenue Safeway DEIR. Check the RCPC web site at http://rockridge.org for the latest update, or sign up for the RCPC e-newsletter for more immediate notification.

The Oakland planner is Daren Ranelletti; 238-3663; e-mail DRanelletti@oaklandnet.com).

Pros & Cons

from page 1

impartial pros and cons review of the ballot measures to be voted upon in the election on November 15. As described on the city's web site, the measures are:

• **Measure H:** Shall the Oakland City Charter be amended to return the City Attorney to an appointed position?

• **Measure I**: Shall the City of Oakland establish a five year temporary fiscal emergency parcel tax to preserve essential city services, including fire, police services, and police technology, youth violence prevention, library, services, parks and recreation, and street repair, by establishing an $80 parcel tax for single-family homes and specified amounts for multi-family and commercial properties with an exemption for low-income households?

• **Measure J**: Shall the Charter be amended to allow the City of Oakland to change the deadline for fully funding its Police and Fire Retirement Plan to a new financially responsible deadline?

The city's web site states that the registrar of voters will begin opening and counting ballots on November 4; ballots must be received by November 15.

Voters may register to vote in this election through October 31.

Additional topics the speakers will cover include information related to the state election next June, specifically the new top two primary system, and how redistricting will affect Oakland.

The LWVO speakers are Megan Chenoweth and Katherine Gavzy, LWVO President.

The city's web site with election details is at http://www2.oaklandnet.com/OAK030369.

The LWVO web site address is: http://www.lwvoakland.org/VOTER-October-2011.html.

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Chabot Elementary Annual Fall Carnival Creates Lasting Memories, Raises Funds

by Lyn Hikida, Chabot PTA

The Chabot Elementary Fall Carnival has been a Rockridge tradition for years, and the tradition continues this year Sunday, October 30, starting at 11 a.m. and carrying on to 4 p.m.

Excitement is building ahead of the event, which will be held on the Chabot campus amidst the recently remodeled school yards for the community to enjoy, complete with new play structures.

Traditionally, the carnival is viewed as the community event kicking off the school year. Each year, new families with school-age children enter the school and are greeted by this fun-filled day. Little brothers and sisters enjoy participating; there are games for all ages.

Back by popular demand are the rock climbing wall and dunking booth. Come dunk Principal Mayer or your favorite (or not-so-favorite) teacher.

As always, entrance is free. Enjoy a family lunch from one of the food trucks, and play games to win prizes.



Photo: Morris Dye

Dancing was a popular way to pass the time last year, and there will again be a live DJ all day and a cake walk hourly.

Remember to bring your best Halloween costume: Also back by popular demand, the kids' costume contest will be held at 1 p.m.

All proceeds benefit the Chabot Elementary PTA to fund enrichment programs like music, art, computers, the library and the garden; to coordinate numerous after-school programs; and to help in the classrooms.

Back to School for Chabot Bobcats

by Lyn Hikida, Chabot PTA

The school year at Chabot Elementary is back in full swing, and students returning from summer vacations discovered a number of campus improvements finished up at the tail end of the major construction project that began in 2008.

According to Chabot PTA Construction Liaison Shelly Fierston, the Cal Fire Air Quality Grant (part of the Caltrans Fourth Bore mitigation settlement) provided new plants between all major buildings, new ground cover throughout the lower yard, and a variety of fruit trees in the rejuvenated garden, all done during the summer.

Thanks to additional grant funding, a stepped seating/sculpture garden was constructed on the upper yard. The seating—which includes concrete pads of various heights and depths surrounded by native, drought-tolerant plants—accommodates outdoor learning as well as lunchtime and community gatherings.

On the lower yard, in an area that continually struggled with the effects of poor drainage, artificial turf was installed, courtesy of generous community support from the Chabot PTA. Students can now enjoy unrestricted play in this area throughout the school year.

Chabot is proud to be part of the Rockridge community, and the PTA encourages neighbors to support our school every time you shop. Visit eScrip (www.escrip.com) to sign up and choose Anthony Chabot Elementary (ID # 118422370) as your group. Merchants such as Safeway, Andronico's, Piedmont Grocery, Village Market, Khana Peena, La Note, Pican, and Extreme Pizza all participate and help us raise more than $4,000 annually by donations of a portion of each purchase. In less than five minutes you could be supporting us all year long!

For more info, visit www.chabotelementary.org.

Claremont Middle School Auction Helps Pay for School Programs

by Michelle Bilensky, Claremont PTA

Scarin' Up Some Change at Claremont Middle School!, Claremont's annual party and auction, will be held Saturday, October 29, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Uptown Body and Fender, 401 26th Street, Oakland.

Everyone is welcome to come support our event to raise funds for the school. There are many school programs that need your support, including our band and orchestra, digital media and film animation courses, our garden, our art courses, and our library.

This will be our 5th annual auction. It is an adults only, Halloween-themed event. Last year we raised $35,000; our 2011 goal is to top that. Tickets are $20 in advance and $25 at the door.

Contact parent Michelle Bilensky, mdb.pta.oakland@gmail.com, or visit the Claremont website, www.clarmontms.org for ticket information.

As always, a special thank you to our local Rockridge merchants for their loyal support over the years.



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Fire!

On that fateful day of October 20, 1991, the noonday fire rose like a monster in the Oakland-Berkeley Hills above the Caldecott Tunnel. Fierce Diablo winds sweeping over the ridge and into the canyon created an instant firestorm that moved so fast, hill dwellers were taken completely by surprise.

Soon, flames jumped from tree to tree, lighting them like giant candles every 11 seconds; bounced from rooftop to rooftop until the hillside was lit up by thousands of little fires glittering, diamond-like, in the dark. Three days later 3,400 homes had been destroyed, 25 people were dead and another 150 injured. Sixteen hundred acres had been reduced to ashes. Damage was estimated at $1.5 billion. The Claremont Hotel was saved.

Time Heals All Wounds

Natural and man-made disasters seem an unavoidable part of the human condition. Almost always unpredictable or unimagined, when they happen, our lives are put on hold as our trajectory is recalibrated. Then, after a while, it's everybody back to work! Time heals all wounds after all. But how much time? This fall we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Oakland Fire of 1991. Is 20 years enough for healing? In the hills above Rockridge, the debris has been cleared away, houses and trees have sprouted where there was nothing but ruin and ashes.

I randomly asked people what they remember, how this seminal event affected their lives. I learned that it depends on where you stood physically and emotionally in relation to this disaster, whether you watched or were directly affected by the maelstrom.

Those who did not live in the fire zone tell anecdotal stories, point to all those new huge, pink houses on the hills and perhaps remember that there was once a different, more rural kind of life up there. My teen age son remembers packing the things he wanted to save only to find to his amazement that his young life barely filled a shoe box of mementos. Further, those who have moved into the area since the fire are hard-pressed to know what it was all about and whether it has anything to do with them.

As I talked to people who lived in the hills at the time of the fire, I got either short, pained responses or longer, talk-it-out replies. The emotions are still raw, and the anger, the loss, the sense of helplessness in the face of disaster are palpable. Yet, one could also sense a real pride of achievement, determination, and of discovery of inner strength you didn't know you had.

Up on the Hill, there is still an occasional empty lot, a lonely foundation, but most people have rebuilt out of sheer defiance or, as Margaretta Mitchell did, out of a refusal to let dreams and things of meaning and great beauty, reminders of the past, just die. Vallery Feldman and a host of North Hill dwellers found consolation in banding together to make a difference through active community involvement as the neighborhood rose anew from the ashes, focusing on creating a wildfire prevention district, undergrounding of utilities and opening Fire Station #7. Their stories can be followed at www.Northhillscommunity.org.

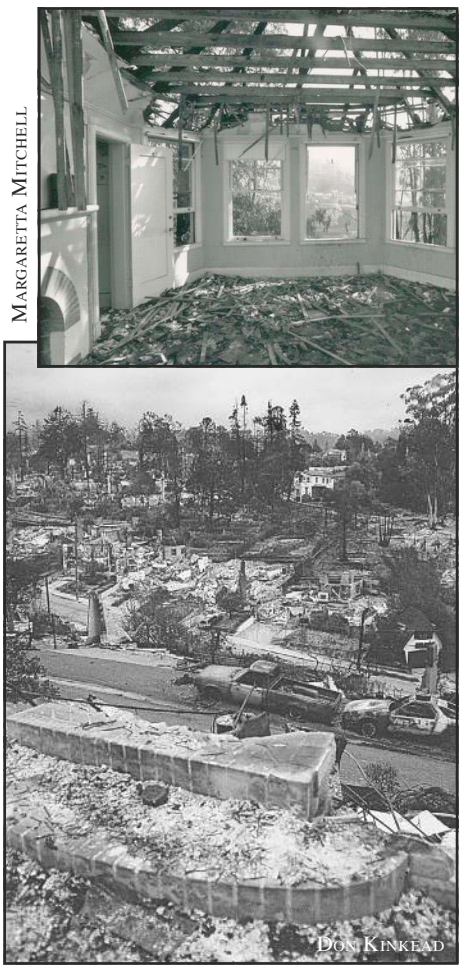
Some people, though, simply left, never to return. Others moved closer to College Avenue to feel safer, to be among people. Some lost their pets and never dared own another one. Many still never fail to say goodbye and silently ask for forgiveness of anyone leaving the house. To round out the picture, illness and disease frequently set in at

Fire!, page 11

The Rockridge Muse

by Ortrun Niesar

The Aftermath



Margaretta Mitchell

Don Kinkead

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Scenic Streets
of Oakland


PHOTO: PETER LUND

DaVita is drafting site improvements.

DaVita Joins Claremont Avenue Landscaping Efforts

by Diana Thomas, Scenic Streets

Scenic Streets, the volunteer group leading the renovation of Claremont Avenue near Highway 24, has announced that DaVita Dialysis Corporation recently pledged to join the campaign. DaVita occupies the former supermarket at 5354 Claremont Avenue, across the street from the group's recent landscaping along the highway 24 off-ramp.

"We are very pleased that DaVita is joining with its neighbors to improve the appearance of this important gateway to Rockridge and Temescal," says Scenic Streets founder Peter Lund. The group contacted DaVita's Denver headquarters last spring, asking the company to spruce up its property.

Scenic Streets requested that DaVita remove unused signage remnants from the northwest corner of its parking lot and add landscaping along Claremont Avenue and Clifton Street to improve the facility's street view. DaVita spokesperson, Mollie

Scenic Streets, page 14

Uproar Over Unannounced Tree Cutting Leads DMV to Cooperate on Replanting


PHOTO: MISTI GROVES

In the aftermath of its unannounced tree removal and brush trimming in the DMV parking lots, leaving debris that caused Temescal Creek to overflow, the DMV now plans to work with the community to develop a replanting design.

by Theresa Nelson, FROG chair

Many Rockridge residents were startled when, in mid-August, 14 trees and several native plant shrubs in the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) parking lots at Claremont, Cavour and Miles avenues and traversed by Temescal Creek, were cut down or trimmed without prior notice.

The work – and the extent of it – surprised residents living nearby. Clumps of chipped eucalyptus the loggers left along Temescal Creek blew into the water and blocked the grating, causing backups and some flooding.

The tree felling and severe bush pruning drew a flurry of concerned phone calls and e-mails from DMV neighbors, Farmer's Market patrons and Frog Park users who expressed their concerns to Councilmember Jane Brunner, Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, and to the DMV.

The DMV heard the concerns, and hired Arborist Steve Batchelder to develop a planting plan that will be presented at a community meeting, date to be determined. A second meeting date to finalize the plan will be held, setting the stage for re-planting in November in time for the rainy season. Planting will be in the DMV parking lot, some near the Farmer's Market area, and some in the Frog Park and Temescal Creek areas.

Check the FROG website – www.frogpark.org – for the dates and locations of the community meetings. You may also contact Jane Brunner's staff member, Elinor Buchen, at 510/238-7240, or e-mail EBuchen@oaklandnet.com.

Provide your input for the plan by leaving a comment on the FROG web site and/or by e-mailing your comments to DMVreplanting@frogpark.org.

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Peralta Elementary Recognized as a Blue Ribbon School

by Heather Ashcroft, Peralta PTA

Students and staff at Peralta Elementary are bursting with pride this week after Peralta, a public school in North Oakland, was recognized as a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School. Peralta is one of just two schools in Alameda County, and one of 21 in California, to be honored this year.

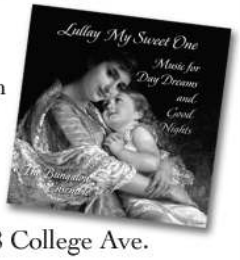
The U.S. Department of Education presented the award to 305 public and private schools nationwide for their overall academic excellence or for their success in closing achievement gaps. Peralta is categorized as an Improving School, where at least 40 percent of the student population from disadvanaged backgrounds has improved reading and math performance to high levels.

Principal Rosette Costello attributes part of that success to a focus on art. Peralta's artists-in-residence collaborate with teachers to incorporate art into all areas of study. An example of the children's art can be seen at the Días de los Muertos (Days of the Dead) exhibit at the Oakland Museum, October 12 through December 11. Peralta is one of three community groups invited to create a traditional altar, or *ofrenda*, to be on display at the museum.

With continued cuts to public school budgets, Peralta relies increasingly on grants and fundraising events such as a walkathon and auction to support student enrichment programs.

For the Peralta community, the addition of a National Blue Ribbon flag against that colorful backdrop will symbolize the school's use of art to inspire each child's success.

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Celebrate 10 Years of Frog Park!

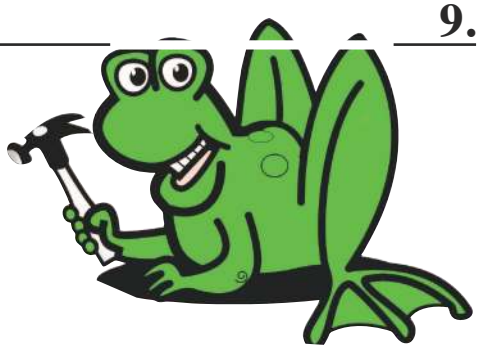
by Theresa Nelson, FROG Chair

It was only 10 years ago, in mid-October, 2011, that community volunteers finished building the two custom play structures at Frog Park.

The park has become a central feature of the neighborhood, but prior to 2001, the area was mostly a fenced and heavily-weeded place with no play structures, no swings, no water fountain, no bathroom, no pathways, no plantings, no ADA-accessible play features, dilapidated basketball courts, and of course, the dog park, popular since the mid-1990s.

More than 1,300 local volunteers came for 10 days to work from dawn until after dark to build the custom-designed play structures. Every bit of wood and ChoiceDec, every screw and nail, the mosaic turtle and walls, every painted wooden butterfly, flower or leaf, and all the fencing was built by community volunteers who gave their time and energy to make this park a reality. More than 1,000 tools were lent for the Big Build; we offered childcare so parents could participate in the build; and we fed everyone lunch, dinner and snacks from a field kitchen set up in the park. People took off from work to serve as captains for the entire build, working with groups of volunteers from throughout Oakland, as well as local corporations, garden clubs, U.C. Berkeley and high school students, the Junior League, Oakland Firefighters, and many more.







2001: Hardy Park Big Build participants celebrate their playground construction progress. Photo: Bill Caldwell

A few years later, more volunteers continued to improve the park. They helped ensure that the mural on Claremont was restored, they guided the plans for Phase two (2006) to complete the path, add swings, re-do the basketball courts and secured funding to build the long-awaited bathroom at Hardy Park. The Frog Park volunteers created an enduring legacy for future users. It's a delight to see the new generation of families who appreciate the park as an important part of community life.

Now you can do something to help sustain Frog Park for the next 10 years! Please consider making a special 10th anniversary gift to support park improvements and maintenance. You can go to the park's web site to donate online at www.frogpark.org, or send a contribution to: Frog Park, 4123 Broadway PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. The builders of Frog Park from 2001 and beyond thank you for your support for the park and the community.

For more photos, go to Frogpark.org and check out the flickrfeed

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RCPC & Safeway

from page 1

sq.ft. and some structured parking to the Rockridge Shopping Center. The College Avenue Safeway project would also include eight "small shops" totaling about 12,000 sq. ft. of added retail and restaurant space, plus a 175-space enclosed garage.

RCPC's attitude towards these projects tries to reflect that of the Rockridge community, and, unlike Safeway, to take into account local conditions and what makes most sense for the community. Our positions reflect input from community meetings, discussions by RCPC's land use committee and board of directors, and other community groups.

There is little question the existing 22,500 sq.ft. 1960s-era College Avenue Safeway store could use updating. Most other East Bay supermarkets from that era have either been refurbished, replaced, or re-used for other purposes. For example, the former Safeway store on Claremont Avenue – also in Rockridge – is now a dialysis center. However, College Avenue's general plan designation and zoning (neighborhood center mixed-use and CN-1, respectively) reflect an understanding that College Avenue, as a two-lane street with little potential for expansion, is not a good place for large-scale development. Its focus is on pedestrian-oriented comparison shopping, with an emphasis on small, locally owned specialty retail shops. That approach has been spectacularly successful, and College Avenue is widely recognized as one of Oakland's most lucrative neighborhood retail venues.

Kill Goose Laying Golden Eggs?

Safeway's proposed 62,000 sq.ft. shopping center threatens to kill the goose that has been laying golden eggs for Oakland.

The recently-released draft environmental impact report for the project, even though grossly understating the project's traffic impacts, still found those impacts "significant and unavoidable." RCPC agrees that the impacts would be highly significant, leading to near-gridlock on College Avenue at key hours and also creating potential safety and local air quality impacts, but they are *not* unavoidable.

While full mitigation isn't feasible, there *are* project alternatives: A smaller project with a Safeway more on the scale of the company's recently-rebuilt stores on Grand Avenue and in the Fruitvale District would diminish or even eliminate the traffic and other problems the proposal creates, while still providing an attractive and functional store more in keeping with College Avenue's situation and zoning.

RCPC hopes that Oakland, in its approval process, will avoid unnecessarily damaging a successful retail area and, instead, tell Safeway to rethink its plans so they fit into, rather than overpower and destroy, Rockridge.

Rockridge Center Project: Different Circumstances

Safeway's Rockridge Shopping Center Project at Broadway and Pleasant Valley is an entirely different story. The shopping center, on the edge of Rockridge and at the intersection of two major streets, is zoned for larger-scale commercial activity. It has been identified by Oakland as a "node" for new development. RCPC believes, as do other surrounding neighborhood groups, that *this* site is appropriate for – and merits – a major, urban, transit-oriented development effort. While Safeway's revised project proposal at that site has moved in the right direction, RCPC believes it still suffers from major flaws:

- Its proposed "shopping street" simply doesn't work well, either as a street or as a shopping area;
- The project turns a blind side to Pleasant Valley Road, leaving that streetscape dead and isolated;
- The project still has far too much

RCPC & Safeway, page 11



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Shopping? Shop Oakland, First

RCPC & Safeway

from page 10

surface parking. This land is too valuable to be used for parking lots. Other than a small amount of short-term "in-and-out" parking spaces, the rest of the parking should be in parking structures;

■ The center needs at least one other "anchor tenant" besides Safeway. Ideally that would be something much like the present Longs/CVS store. Alternatively, Safeway might look at a large hardware store, like Pastime Hardware in El Cerrito, or an entertainment complex like that at Bay Street in Emeryville;

■ The center needs much better and easier transit connections. This would be the ideal turnaround site for AC Transit's 51A and B lines, especially with an on-site bus station that would also connect to Kaiser's MacArthur BART station shuttle bus service.

In the long term, the site cries out for a residential component. It would tie together the neighboring residential areas and make for a more vital site. That's apparently not possible under the current site lease, but there ought to be provisions to add housing in the future.

Best Opportunity for Success

RCPC is hopeful that both Safeway and the city will recognize that there's far more to be gained from working with, rather than against, the surrounding community on these two major projects. Safeway's two projects, done right, could offer a tremendous boost to North Oakland. Done wrong, they could damage one of Oakland's most successful commercial and residential areas.

Fire!

from page 7

a later date, claiming more apparent victims, even though they may not have been counted.

These are all post-traumatic stress responses. It's not over.

Memorials

There will be many events beginning mid-October, including exhibits at the Oakland Library History Room, 238-3222; the Oakland Museum, 318-8400; and the Berkeley Art Museum (BAM); 642-0808. Don't miss the talks given by photographer Richard Misrach October 12, noon, at BAM. Also, UC professors Louise Mozingo and Richard Walker will discuss various sociological, economic and environmental aspects of the firestorm at BAM on October 30, 3 p.m.

Also, Margaretta Mitchell has produced a short film for the Institute for Historical Study for The Phoenix Firestorm Project. It is a film of disaster, yes, but also one of wonderful renewal as she and her family go about reconstructing their unique 1925 William Raymond Yelland Normandy Style home. The film will be shown at the Oakland Museum as part of the exhibit there. It is hoped that others will be inspired to come forward and contribute their stories to the project. For more information and donations to the project, contact Margaretta at mmkm@margarettamitchell.com or give her a call at 655-4929.

Visit the city's web site for a detailed listing of memorial events: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Residents/OAK030313

The Rockridge News Needs Your Help

Did you know we have 150 block captains, district captains and marshals who deliver the Rockridge News? Some of them have been doing their jobs since the first issue of the newsletter was delivered in March, 1986! It is inevitable that we lose volunteers to moves out of Rockridge, to family responsibilities, etc., but the News will continue to come to your doorsteps as long as we can find replacements for those volunteers. We hope that will be you!

Here are three routes that need block captains. Let us know the route number when you call or e-mail to volunteer: smontauk@gmail.com or phone 547-3855.

Route No.	Route Description
16D	*To replace Block Captain: Rachel Rusting.* Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment at 5248.
09H	*To replace Block Captain Jennifer Gregovich* Up Keith from McMillan to 5925 Broadway.
19C	*To replace Jeannine Miles & Ella Sophia Miles-Urdan.* 5400 Lawton between Forest and Hudson, and the apartment building at the end of Lawton next to Eddie's Liquors.



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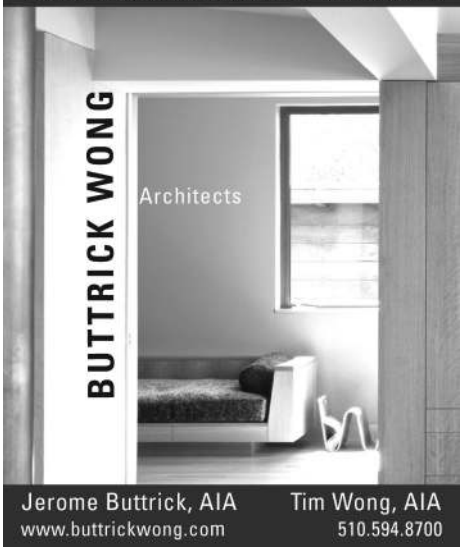
Closing Date	BR	BATH	Address	Original Price	List Price	DOM	Selling Price
8/26/11	3	2	5401 Claremont Avenue	$599,000	$599,000	69	$562,500
8/26/11	3	2	6409 Benvenue	$1,020,000	$995,000	152	$995,000
9/2/11	6	4	6209 Colby Street	$689,000	$689,000	29	$675,000
9/7/11	2	2	458 Hudson Street	$1,250,000	$1,175,000	16	$1,155,000
9/9/11	5	2	323 Florence Avenue	$769,000	$769,000	58	$811,000
9/13/11	3	2	6008 Auburn Avenue	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	13	$1,100,000
9/16/11	2	1	5274 Manila Avenue	$649,000	$649,000	29	$650,000

• Rockridge currently has a 2.7 month supply of inventory • Average list to sell is currently 96% vs 93% last year • Average market time before a listing sells is currently 52 days in Rockridge - compared to an average of 32 days a year ago • Median sales price is up, currently $818,000 vs $762,500 last year • Sales are up from 6 last year to 7 this year

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Young People's Symphony Orchestra Plans 75th Anniversary Gala

The Young People's Symphony Orchestra (YPSO), the second oldest youth orchestra in the country and with members from all around the Bay Area, is holding its 75th Anniversary Gala Saturday, October 22, at the Claremont Hotel. It will be a beautiful evening.

YPSO has played in Carnegie Hall, toured in China and in Australia and is touring in 2012 to Vienna, Prague and Bratislava. You are invited to come and/or send a donation to help raise money for scholarships, the 2012 International Tour and an endowment. One of the featured performers will be Rockridge resident and YPSO alumnus, violinist Aaron Requiro, nationally recognized for his outstanding artistry.

Silent Auction items will be available for viewing on the web site before the Gala: www.YPSOmusic.net. A percentage of the proceeds will be contributed to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Single tickets are $150; tables run from $2,5000 to $10,000. You can underwrite a full scholarship for $1,300, or half a scholarship for $650.

For more information about the Gala and YPSO, please go to www.YPSOmusic.net.

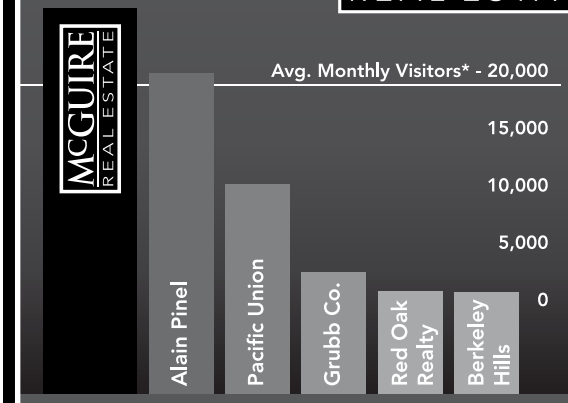
Details: YPSO Gala 75th Anniversary

Claremont Hotel: 41 Tunnel Road, Berkeley; **Saturday, October 22**
6:00 p.m.: Cocktail reception and silent auction
7:30 p.m.: Dinner and Program
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Rockridge Branch Bids Farewell to 2011 Library Summer Intern

by Jane McDermott, Treasurer, Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL)

Admittedly, Quinn Reedy-Schwarz had spent "zero" time at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library prior to becoming this summer's intern. In fact, Quinn had never been in a public library before. He feared that working at the library would be "geeky." However, once he was established at the branch, his friends were very jealous. "They were like 'whoa, this is really cool.'"

Since 2005, the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) have underwritten the cost for a summer intern who, among other things, oversees the summer reading program and the volunteers who come with it. The summer reading program is an opportunity to get kids to keep reading and keep using the library. For reading eight hours' worth, participants are rewarded with coupons for such local attractions as Fairyland and Fenton's Creamery. More than 1,000 local youngsters signed up for the program this summer.

The intern is selected from a pool of applicants comprised of high school juniors from Oakland Tech. The process is coordinated by FORL board member Tracy Weber and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) guidance counselor Louis Thomas; the final selection is made by head librarian Pat Lichter, and librarians Gay Ducey and Erica Suskind. According to Lichter, what made Quinn stand out from the other 12 finalists was his experience at demanding jobs, his innate sense of curiosity, and his comfort in talking to people. The librarians believed that he would be at ease talking to both parents and kids – and he was.



2011 Library Summer Intern Quinn Reedy-Schwartz and Summer Reading Program volunteer Lucy Slattery-Vickness. COURTESY: FORL

For Quinn, who had done a variety of jobs mostly involving manual labor, coordinating volunteers was a big challenge. "Sometimes we had a lot of volunteers, maybe too many, and sometimes, like, one." It was Quinn's job to make sure that the Summer Reading Program desk was staffed and that the volunteer knew what to do.

Quinn likes punk rock, cooking, and people. He connected with our youngest patrons as well as our middle school volunteers.

Asked what skills he learned this summer, he replied that he learned patience, how to be more flexible, and how to work with volunteers. "This job has definitely given me the opportunity to do things I want to do in my life and will help me achieve my goals. I really enjoyed my time here and learned a lot. I wish I didn't have to leave."

We wish him well as he begins his senior year at Oakland Tech.

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Scenic Streets

from page 8

O'Brien, says a plan should be drafted by mid-October.

"Since we do not own the property, we are actively working with our landlord to establish a plan of action" says O'Brien. "But DaVita is committed to beautifying our exterior lot and introducing green space to our location."

The chain link fenced facility has been a concern for many local residents who feel its appearance makes a poor first impression to area visitors.

"It's a pretty stark property" says nearby homeowner Stephanie Bianco. "And it's the first thing everyone sees when they come off the highway. A little landscaping will go a long way to improve such a prominent corner in our neighborhood."

Scenic Streets will post periodic updates on its web site, www.scenicstreets.org, so area residents can follow DaVita's progress. Lund says the community is also encouraged to e mail suggestions or comments of support that he will pass along to DaVita.

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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

Councilmember Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

Sat., Nov 5, 10am to noon. **Topic: "Growing Businesses and Jobs in Oakland."** Speakers from the Oakland business and finance community incl. the Women's Initiative for Self Employment. Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave. Info: 238-7001or www.oaklandnet.com (the site for all City-related information).

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. Confirm mtg. date 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 through 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.

Special Events:

- **MoChA** and the City of Oakland's annual juried exhibit of art by Oakland **students (K – 12)**, made from re-used and recycled materials. Entries due by Nov. 13. Attend the **Re-Create Workshop** on Friday, Oct 14, 3:30 to 5pm to make something for the exhibit (or to take home).
- **VHS Give-Away:** Discontinued collection of used children's VHS tapes will be given away **free** on Sat, Oct 15, 10am to 2pm. Includes some not available on DVD, some classics and lots of non-fiction.
- **Halloween Celebration**: Annual Not-Too Scary Stories on Tues, Oct 25, 7pm. All invited to come in costume. Also, decorate a Trick-or-Treat bag.
- **Library Tours**: On Sat, **Nov 5 at noon**, the Teen Advisory Board will give tours for children 6 -12 who want to know what goes on behind the scenes at the library. **Advance sign-up now**.

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.

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**. First Tues. each month, 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 present.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

- Oct: Watercolor and Chinese brush art by students of **Karen Legault.**
- Nov: Drawings and paintings by **Unity School Students.**

Lobby Display Case:

- Oct: **Malonga Casquelourd,** Center for the Arts: paintings.
- Nov: TBD

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 Sat, 10/8**. **Note: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates.**

Peace Corps Recruiting in Rockridge

Volunteers work in 76 countries in education, agriculture, health, business, environment and more. **No upper age limit to join**. Assignments last 27 mos. and include travel/living expenses and health care. Information session: Tues., 10/18, 6 to 7:30pm, Rockridge Library. More info: 800-424-8580 or www.peacecorps.gov.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Mon, 10/10, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (**2nd Mon. each month**): All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed, 10/12, 7pm. Local author **Marissa Guggiana**: *Off the Menu: Staff Meals from America's Top Restaurants*.
- Sun, 10/16, 3pm. **Adam Mansbach**: *Go the F**k to Sleep*.
- Thurs, 10/20, 7pm. Local author **Adam Metz**: *The Social Customer: How Brands Can Use Social CRM to Acquire, Monetize, and Retain Fans, Friends and Followers*.
- Sun, 10/23, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** in celebration of the publication of **Kenneth Patchen**: *A Centennial Selection*, with editor **Jonathan Clark, Bart Schneider** and poet friends.
- Thurs, 10/27, 7pm. Local author **David Darlington**: *An Ideal Wine: One Generation's Pursuit of Perfection – and Profit – in California*.
- Sun., 10/30, 3pm. Launch party for the 10th anniversary double issue of *Monday Night Magazine #10*, which publishes new writing from all over the world, including many Oakland writers. Reading from **Annam Manthiram, Christine Cho**i and **Patrick Duggan**.
- Sun,11/6, 3pm. Publication party for 2 local authors: **Alvin Orloff**: *Why Aren't You Smiling?* and **Stephen Beachy**: *Boneyard*.

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

First Friday Monthly Square Dance in North Oakland

Music by **The Squirrelly String Band**. Calling by **Jordan Ruyle**. Every 1st Friday of the month from 8-10pm. All levels welcome; all dances taught on the spot. $10-5 sliding scale donation. The Niebyl-Proctor Library, 6501 Telegraph Ave. Info: http://squirrellystringband.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Cascada de Flores, along with guitarist **Ricardo Flores**: musical traditions of Mexico and Cuba. Saturday, 10/29, 8pm; doors open 7:30 (inside venue; not wheelchair accessible). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. More info at: www.cascadadeflores.com. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Young People's Symphony Orchestra

75th Anniversary Gala and fundraiser. A featured performer is Rockridge resident and YPSO alumnus, violinist **Aaron Requiro**. Sat., 10/22, 6pm. Dinner, music, silent auction and more. Formal attire (black tie optional). Proceeds benefit tours and scholarships. Claremont hotel, 41 Tunnel Road. Tickets and info: www.YPSOmusic.net.

Halloween Parade on College Ave.

Sun, 10/30, from noon to 2pm. Kids of all ages, put on your costumes and **meet at 11:45am in front of the College Ave Presb. Church, 5951 College Ave** to join the parade. Later, come back to hear stories and songs. Merchants will host trick-or-treating from Alcatraz Ave. to B'way. Sponsored by the Rockridge District Assn. (RDA) and RCPC.

Chabot Elem. School Fall Carnival

Sunday, Oct 30, 11am to 4pm. Activities for all ages; games and prizes; rock climbing wall; dunking booth; live DJ and dancing; gourmet food; Halloween costume contest (at 1pm) and more. Proceeds benefit enrichment programs and school improvements. Chabot School, 6686 Chabot Road (cross street Patton). More info: Hope, 967-2294 or www.chabotelementary.org.

Claremont Middle School Auction

Sat, Oct 29, from 6 to 10pm. **"Scarin' Up Some Change"** at a festive Halloween-theme fundraiser (for **adults** only). Costumes are encouraged. Freaky food, deadly drinks, mad music and fabulous items to bid on. Tickets: $20 in advance; $25 at the door. Proceeds support enrichment programs: band and orchestra; digital media and film; garden; art; library and much more. Uptown Body and Fender, 401 26th Street. Info and to purchase tickets: Michelle, 917-1780 or mdb.pta.oakland@gmail.com or www.claremont.org.

Women's Cancer Resource Center (WCRC)

A lineup of fundraising events to **celebrate the WCRC 25th Anniversary**, ongoing through Feb. 2012.

- **Art show/sale** celebrating the creativity of women 50 and over: painting, weaving, book art and more. Sunday, 10/23, 1-5pm. WCRC, 5741 Teleg. Ave.
- **25th Anniversary Cabaret: an evening with the Duck's Breath Mystery Theater.** Wed, 11/9. Reception at 6:30pm; performance at 7:30. Julia Morgan Theater, 2640 College Ave. Tickets ($25) and more info about other events: Pat, 601-4040 x 105 or www.wcrc.org.

East Bay Mini Maker Fair

Sunday, Oct, 16, 10am to 5pm. A family day of do-it-yourself creativity, learning and fun for all ages **to benefit Park Day School**. Make unique hand-crafts; music; local food; DIY science and technology; educational workshops and more. Sew your own Halloween costume. Sponsored by the parents of Park Day School, 360 42nd Street (at Opal). Tickets and more info: Cathy, 653-0317 or http://ebmakerfaire2011.eventbrite.com/.

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