THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 26 ■ NO. 10 ■ ISSUE NO. 283 ■ November 5, 2011 ■ CIRCULATION: 3,500 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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Costumes on College: RDA-RCPC Halloween Parade



PHOTOS: ANNETTE FLOYSTRUP

Oakland's Residential Permit Parking Program Is Profitable for the City

by Jonathan Gabel, RCPC boardmember

The city of Oakland's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program enables residents to purchase permits that allow them unrestricted on-street parking in their own neighborhood (not counting street sweeping days). Prior to permit parking, commuters parked on the streets near the Rockridge BART station in such numbers that there were no vacant spaces left during the week days. Now, vehicles lacking permits are limited to a 2- or 4-hour stay on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

In response to a direct request made by the author to Parking Division Director Noel Pinto, the city of Oakland disclosed operating costs and revenues for the RPP Program during fiscal

▶ RPP Pays Off, page 10

Oct Town Hall: Rockridge Schools

by Don Kinkead, editor

Hampered by a shrinking budget and declining state financial support, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is forging ahead with Superintendent Tony Smith's strategic plan envisioning "Community Schools, Thriving Students," school board President Jody London told RCPC Town Hall attendees at the October 20 meeting.



/D. Kinkead

Jody London, OUSD president, at Oct Town Hall.

The plan's goal, London said, is to provide every Oakland public school

▶ Oct Town Hall, page 13

Volunteers Serve at Thanksgiving



/MONTE MCCLAIN

College Avenue Presbyterian to Host Community Thanksgiving Feast

by Monte McClain, pastor

For more than 20 years, the College Avenue Presbyterian Church community has hosted an annual Thanksgiving Day Community Meal.

Initially begun to build a deeper sense of community in our neighborhood and to respond to concrete needs, the meal continues year in and year out to work towards that consistent goal.

Then, Rockridge was emerging from the shadow of the neighborhood transformation

▶ Thanksgiving Feast, page 12

17 AGENDA: November RCPC Town Meeting

☞ Oakland Walk Tours: Annalee Allen

Annalee Allen, coordinator of the Oakland Tours Program, a member of the Alameda County Parks, Recreation, and Historical Commission, author of the weekly Landmarks column in the Oakland Tribune, and Rockridge resident, will speak, along with watercolorist Heidi Wyckoff, about their collaboration on ***Oakland Landmarks***, a book in honor of Oakland's 160th birthday. The book features stories and pictures about such well-loved architectural landmarks as the Rotunda Building's 125 ft. elliptical dome, the Tribune Tower and City Hall itself. Oakland is rich in architectural treasures from many eras; come and hear an exploration of our hometown's best.

Thursday, November 17 | 7:30-9 p.m. | Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 5366 College Avenue at Manila

RCPC Announces Board Vacancies

Due to the recent resignation of board member Ashley Etling, the RCPC Board of Directors has a vacancy 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.

Rockridge Through New Eyes: Motor City Escapees Meet Pedestrian-Oriented Lifestyle



When Judith Berne and her husband decided to move to the Bay Area, they settled in Rockridge and found a lifestyle very much to their liking. They are within a comfortable walk from each of North Oakland's three community hubs – College Avenue, the Temescal District, and Piedmont Avenue – and, at home, enjoy views that encompass San Francisco, Marin County and the Oakland-Berkeley Hills.

/D. Kinkead

by Judith Doner Berne

The first thing we did upon moving to Rockridge in June was pare down from two cars to one.

So what, you might say. But I grew up and lived all but 10 years of my life in the suburbs surrounding the Motor City – where two-car garages were the rule, and sometimes an extra car for your teenager was parked in the driveway.

Yes, we used our garages for parking – not for storage or an extra room as many do here.

As a result, our car wash bills have gone up – along with the cost of housing, groceries and dining out. But our dry-cleaning (more casual lifestyle), lawn cutting (we now have grasses, not grass) and heating/cooling (ah, the temperate climate) have gone down.

Those are just a few of the differences we are eager to absorb as newbies to Rockridge – the neighborhood we targeted to live in after renting a house in the Berkeley Hills during each of the last two winters.

An on-line SFGate article confirmed our choice of neighborhoods as we waited to see if our offer to go from a 1972 two-story air-conditioned colonial on one-third acre to a 1914 non air-conditioned bungalow with a postage-stamp yard was accepted.

"Although some have derided the neighborhood for being too upscale, too yuppie, Rockridge is, unlike many other gentrified areas, ethnically diverse," according to the article. "After all, this is still Oakland, the most integrated city in the United States. It's true the area has a chic edge. But it's also a place where people greet each other on the street, chat in line while they wait for their burritos at Cactus Taqueria, walk home together from BART. In the hamlet of Rockridge, a down-home feel prevails."

That was certainly true of our block's annual street party the Sunday after Labor Day. It was also in evidence at last month's Rockridge Out and About celebration, where throngs of locals turned out for the blocks-long street fair sponsored by College Avenue merchants. The Halloween Parade along the heart of College Avenue Sunday, October 30, was another vivid example of

Through New Eyes, page 13

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Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

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

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

Contact us at one of the following:
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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
☛ **December 3, 2011**
☛ **December deadline is November 17, 2011.**
Advertising rates are $26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. ***RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)***

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. However, the November meeting is set for November 16. See Land Use Update, below. *Subject to change. Check* rockridge. org *the preceding week for the full meeting agenda.*

City's Design Review Committee Members Clash with Safeway, City Staff on Next Steps for College Project

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair

The October 12 Design Review Committee hearing on the College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center project proposal (postponed from September 28 due to the Jewish High Holidays) had more than its share of fireworks, as well as a lot of negative comments on Safeway's project.

Following a short introduction by Oakland planner Peterson Vollman, Safeway architect Ken Lowney presented the design of the shopping center, emphasizing how well it would fit into College Avenue. The committee (Chair Madeleine Zayas-Mart, Vice-Chair Chris Patillo, and Commissioner Michael Colbruno) then heard from members of the community.

The majority of comments were negative, although a smattering of positive comments mostly asked the committee (and Planning Commission) to quickly approve the project. Most of these speakers appeared to have been recruited by Safeway, as they sat together and could be seen talking to one apparent leader both before and after speaking. Many of the speakers opposed to the project were also organized, with neighborhood group FANS (Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue) taking the lead in setting up the presentations. RCPC had two speakers; its chair, Stuart Flashman, and vice-chair, Andrew Charman. Also speaking was past planning commissioner, RCPC Land Use Committee member, and local architect Glen Jarvis. RCPC also submitted a formal comment letter, a copy of which is available at rockridge.org.

While some comments dealt with typical design issues such as driveway widths, building heights (and loss of views), and architectural style, others emphasized how poorly the large project would fit into the surrounding College Avenue commercial community with its small shops and pedestrian orientation. Still other comments objected to the project's potential for traffic generation and the unimaginative Claremont Avenue frontage. Lowney said they would fix that problem by adding more windows.

Commissioner Colbruno, who had to leave the meeting early, singled out RCPC's comments for praise. He noted that project opponents often don't propose anything positive, but limit themselves to criticising the project. RCPC's comments, after objecting to the Safeway project's lack of pedestrian focus, suggested pulling the non-grocery functions (including a florist, pharmacy, deli, meat and fish market) out of the main store and putting them in separate storefronts at the street level, where they would have to compete directly with other College Avenue merchants. This would result in a smaller Safeway store more conducive to College Avenue.

Other comments suggested adding a residential component. Many speakers urged Safeway to reduce its store from the proposed 51,000 square feet to something in the range of 25,000 to 30,000 sq. ft. It was pointed out this would still be roughly twice the size of Trader Joe's, the other major grocery outlet on College Avenue.

Susan Shawl of FANS presented a slideshow showing how Safeway itself had rebuilt or refurbished several of its Bay Area stores in the general "Lifestyle" format but with under 30,000 square feet of floor space.

Commissioners rebuffed by staff, Safeway

Once the public comment period ended, the two remaining commissioners spoke. Commissioner Patillo asked to see Safeway's

Design Review, page 10

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

Committee Notes:

The RCPC Land Use Committee's next meeting will be Wednesday, **November 16** (note change of date), 7:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch Library. Expected topics on the agenda will be the College Avenue Safeway project, the Rockridge Shopping Center project, and discussion of a possible zoning overlay for the central portion of the College Avenue CN-1 zoning area.

Contact Stu Flashman (652-5373 or chair@rockridge.org) for a copy of the agenda. Land use committee meetings are generally open to the public.

See article above for a report on the Planning Commission's Design Review Committee public hearing in October on the Safeway College Avenue Shopping Center project, and an unexpected decision by planning staff at meeting's end.

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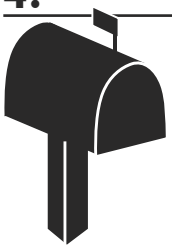
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Letters to the Editor

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.

Kaiser School Parents' Questions Given Short Shrift by RCPC

Editor:

I have lived here for 25 years. I moved here to attend CCA back in 1990.

I have a business on Claremont Avenue, I lived in Danspace for 10 years and I currently live near the DMV. My kindergartner just started Kaiser Elementary School, our school of choice.We are one of many families who live within walking distance of Peralta, Chabot and Emerson whose children attend Kaiser.

While attending the RCPC meeting at the Rockridge library on October 20, Kaiser and Santa Fe parents were told we couldn't ask our school board representative Jody London questions about Kaiser and Santa Fe's closure/relocation/expansion plan because it's not a Rockridge school. We complied and our questions were largely not addressed; including the pressing issue of school closures affecting our community. We were treated as if we were attacking Ms. London and as if wanting to talk to our school board representative was inappropriate.Five schools were discussed that evening: Peralta; Chabot; Emerson; Oakland International High School and Oakland Tech. Technically, four of those five schools do not lie within the Rockridge boundary.

We are trying to save our school. We are trying to keep open a school which mirrors all the successes of Peralta, high API at 885, music, art, computers, etc., only we serve a slightly more diverse student body. We are a safe haven for LGBT families, multi-racial and adoptive families as well. We are one of only eight schools in Oakland with a high API that serve more than 33 percent African-American students. Of this subgroup there are only four schools in Oakland where these students have achieved API over 800 and two are slated for closure.

My question for Ms. London, which was not addressed, was: "Why are you voting to close or relocate a school with high African American achievement?"

Our children come from every neighborhood in the city. Kaiser is a model school; we reflect our city and Oakland is our neighborhood.

We want to keep open and stable a high-performing, culturally and economically diverse and successful school with a wait list. OUSD wants us to "relocate" or "expand," but it is not clear which, or where or how.

We are defending our right to public education. Our city can serve our children but only if our communities, including the Rockridge community, can expand support for schools that lie outside community "boundaries."

We are told to be silent. Is this really our neighborhood? Our Oakland?

— Caroline Stern

RCPC Board Chair Stuart Flashman Responds on Behalf of RCPC

Ms. Stern:

The regular October RCPC Town Hall Meeting was about Rockridge schools within the Oakland Unified School District [OUSD]. By Rockridge schools is meant not their physical locations, but schools that have Rockridge in their attendance area. Those schools are Chabot Elementary, Peralta Elementary, Emerson Elementary, Claremont Middle School, Oakland Technical High and International High. Representatives of those schools were asked to attend the meeting and speak about their schools.

Some Rockridge families choose to send their children to Kaiser School, but its attendance area does not include Rockridge; hence, it was not a focus for the meeting.

Recognizing that there were many critical issues that audience members would want addressed, meeting facilitators asked the audience to submit written questions (a method pioneered by the League of Women Voters). The questions were screened and combined to allow as many topics as possible to be addressed. The facilitators tried to ask questions covering all topics, including school closures. In addition, the room was kept open an additional half-hour past the end of the meeting, and Board President London stayed for that full half-hour, to allow those with individual questions or comments to talk one-on-one.

We regret you found the process unsatisfying. However, the purpose of RCPC Town Hall Meetings is to provide information to the community and to allow community members to communicate with their elected representatives. We believe those purposes were satisfied by the format chosen.

— Stuart Flashman, chair RCPC

School Board President London Replies: School District Must Work With Deep Funding Cuts While Maintaining Standards

Editor:

Thanks to RCPC for the October program. Even during these difficult times, our teachers, principals, and staff, working with families and the community, continue to provide a sound education for our students.

In July 2009, after six years of state receivership, the Oakland Unified School District [OUSD] hired the first locally selected superintendent in years. The School Board directed Superintendent Tony Smith to develop a strategic plan that would lead to more equitable outcomes for all children in our school system. The result was "Community Schools, Thriving Students," designed to ensure that all OUSD schools provide the academic, social, and emotional supports students need to graduate from high school.

Even as we implement this plan, OUSD, like other California school districts, has experienced massive budget cuts. Statewide, $20 billion has been cut from K-12 education in the past several years. In the last two years, Oakland's general fund revenue decrease by $120 million. Districts throughout California, who rely on the state for 80 percent of general revenue funds, are compensated at 2005-2006 levels, nearly $3,000 less per student than required under state formulas.

Oakland today operates 101 schools for 38,000 students, far more schools than similarly sized districts. This is not sustainable.

The Oakland School Board asked the superintendent to recommend ways to continue to reduce our structural deficit and better direct limited resources to students. This recommendation included merging several schools located on the same campuses, changing grade configuration at several schools, and closing five schools. The recommendation recognizes the quality work at Kaiser and

Letters, page 5

Letters

from page 4

Burckhalter and suggests those schools grow from under 300 students to 380 students. Over the next year and a half, OUSD will work with the schools to determine where that growth can best occur: at the current site, or in a different location.

— *Jody London*
President, Board of Education and Director, District 1, Oakland Unified School District

Ed note:

Board President London also noted that more information about the strategic plan and its development – involving 14 task forces and extensive community involvement – can be found at www.thrivingstudents.org.

RCPC Town Hall No. 2: Oakland's Measures H, I and J

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair

Measures for the city of Oakland's special mail-in-ballot-only election headlined an out-of-the-ordinary second RCPC Town Hall Meeting held in October and co-sponsored by RCPC and the League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO).

Attentive Rockridge voters at the meeting heard league member Megan Chenoweth and LWVO President Katherine Gavzy explain the ins and outs of the three measures placed on the ballot by votes of the City Council: Measures H, I and J.

■ Measure H would shift the City Attorney position back to being an appointment by the City Council, rather than being elective by Oakland voters as it has been for the past 10 years.

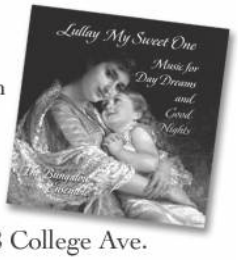
■ Measure I would establish a five-year parcel tax. Single-family residences would be assessed $80 a year (other properties would be assessed at different rates), to fund some specific city services, including police, fire, public works, parks, and libraries.

■ Measure J would extend the full-funding deadline for the city to fund a police and fire retirement fund now closed to new members but which still has about 1,000 participants. As with extending a mortgage, the annual payment would be reduced, but payments would continue longer. Under current law, the city would be required to pay $40 million into that fund this year. The measure would reduce that amount by about $10 million, the League reps said.

After explaining the measures, Chenoweth and Gavzy briefly examined the arguments for and against each measure and answered questions from the audience. They also explained two changes in how elections will be run in 2012 – the effects of the 2010 redistricting (Rockridge is unaffected in its representation) and the open primary, which will place all primary candidates on the same ballot, regardless of party affiliation.

All-in-all, an informative evening. Those present will surely feel more comfortable when marking their ballots, which are due by November 15. Happy voting.

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DMV Works with Community on Replanting Plan

by Don Kinkead, editor

When state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) loggers swooped in early in August to trim the DMV grounds, felling 100-year-old Eucalyptus trees and laying waste to FROG Park shrubbery in the Temescal Creek-FROG Park-DMV grounds, they could not have foreseen the storm of protest they would reap (The Rockridge News, October, 2011).

In addition to outraged Rockridge neighbors upset over the loss of FROG Park greenery and woodsy ambience, DMV management heard from District 1 Councilwoman Jane Brunner and State Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner.

Without ado, DMV agreed to hire an arborist to develop a replanting plan, and agreed to consult with neighbors and FROG Park supporters in development of that plan.

Meeting with a group of 20 neighbors at DMV offices in mid-October, John Hansen, chief of DMV's facilities operations, introduced arborist Steve Batchelder, who wanted to hear what the community expected from the replanting.

Community members lamented the loss and seek restoration of the sense of place the vegetation lent the area, berated DMV for taking action without contacting nearby residents, and called for input into the landscape design and replanting. The community also wanted a liaison position reestablished to ensure improved future communication between DMV and the community.

Citing the need for timely planting, Batchelder said it would be best to get "trees in the ground" before the rains begin. That

DMV Replanting, page 7

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RCPC Makes its EIR Grant Match: Safeway Project Elements Studied

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair

Earlier this year, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) received a $10,000 grant from the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment to fund consultant analysis of the environmental impact report for the College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center project.

The grant required dollar-for-dollar matching contributions from the community. For several months, The Rockridge News included a shopping bag "thermometer" marking the progress in reaching that $10,000 funding goal.

Now, RCPC is pleased to announce that the community came through with the full $10,000 in matching funds.

With the grant and matching funds, two consultants – one specializing in traffic impact analysis and one an expert in air and water quality and toxics – to study and report on the potential for adverse effects in those areas that could be caused by the proposed project.

The consultants' reports were submitted to the city along with RCPC's comment letter on the Draft EIR (environmental impact report). The letter and the reports are available on the RCPC website at rockridge.org.

Thank you to everyone who made a contribution, allowing the community to be even more effective in monitoring this important project proposal.

Get in the Holiday Spirit

Be a Rockridge News Distributor

How would you like to give a thoughtful holiday gift to your neighbors at no expense? You can do it by simply signing up for one of these two Block Captain routes. Once a month (except in August, when we do not publish), you will deliver our little gem of a newsletter to neighbors who have sorely missed reading the local news since their distribution captains Leah & Ben Hoskin and Jennifer Gregovich – thank you all very much for your service – resigned.

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Scholarship Program Names Three Rockridge Students at Tech 'Commended Students'

suggested by Ronnie Spitzer

Of 12 Oakland Tech students recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program as Commended Students, three are children of Rockridge families: Naomi Zingman-Daniel, Tom Dal Pino, and Gina Napolitano. The other Tech students awarded the designation are Ronah Baha, Hannah Doane, Dylan Everingham, Dashiell Harrison, Chloe Hawkey, Kelsey Higbie, Samantha Lamont, Nicholas Regent, and Evan Williams.

They all earned the designation by virtue of their scores on qualifying tests administered under the auspices of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). The students were noted as ranking among the top 50,000 of over 1.5 million other students nationwide who took the tests.

In another scholarship recognition, two students were noted by the National Achievement Scholarship Program, also conducted by the NMSC. This program is an academic competition established to honor Black American high school students. Savannah G. Harris and Olivia Hayden achieved test scores among the top 3 percent of more than 160,000 Black Americans who requested entry to the 2012 National Achievement Program.

From information provided by the acacemic counselor's office at Oakland Technical High School.

Find more information about Oakland Tech and its programs at http://oaklandtech.com/staff/

Tastes of Tech

News from Oakland Tech

Oakland Tech Offers School Tours to Future Students, Parents

Oakland Tech offers prospective students the nationally renowned Paideia program, our rigorous "schools within a school" academies centered on different career fields, special academic programs, AP courses, the comprehensive Performing Arts program, athletics and more.

A series of two-hour tours begining November 29 offers prospective parents and students an opportunity to visit the facility and classrooms during a typical school day. Starting time is 9 a.m. on the following scheduled tour dates:

■ Tuesday, Nov. 29	■ Tuesday, Dec. 6
■ Thursday, Dec. 8	■ Tuesday, Dec. 13
■ Thursday, December 15	

"Shadow days" are available to 8th grade students whose families have already visited Oakland Tech (at Information Night, on a school tour, through having another child or family member who attended Tech) and who have decided they're interested in seeing more. During a shadow visit, the visiting student spends a day or part of a day with a Tech student, following the Tech student host's schedule. Sign-up for a Tour or Shadow Day on the Oakland Tech Web site at http://oaklandtech.com/staff/admissions/prospective-families.

— Ronnie Spitzer, from Tech sources

DMV Replanting

from page 6

would give them a season to build stronger roots. Asked about soil contaminants, he said a general survey had found some but not dangerous amounts. Skeptical neighbors called for a fuller study.

Local landscape architect Penn Phillips, of InsideOut Architecture on Harwood Avenue, presented two versions of conceptual plans for the desecrated Frog Park areas.

There was no consensus to move ahead with the full Batchelder design, but neighbors supported the idea of moving ahead with replanting the trees in the rear parking lot. There will be further discussions on what species are best for this location. DMV representatives suggested the agency might be able to help with some costs of that part of the project.

Assemblywoman Skinner's staff and Councilwoman Brunner are examining ways to work with the community to begin to redress the loss of the sense of place the community enjoyed in the area.

The group agreed to meet again November 6 for further discussion and planning.

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Barry A. Kaufman

Spice Blends

I was recently wandering through the Pasta Shop in Market Hall looking around for new products. On the spice shelves I found an assortment of spice blends often used in a variety of North African, Middle Eastern and Indian dishes. Until recently, these spice blends were somewhat difficult to obtain. As with most ethnic spice blends, you will not find a singular recipe. As a result, a home cook wanting to prepare these blends would need to gather together numerous spices and herbs and often hope for the best. More recently several mail-order and on-line spice outlets now carry these hard-to-find blends.

My go-to spice blend is *ras el hanout*. *Ras el hanout*, which means "head of the market" in Arabic, is a complex mixture of upwards of 22 spices and is basic to Moroccan and Tunisian cooking. In Morocco, *ras el hanout* is the foundation for most lamb tagines.

Traveling through Morocco, my first stop was to go to the spice *souks* of Marrakech and Fez. The spice master would lovingly measure and weigh out the numerous spices – piled high in beautiful, multi-colored cones– to create his own *ras el hanout* blend.

I bought *ras el hanout* mixtures at several different spice markets. Each mix had a deep red color and was highly aromatic, but each was a bit different from the others.

Leaving Morocco, I was stopped by a customs officer and told I could not take the *ras el hanout* out. I begged him and, with little resistance, he smiled and let me go ahead.

Another North African Arabic spice blend is *baharat*. *Baharat* is simply the Arabic word that means "spices." *Baharat* usually contains hot spices such as paprika, chilies, black pepper; sweet spices such as allspice, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cardamom; and a touch of mild spices that include cumin and coriander. In Tunisia, crushed dried rose petals and mint are included in the blend. *Baharat* is used as a rub to flavor lamb and beef dishes.

The national spice mix of Ethiopia is *berberé*. *Berberé* is highly aromatic and extremely hot. It is a blend of Arabic and Indian flavors and is used in the preparation of Ethiopian stews called wats. *Wats* is the Ethiopian version of Moroccan *tagines*. *Berberé* includes coriander, cumin, fenugreek, and ajwain (an Indian spice), black pepper, allspice berries and various other sweet spices such as ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon. No two *berberé* blends are the same. Try it out at one of the several Ethiopian restaurants in the nearby Temescal Triangle. Order one of the *wats*; it will most certainly be prepared with *berberé*.

Another spice blend I saw at the Pasta Shop is *dukkah*. Although not formally a spice-blend, *dukkah* is an Egyptian mixture of finely chopped and toasted nuts and spices. It is used as a crunchy coating for grilled lamb chops, or sprinkled over salads with a little sumac. *Dukkah* is made from hazelnuts, pistachio nuts and sesame seeds with spices such as coriander and cumin added to the ground nuts. I really love this mix. Check out this month's recipe below.

If you want to make any of these spice-blends yourself, the *Field Guide to Herbs & Spices* by Aliza Green is a great resource for recipes. In addition to the Pasta Shop, on-line sources for many spice blends include World Spice Merchants, www.worldspice.com, and Penzeys Spices, www.penzeys.com. In New York, the best spice market is Kalustyans, www.kalustyans.com.

This Month's Recipe

Dukkah Crusted Lamb Chops

(serves 4)

1/2 cup of dukkah (available at Pasta Shop)
1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses (available at Pasta Shop)
1 tablespoon honey
8 small lamb rib chops, well trimmed
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

• Season lamb chops with salt and pepper.

• Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add lamb chops to pan. Cook to desired doneness, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare.

• Holding each chop by bone end, dip both sides of meat in the dukkah to coat and transfer to platter.

• Whisk pomegranate molasses and honey in small bowl. Drizzle honey mixture over chops and serve.

Goes well with couscous.

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

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College Prep Dedicates Center for World Languages and Cultures in Student's Memory

by Jennifer Beeson, school communications director

Nearly 300 members of the College Preparatory School community gathered in mid-October to dedicate the recently completed seven-classroom building that is the new home to the world languages department, as well as the Imbrie Student Center and the College Counseling Center. The Scott MacPherson Stapleton Center for World Languages and Cultures is named in honor of College Prep alumnus Scott Stapleton '01, who died tragically in an accident abroad in 2008.

Head of School Monique DeVane acknowledged the many individuals who were instrumental in bringing this new building to life, and board of trustees co-chair Jim Gilliland lauded the great generosity of the community.

The reception had an international flavor, with musical performances in Japanese, French, Chinese, and Latin. On behalf of his family, Frank Stapleton spoke of the role that College Prep played in Scott's life, and the very special pride they have in the new home for the study of world languages and cultures, which resonates so closely with Scott's life of global scholarship and adventure.

The ceremonial ribbon cutting marked the official opening of the building, and guests were invited to tour the new facility. Students occupied their new classrooms on November 1.



/Courtesy College Prep

Pictured above, from left, are: Jim Gilliland, co-chair of the school's board of trustees; Monique DeVane, Head of School; Pam Stapleton; Claire Stapleton '03; Frank Stapleton; Murray Cohen, former head of school.

College Prep, located at 6100 Broadway, is an independent, grades 9-12 coeducational day school in upper Rockridge. About 40 percent of the students live in Oakland and in Piedmont, 31 percent are from Contra Costa County, and 22 percent are from Berkeley and cities north of Berkeley. The remaining 7 percent come from San Francisco and Marin. Visit college-prep.org for more information. — Jennifer Beeson

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Design Review

from page 3

materials board – a depiction of the various materials that would be used in the project. Architect Lowney said he didn't have it with him. When Patillo asked if he could have it brought to the meeting, he answered with a flat, "No." She then suggested the meeting would need to be continued until she could see it. After a few more comments on what was lacking in the design, Commissioner Zayas-Mart expressed a preference for a design that included residential use and indicated that based on the problems with traffic and other issues, she'd like to have Safeway come back with a project alternative that was 10,000 sq. ft. smaller. Safeway's representatives stated emphatically that the company would NOT consider a smaller project option. Zayas-Mart suggested that the committee continue its discussion of the project to its next meeting, but Scott Miller, Oakland zoning administrator said that rather than hold the item over, he would present the commissioners' recommendations to his boss, Eric Angstadt, for his consideration.

The audience came away with the sense that city staff and Safeway had more control over the process than the citizen commissioners who had been appointed to make the decisions.

RPP Pays Off

from page 1

year July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. The figures are:

Gross Permit Sales Revenue:	$ 285,436.
Gross Enforcement Revenue (RPP Only):	$ 858,230.
RPP Expenditures:	$ 501,204.

The total revenue accruing to the city is the sum of permit sales revenue and enforcement revenue, or $1,143,666. The net profit to the city is this amount minus RPP expenditures, or $642,462. Enforcement revenue exceeds RPP expenditures by $357,026. So RPP would still be quite profitable even if residents did not have to pay anything for their permits.

Since RPP was put in place about 25 years ago, the city has raised the price of permits twice. (The last time was December, 2009; permit renewals went from $20 to $35 per year.) The justification for both fee increases was that the revenue from RPP had to cover its costs. However, the true costs of RPP were not then known because RPP enforcement revenue could not be broken out separately from general parking citation revenue. With the advent of the Citation Administration and Revenue Reconciliation System software, also known as CARRS, the city now can separate these costs. The system went into operation in the summer of 2010; 2010-2011 is the first fiscal year for which such information is available.

According to an announcement made by Pinto at a meeting in July, 2010, other features of the CARRS program include:

- a new telephone answering system that is more responsive and more accurate regarding wait times
- elimination of the paper-based system's six-week delay between the time a citation is issued and the time when the city is able to accept payment.
- ability of residents to apply for, renew and pay for RPP permits online.

See The Rockridge News, July, 2010, page 3, at http://www.rockridge.org/news/RN07.10.pdf, for additional details.

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Loss and Recovery Drama Plays Out on Yahoo! Group Site

The potential power (and potential risks, as well) in social media communications was demonstrated in the early days of the Arab Spring when dissidents used Facebook pages and Twitter accounts to coordinate their organizing.

Just as effectively, Oakland neighborhood groups and resident organizations use Yahoo! Groups to discuss community events, note crime trends, trade shopping hints, and build group cohesion. Some have even used the groups to finesse small-time crooks.

This condensed series of Yahoo! Group postings by Kadi Driscol begins with her report of a crime that rarely ends well for the victim: bicycle theft. It tells us of her dogged sleuthing, and closes with congratulations from a Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) representative.

■ ***Initial posting by Kadi Driscol***

Hey all.... Some time during the day today, we had three bikes stolen from our yard. Two of them were vintage Schwinns that were secured (they cut the locks), the third was not. I am heartbroken, as one was my grandmother's and I had recently brought it to California and restored it.

I'm wondering if anyone knows if there is anything I can do about it. I filed an online report with OPD but the dispatcher said they probably wouldn't do anything about it.

■ ***Next posting by Driscol***

I am grateful to report that after a great deal of effort and the assistance of a few friends and the OPD, my grandmother's vintage Schwinn was recovered tonight!

Here's how it all went down.... After I filed a report with OPD, I reported it stolen through several stolen bike registries and mailing lists. I also posted ads on Craigslist to "buy" a vintage Schwinn and set up automatic alerts for postings with Schwinn in the title.

At 3 p.m., the posting came. A guy had actually posted photos so I was able to identify my U-Bolt lock still on the bike. I alerted several friends and we all contacted him to buy the bike.

Through contact with several of my friends, the guy gave various clues: his e-mail, which included his name; his area (Temescal); his phone number; and photos of the bike locked to a distinctive railing. We narrowed down possible areas and set out to locate the railing.

Lo and behold, after 40 minutes of driving up and down streets in Temescal and asking neighbors if they recognized the iron work, we found the bike sitting in plain sight at a house just off Telegraph.

I realized we had two big problems: one, the guy had put another U-Bolt on the bike, and, two, I was afraid to approach the guy without backup. (Earlier in the day, our OPD resource officer, Maureen Vergara, told me there would be no police assistance available since they were all at the "Occupy Oakland" protest.)

After driving around to find a patrol officer, we gave up and went to Frank Ogawa plaza (since they were all there anyway).

I found officer Everett Peterson inside City Hall, explained the situation and he made some calls. Before long, OPD was on the case.

We coordinated a would-be purchase with the thief and waited nearby with police. When the seller came out and freed the bike, we pounced! I personally snatched my beloved bike from his grubby paws while the officers cuffed him and read his rights.

I want to give a special thanks to Officers Peterson, Calipes, Bermudez and Sergeant Mitchell and all of my wonderful neighbors who offered ideas and well-wishes.

I'll be keeping my bike inside from now on!

— Kadi Driscoll

Epilogue

Dear Kadi,

My heartiest congratulations on such terrific detective work and coordination amongst you and your friends!

You also hit the jackpot when happening upon Officer Everett Peterson at City Hall. He was our Rockridge NCPC's PSO (Problem Solving Officer) some years ago and very enthusiastic and super in dealing with our concerns and our observations of suspicious activity.

With everything going against you — the financial state of our city, OPD's troubles in general and lack of resources, timing of the protests, etc. — you succeeded as a team effort with OPD: perfect community policing.

Denise Jorgensen
Treasurer, Greater Rockridge NCPC
Beats 12Y & 13X

— With thanks to Susan Montauk for her help telling this true tale of urban justice.

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Thanksgiving Feast

from page 1

caused by the building of Highway 24 and the BART Station. Today Rockridge is established as a vibrant community: a destination for shopping, foodies and families.

The Judeo-Christian Bible defines community as a place where those who may be the least-noticed among us belong and are not forgotten.

Our annual Community Thanksgiving Meal is a way in which we serve each other, investing our time and resources to care for others, from the urban poor who live here, to the homeless who live in Oakland, to the elderly who are often alone at the holidays.

This Thanksgiving, College Avenue Presbyterian Church will again be hosting its annual Thanksgiving Day Community Meal on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., at 5951 College Avenue.

The meal is a joint project with diverse members of our Rockridge community, involving congregational members, local merchants and local residents. In our current economic and political climate, it is an opportunity for us to gather as a community to respond to the needs of those struggling with hunger, solitude and joblessness.

The meal generally serves between 200-300 people with over 50 volunteers gathered in the shared desire to make this event possible. The meal is open and free for everyone. Donations of money and food are gratefully accepted. It's because of such donations that the meal takes place. You can also give of your time. Help is needed beginning Monday, November 21st through Wednesday the 23rd to prepare, set up and decorate the church gym for the meal. Significant help is needed the day of the event to set-up, cook, serve and also clean up. To volunteer or to receive more information, you can call the volunteer coordinator Mike Castner at 658-3487 or contact the church office at 638-365 or capc1@sbcglobal.net, or look for the Thanksgiving section on the church website at www.capcchurch.org.



Attendees and volunteers at last year's College Avenue Presbyterian Church Thanksgiving Feast gather for a post-meal photo. /Monte McClain

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Through New Eyes

from page 2

a community coming together.

Maybe we rejected Berkeley because it was disconcerting to see hordes of blue and yellow tees, sweatshirts and jackets – only to know that they displayed the Cal Berkeley logo and not the University of Michigan, which generations of our family have attended.

It did turn out that the former owner of our 1914-era bungalow is a U-M graduate, but we only discovered that when we had to forward his alumnus mail.

The fact that three Cal law seniors recently moved in next door was mitigated when one told us she was getting up to make an 8 a.m. public policy class taught by our former Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm.

So why did Rockridge and Northern California appeal after growing up and raising our children in the Midwest suburbs?

It wasn't only that one of our three children and one of our three grandchildren live nearby.

We are in awe that we can walk two blocks to College Avenue and enjoy the incredible array of restaurants offering almost whatever you can conjure up. And we like the vibe inside and on the street.

We are excited that we can buy sunglasses, have our shoes re-heeled, buy or borrow books, pick up a tee or more, drop off our dry-cleaning, have a massage, do yoga and stock our fruit bowls, refrigerators and pantries – all, if we choose, on foot.

We can't get over that the Rockridge BART lands us in the heart of "the City" in less than half an hour.

And we have become addicted to your big, fat, chewy ginger cookies, gourmet pizza, exotic sorbets and organic ice creams. They make up for the fact that your bagels, shall we say, don't cut it.

Summer here isn't the summer of the Midwest, and we have had to celebrate from afar the victories (and defeats) of our sports teams. But most of our Detroit-area friends couldn't stay up for the final innings as the Tigers beat New York and succumbed to Texas in the American League championship. Ditto the Detroit Lions' appearance on Monday Night football. We, on the other hand, had just finished dinner!

Readers: Stay tuned for periodic observations on Rockridge from the new journalist on the block.

Judy Berne is a former writer, columnist and editor for local newspapers in and around metropolitan Detroit. You can e-mail her at judyberne@att.net

Oct Town Hall

from page 1

student access to a high-quality education. Moreover, "All children will graduate from high school," she said.

Invited to the Town Hall to discuss the new plan and how it could affect Rockridge area schools and students, London first described the bleak legacy of the district's six years under state receivership, now lightened by the local board's hiring of Smith, the first board-picked superintendent in 10 years.

Elements of Smith's plan include linked learning that will give students real-world connections to classroom teaching, rigorous academic standards, technical knowledge and habits of mind, such as self-discipline and problem-solving skills, London explained.

Also, the district is improving facilities across the city with Measure B funds approved by voters in 2006. School buildings will be brought up to "green" certification standards, on-site resources will be improved and landscaping will be added.

As to Rockridge area schools, London introduced principals and some teachers from Emerson, Peralta and Chabot schools, and Oakland Technical and International high schools to relate their work in support of the strategic plan.

Although the plan calls for the merging or closing of a number of schools throughout the district over time, Rockridge schools are not included at this point, London said, although rumors to the contrary had circulated for several weeks.

Subsequent to the question-and-answer period that followed the presentation, a group of Kaiser School parents said their concerns about that school's reported closing had not been fully addressed. The meeting was continued a half-hour beyond the scheduled end for further questions.

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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. **Note change of meeting place for Nov. only**: College Preparatory School, 6100 B'way. Info: 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 Nov.

FOR CHILDREN

- **Pre-School Story Time:** (ages 2 to 5) **Note new day:** every Thurs, 10:30am; (Sing-along story time on 2nd Thurs.).
- **Toddler Story Time:** (up to age 2) **Note new day:** every Thurs., 10:30am**,** upstairs.
- **Family Story Time:** Stories, songs and rhymes (kids to age 5). Every Saturday, 10:30am.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Medicine Warriors Dance Troupe** will perform to celebrate Native American Heritage Month. Tues. 11/29, 7pm. Best for ages 3 to 10 but all ages welcome.

FOR TEENS

- **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.
- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club**: (ages 13 and up) Watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month 5 to 6:30pm.
- **Soap Making Workshop:** Make gifts in time for the holidays. Sat., 11/19, 11:30am to 1:30pm.
- **Youth Speaks** presents **free Writing and Performance Workshops**. Thursdays from 4 to 5:30pm, ending on Dec 8.

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 at the adult reference desk). **Note:** volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

- Nov: **Jamie Treacy:** Unity School Students' drawings and paintings**.**
- Dec: **Jimi Evins:** oil painting and prints.

Lobby Display Case:

- **TBA**; call for info.

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:** Fri and Sat, 11/11 and 11/12 (Veterans' Day and city-wide furlough); and Thurs, Fri and Sat, 11/24 through 11/26 for Thanksgiving. **Note: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates.**

Diesel Book/Readings and Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Sun, 11/6, 3pm. Publication party for two local authors: **Alvin Orloff:** *Why Aren't You Smiling?* and **Stephen Beachy:** *Boneyard.*
- Sun, 11/13, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Sharon Doubiago** and **Lindy Hough.**
- Mon, 11/14, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (2nd Mon. each month)**:** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed, 11/16, 7pm. Local author and teacher **Jon Schreiber:** *Waking Up to This Moment.*
- Mon, 11/21, 7pm. Photographer **Annie Leibovitz:** *Pilgimage.*

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

Holiday Jazz and Wine Stroll

College Ave merchants will be open for an evening of strolling, shopping and dining. Live music by top Bay Area jazz musicians. Fri, Dec 9, 5 to 8pm (restaurants until 9pm).

Rockridge in the Snow

Children of all ages are invited to play in the snow at Rockridge BART. Live holiday entertainment. Sat, Nov 26, 3-6pm. Annual Holiday event sponsored by the Rockridge District Assn. (RDA). Bring donations for One Warm Coat and Toys for Tots. Info: www.rockridgedistrict.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

Evie Ladin Band; string band and vocals. Saturday, 11/12, 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.evieladin.com. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Women's Cancer Resource Center (WCRC)

25th Anniversary Cabaret: an evening with the **Duck's Breath Mystery Theater** to celebrate the WCRC 25th Anniversary. Wed, 11/9. Reception at 6:30pm; performance at 7:30. Julia Morgan Theater, 2640 College Ave. Tickets ($25) and info about future events: Pat, 601-4040 x 105 or www.wcrc.org.

Temescal Farmers' Market

Open Sundays, 9am to 1pm (all year). Locally grown fruits and vegetables; fresh ranch eggs; home-made 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 unique food varieties and cooking tips; greet your neighbors and listen to live music. Bring your own reusable bags. 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot. More info about Certified Farmers' Markets at www.urbanvillageonline.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Programs include: Arts/crafts; health insurance counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers support groups, computer classes and more. Annual $12 membership entitles seniors 55 and older to get discounts on activities and trips.

- **Free flu and pneumonia shots**: Wed, 11/9, 9am to noon. (Bring Medicare card)
- **AARP driver safety class** (8 hours): Tues, 11/15 and Thurs, 11/17, 8:15am to 12:30pm (free for veterans and spouses).
- **Red Hawk Casino trip**: Mon, 11/14, 8am to 5pm. $25 (receive a $10 casino slot package).

Open 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, and volunteer opportunities. Info: 597- 5085.





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