THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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19 AGENDA

January 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

- **REPORT FROM THE BOARD AND COMMITTEES.** This year's reports will be in written form. Besides being available at the Town Hall Meeting, the reports will be available later in the Rockridge library lobby (next to the copies of the Rockridge News) and will be posted on the rockridge.org website.
- **BOUQUETS AND BRICKBATS.** Provide feedback to the board about how RCPC did in 2011, and what you'd like RCPC to focus on in 2012.
- **INTRODUCTION TO LAND USE - PART III: Litigation.** What happens when, after the general plan and zoning are done, and all the EIRs and hearings are over, the City ignores our input and approves a horrible project? Well, sometimes nothing, but often it's time to head to the courts. This presentation won't give you a law degree, but it should help you understand what's at stake and what's going on when a land use lawsuit gets filed. The presenter will once again be RCPC Chair and land use attorney Stuart Flashman.

Thursday, January 19 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College at Manila

Will a New Year Bring Solutions to Old Problems?



The word cloud at left names several growing public safety concerns that often confront Rockridge residents. The money to fund solutions that could improve public safety is unlikely to be available in the near future.

The cloud, though, also names existing public safety resources that need only personal action and involvement to be effective.

Vigilantism? A non-starter. Active participation is the key to personal safety

by Don Kinkead, editor

The headline of a brief report in the November issue of The Rockridge News introduced the story of a "worrisome" mugging on Ocean View Drive.

Any mugging, any time, is worrisome. This one was especially so because the muggers (there were two) were armed. Not only that, there was a second mugging in the same area within a week of the other.

In remarks made by a Problem Solving Officer (PSO) at the December Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) meeting, it was pointed out that Oakland is presently staffed by about 600 police officers, down from a recent high number of about 800 officers. Compared to other cities of similar size, the officer said, some studies have shown Oakland should have a police force of 1,200-1,500 officers.

Others feel effective policing to be more a matter of strategic planning rather than the result of a certain police officer count.

Still, if you have been ordered to the pavement by an armed thug, your concern will be survival, not staffing statistics. At a time when even Oakland police brass are aware that effective response time is a laughable expectation, citizens must prepare their own crime response program in the sense of preventing crime before it occurs, or, at the very least, making it difficult to happen.

Start with Existing Resources

Lost amid crime statistics, consent decree limitations on OPD and a sense of helpless-

▶ Your Role in Public Safety, page 14

Scenic Streets Volunteers Morph On-Ramp from Dowdy to Dandy



Green Thumbs Needed Now to Nurture Renovated Ramps

by Diana Thomas, Scenic Streets volunteer

In the second urban beautification achievement by local group Scenic Streets, neighborhood volunteers finished landscaping the Highway 24 on-ramp at

▶ Scenic Streets, page 13



BART Update: Changes, Plans, Activities

by Bob Franklin, director, BART District 3

■ Rail Grinding Reduces Troublesome Track Noise

Some neighbors along Keith Avenue had recently reported that BART trains had been excessively noisy and were causing their homes to slightly tremble. The trains were also setting off alarms of some cars parked in the eastside parking lot. BART engineers found heavy corrugation and "wheel burns" on the tracks just east of the station. A rail grinder smoothed the trackway and re-profiled some of the rail, which have addressed the neighbors' concerns.



Bob Franklin, BART District 3 boardmember and Rockridge resident, pictured with newly-built accessible fare gates at the Rockridge station.

Photo Courtesy of Bob Franklin

■ New Car Seats to be Installed

In response to customer feedback on the condition of BART seats, BART will soon be installing padded vinyl seats in 100 of its 669 cars as a pilot program. The intent is to provide the same comfort as the current wool/cotton seats, but to make the seats easier to clean.

■ New Accessible Fare Gates

This past month, new accessible fare gates were installed at the Rockridge BART station. This installation will make it easier for people in wheelchairs or with luggage or other large objects to go through the fare gates. The reconfiguration of the fare gate array will also make interactions with the station agent easier.

■ Plaza Renovation

The contract to make some improvements to the Rockridge BART plaza was awarded this past fall and construction will begin around February 2012, weather permitting. The ivy at the base of the escalator will be replaced with native plants, lighting will be improved, seating added, a decorative compass rose will be installed, and the overall area will have a greater community feel to it. The construction is scheduled to last about six weeks.

■ Pigeon Abatement Program

This past month, BART maintenance workers removed roosting areas for pigeons, especially where this was a conflict with pedestrians along College Avenue. Although pigeons will always find new areas to roost, this abatement technique will lessen the impact of the pigeons around the BART station.

■ Clipper Card to Replace Tickets

BART has been phasing out the sale of BART tickets at offsite locations (i.e., Safeway and Walgreens) in order to transition more riders to the Clipper Card, the smartcard that can be used to pay for fares on most public transportation providers in the Bay Area. Soon, using a Clipper card will be the only way riders will be able to take advantage of discounts for seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, and the 6.25 percent high value discount (available to everyone). More information can be found at www.clippercard.com or by calling 877/878-8883.

BART Update, page 3

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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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- 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
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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
☛ **February 4, 2012**
☛ **February deadline is January 19, 2012.**
Advertising rates are $26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. *RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)*

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: January 25.

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

Committee Notes:

■ Environmental review of two Safeway projects continues

Between holiday vacation days and budgetary furlough days, Oakland planning staff didn't have a lot of time to make progress during December. Consequently, there haven't been significant changes (at least that RCPC is aware of) in the status of the two major Rockridge projects now undergoing review: the College Avenue Safeway project and the redevelopment of the Rockridge/Safeway Shopping Center at Broadway and Pleasant Valley Road.

The city's consultants are still working on the environmental documentation for those projects: preparing the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Rockridge Shopping Center, and responding to comments on the DEIR for the College Avenue Safeway project.

Given their status, it's unlikely there will be any public hearings about either project in January. However, to make sure you're notified when something does happen, please sign up for the RCPC e-news at the rockridge.org website.

■ No news on city-wide zoning

Likewise, there doesn't appear to have been major progress on the second phase of Oakland's city-wide rezoning process, which will include consideration of changing the city's off-street parking requirements, particularly for transit-oriented development areas. Again, signing up for the RCPC e-news will ensure you hear about it when public meetings are scheduled.

■ Land Use Committee meeting

The next meeting date of the RCPC Land Use Committee returns to the usual fourth Wednesday of the month time slot, January 25, 7:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch Library.

Topics on the agenda will be updates on the Rockridge Shopping Center and College Avenue Safeway projects and the latest word on what we can expect in phase II of the city-wide rezoning process.

Please contact Stu Flashman (phone 652-5373, or email chair@rockridge.org) if you want a copy of the agenda. Land Use Committee meetings are generally open to the public.

Visit the RCPC Website for News and Events: rockridge.org

Board Seeks Applicants for a Remaining Board Vacancy and for Land Use Committee Openings

Due to the recent resignation of board member Ashley Etling, the RCPC board of directors has a vacancy to fill. If you are interested, e-mail: 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.

BART Update

from page 2

■ BART Community Participation

BART has also participated in various community activities: Rockridge Out and About, the 3rd Annual Rockridge in the Snow Day, and the holiday tree lighting of the redwood trees on BART property.

■ Contact BART Director

Please feel free to contact me with your BART concerns or questions: BobFranklinBART@aol.com or 510/684-0026.

Bob Franklin is the BART director for District 3, which includes Rockridge. He is also a Rockridge resident.





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FROG Park News



Community Finds Consensus on Creekside Design Elements and Repairs at DMV Area

by Theresa Nelson, FROG Chair

How best to restore the creekside area damaged by an overzealous pruning job at the Claremont Avenue DMV office building was the topic of another in a series of community meetings centered on the project.

Councilmember Jane Brunner convened the meeting held November 30 at the Rockridge Library to discuss design preferences for the restoration. Elinor Buchen, staff aide to Councilmember Brunner, Mark Chekal-Bain, district director of Assemblymember Nancy Skinner's office, and John Hanson, DMV facilities director, as well as other City and DMV staff, also attended.

In addition to the more than 35 area residents present, 114 people submitted their preferences and comments via an online survey. After FROG leaders summarized the online survey comments and data, those present at the meeting provided additional input.

Councilmember Brunner and her staff aide, Elinor Buchen, then led a discussion on preferred elements, using drawings provided by FROG of the area as it was before the tree removal. After much discussion, the following consensus priorities emerged:

- Replant trees and shrubbery using native plants appropriate to the current uses.
- Anchor boulders and/or tree stump amenities – may be used for seating, for example – on concrete pads or other secure means to avoid migration.
- Create a pathway to connect the existing Frog Park pathway to the Farmer's Market as a more formal entry, to protect the new plantings and to increase safety during market hours.

Preferred tree species for planting, of the 24-inch box size, were:

- Live Oak
- Red Oak
- Redwood
- California Bay
- California Maple (no more than one)
- Cork Oak (lower preference)

Additional direction from the meeting and survey results included replanting at least as many trees as were removed, and adding shrub and grass coverage; providing a mix of sun and shade, taking care to make sure plantings will not block the creek; and removal of the car cages (John Hanson from the DMV is looking into this), or, at least, shielding them with additional plantings above and beyond the restoration. There was also interest in adding a second picnic table near the current one, and, to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, additional benches for those unable to sit on boulders.

Some community members asked why the four trees in the Miles Avenue parking lot had not yet been replanted, given that there was consensus on the species some weeks ago. The DMV's arborist had wanted to wait until after the rainy season to plant these trees, but several landscape architects stated that plantings of this type could be done at any time. Several neighbors on Miles Avenue urged that these trees be planted as soon as possible. John Hanson will look into accelerating that planting.

The DMV has agreed to restore the eroded section of the Frog Park pathway, significantly degraded as a result of the August tree removal. The department will work with its staff architect and the arborist who worked on the earlier tree removal and rear parking lot replanting, to develop a concept for community review in January. Sign up on the FROG list at www.frogpark.org to receive email notice of this meeting.

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Claremont School Supporters Ride for a Reason: Funding for School Programs

Ride for a Reason: May 12, 2012

by Michael Napolitano, Claremont Middle School parent

Now in its fourth year, Ride for a Reason is a bike ride from Oakland to the Capitol in Sacramento, organized to draw attention to the budget crisis affecting public schools in California, and to raise funds essential for school enrichment programs at several schools in North Oakland. California now funds its schools at 25 percent below the national average, and has the largest average class sizes in the nation (California Budget Project web site, 2011: www.cbp.org). We can and must do better.

Ride organizers need your help to register 200 riders and raise $60,000. The funds will be split evenly among Emerson Elementary, Claremont Middle School, Oakland Technical High, and Oakland International High.





Cyclists Kenton Lee and son Nathan mark their arrival at the Capitol.

Sam Evision, Dawn Nakamura, and Nathan and Kenton Lee near Martinez en route to Sacramento. Both photos from 2011 Ride for a Reason.

Photos/Sarah Mages

Join us on May 12 for fully supported cycling of 45-, 60- or 100-mile rides to the Capitol. Transportation home is available. (The 45-mile ride is ideal for families and children.)

All riders are encouraged to raise $250 or more in donations to help achieve our fundraising goal.

To register, volunteer, or donate, go to: www.rideforareason.dojiggy.com. For more information, please contact Mike Napolitano at mikenapolitano5@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Ride for a Reason: Details, Opportunities, Support for Participating Cyclists

Fully supported ride means:

- breakfast and lunch are provided;
- there are many rest stops along the way (where snacks, fluids, and energy products are provided);
- there are group ride leaders for the 45-mile ride; and,
- SAG (support and gear) wagons are available to assist riders who have mechanical or physical challenges during the ride.

We also organize monthly or more frequent group practice rides to help folks get into shape and get to know each other before the ride.

The next group practice ride is on January 21, at 9 a.m., departing from in front of Oakland Technical High on Broadway at 49th Street. Also, we provide free bike mechanical check-ups, tips, and helpful information to beginning riders to help them prepare for the ride.



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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.

The Occupy Movement is Transformative and Effective

Editor:

Your recent Op/Ed essay entitled "Is the 'Occupy' Movement Relevant to Rockridge?" [The Rockridge News, December 2011] was interesting. However, another question is whether Rockridge is relevant to the Occupy movement? Actually, the Occupy movement will end up being honored as having transformed America in the early 21st century from a system of undemocratic rule by the few wealthy (the 1 percent) into a real democracy (rule by all).

Within a month of the first Occupy Wall Street camp-in in Zuccotti Park in New York City, the Occupy movement had spread to hundreds of other American cities and towns, and even to cities in other countries.

We have been treated to a spectacle of city mayors across the country trying to trash our American Constitution, our Bill of Rights, our First Amendment protections of the Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of the Press, all egged on by President Obama's Dept. of Homeland Security, the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies.

But the Occupy movements will persevere, and ultimately succeed, being led by courageous, intelligent and creative individuals. We protested the US war on Vietnam in the late '60s and early '70s. It took us about nine years, but we finally got the US out of Vietnam.

Since the Occupy Wall Street movement has already achieved some major successes in the public framing of discussion of the corrosive effects of big money dominating politics, I would suggest that they will achieve many more major victories in less than nine years.

Some of us seniors living in Rockridge can only contribute passive support to the Occupy movement, including letters to the editor, financial support and signs in our windows. However, passive support is always better than no support at all...

— James K. Sayre

Occupy Movement Seeks Change

Editor:

Thank you very much for the important Op/Ed on the Occupy movement. Interesting that in the same issue of The Rockridge News [December, 2011], you discuss the history of our community's action to limit the negative impact of development when the 24 freeway and Rockridge BART station were being built (my family was part of that fight). Occupy is just a larger and more broad representation of that same spirit: communities in the 99 percent acting together to stem the tide of the rapacious and greedy among the business community in the 1 percent. My own participation in several Occupy events, both in Oakland and in San Francisco, has certainly inspired me.

I hope the Occupy movement will inspire other Rockridge neighbors to continue our work here in Rockridge and beyond in the larger community. The Occupy movement is just beginning and there are and will be a diversity of ways to get involved.

— Name withheld at writer's request

Costly Response to Occupy Movement Reduces City Services

Editor:

Stuart Flashman's article [The Rockridge News, December 2011] asks the question "Is the 'Occupy' Movement Relevant to Rockridge?" Unfortunately, the answer is "Yes," in an unintended way.

It has cost the city of Oakland more than $2 million to deal with the Occupy protestors. The result of this can only be a further reduction in badly needed services for our city.

I agree with the basic description of the 1 percent vs. the 99 percent. But the loss to Oakland (and to Rockridge) will fall on the latter, not on the former.

— Jon Gabel

Op/Ed Piece Author Stuart Flashman Responds:

Jon Gabel points up the cost of the police response to the Occupy Oakland movement. The cost was high and unfortunate. Whether it could have been less is difficult to say. Yet the First Amendment right "of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" is not to be lightly tossed aside based on budgetary constraints. How much did Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington cost the D.C. budget for police presence? Yet without it, the 1965 Civil Rights Act might not have happened.

— Stuart Flashman

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Shop Oakland First

Paideia at Tech: Educating the Whole Student

by Ronnie Spitzer, Oakland Tech parent

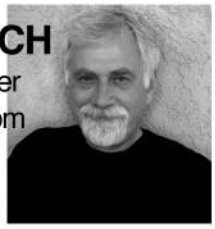
Imagine a high school program so popular that information sessions are conducted in the school auditorium. Add high academic standards disseminated through high-level analysis of sophisticated reading material in English, History and Government. Consider that recent program graduates have matriculated at Harvard, Stanford, Northwestern, Brown, McGill, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Wellesley, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Sound too good to be true, particularly in an Oakland public school? Not so. Rockridge's local public high school, Oakland Technical High School, offers Paideia, a humanities program which fills the bill, and so much more.

Paideia started at Tech in 1986 as the brainchild of program co-directors Marietta Joe and Maryann Wolfe, newly arrived Tech history teachers. At that time, OUSD offered no Advanced Placement classes in any school and Honors English classes required students to read one book per year. Ms. Wolfe and Ms. Joe were given a mandate by Tech Principal Dennis Chaconas to develop a better program. The result was Paideia.

The program Ms. Wolfe and Ms. Joe designed seeks to educate the whole person by teaching critical thinking and communication skills while adhering to California grade-level educational standards.

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Drawing on their own training, the teachers decided that their new program should treat history and literature as interlinked subjects. Once the two directors heard Mortimer Adler speak on educating the whole child through teaching thinking and communications skills using the Paideia method, the program took on its current form.

Tastes of Tech
News from Oakland Tech

Tech's Paideia program's interdisciplinary coursework revolves around the social sciences and English, namely history, politics, economics, and literature. Students acquire knowledge by reading classic literature, poetry, short stories, articles, viewing films and completing home assignments. Class instruction and discussions, conducted by instructors trained in the Socratic method, train students to question "why" through sophisticated analysis. Students graduate well-prepared for college and life afterwards, pursuing careers in law, medicine and other fields.

Courses consist of two-hour blocks in 10th and 11th grade, and a three-hour block in 12th grade. Two teachers are assigned to each grade, with content highly coordinated between them. Classes are accelerated and students are required to take advanced placement exams in 11th and 12th grade. AP test pass rates for Paideia program students range between 80 and 98 percent.

Teachers and students are committed to upholding the Paideia program's high standards. Teachers acquire dual certification in English and History, receive training in the Socratic method, devote extensive amounts of personal time to critically grading student assignments, and develop coordinated lesson plans. Students complete assignments over school breaks including the summer, arrive prepared in class, and constantly strive to better their writing and discussion skills.

Admission to the 10th grade Paideia program is based on 9th grade teacher recommendations, as well as student and parent requests. Maintaining grades of A and B is recommended due to the high program demands, although students with C grades can continue if they express interest.

One hundred thirty students were accepted into 10th grade this year, the maximum that could be accommodated. Two hundred students enroll in 11th grade Paideia classes and 150 in the method's 12th grade. Of these, 65 take the integrated three-course AP English, Honors Comparative Government, and AP American Government/Honors Economics Paideia curriculum.

Ms. Joe and Ms. Wolfe continue directing the five-teacher Paideia program to this day. The AP program at Oakland Tech, led by Ms. Wolfe, now offers classes in 14 different subjects. Seventy-three percent of the Tech students taking the 2011 AP exams scored a passing grade or better, close to double the number of students in 2007, and significantly higher than the California average. Oakland Technical High School continues achieving impressive gains in its standardized testing scores and this year became the top-scoring high school in the City. Congratulations to Tech, to Principal Sheilagh Andujar, and to school staff.

Oakland Tech Call for Student DC Trip Fundraising Support

This spring, the Paideia teachers will visit Washington DC and New York City with 83 Tech seniors to see their government close up, not out of a textbook. The study-tour program, run by the non-profit Close Up Foundation, provides opportunities for Tech students to meet with government officials, lobbyists, news people, and interact with students from all over the country. The cost is $2,476 per student, a sum which can be difficult for some Tech students to raise. Thus, the support of community members and businesses to assist these students in their quest to experience this valuable educational program is much appreciated.

The payment deadline is March 1, 2012. Checks should be made payable to the Close Up Foundation (tax ID # 23-7122882) and sent to: Maryann Wolfe, Chair of History Department, Oakland Technical High School, 4351 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611.

For further questions, contact Ms. Wolfe at Oakland Tech, 510/879-3050, ext. 103. Thank you in advance for support you might lend to this program and these students.



Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Gastronomic Resolutions

A Happy and Healthy 2012 to all Rockridge friends and neighbors

As we all know, New Year's resolutions come and go. Here are a few of my own that I would categorize as 2012 gastronomic resolutions.

■ Continue to support our local Rockridge food merchants and restaurants

The other day, I was shopping at Market Hall Produce where David the fruit whisperer was cutting up a new crop of apples for tasting. David is one of our community's secret gifts. Folks who know him call him the fruit whisperer. David will cut up any fruit for you to sample. He will always let you know which variety of fruit or vegetable meets his standards of excellence. Pick up a melon and David will tell you when it would be perfectly ripe for eating. I could select a peach and he would steer me to another variety that would be sweeter. David is at Market Hall Produce on Sundays. Check him out.

■ Eat more grains

OK, I'm no grain lover. But recently, my daughter convinced me that adding grains to my diet is a good thing. I still have a long way to go, but here are two grains that I hope to include in my diet for 2012:

1. Quinoa (KEEN wah) is now the rage among vegans and vegetarians. Although relatively new to the American market, it has been a staple in Inca and Latin American cuisine for centuries. Hailed as the "super-grain of the future," quinoa contains more protein than any other grain. Quinoa can be substituted for rice as part of a main or side dish, in soups, and in salads.

2. Farro is next on my grain list. Cultivated in Italy for centuries, farro is an ancient variety of wheat. It has high protein and fiber content and a nutty texture that's great in grain salads and soups. Farro and quinoa are available at the Pasta Shop in Market Hall.

■ Eat more salads

Although I love a good salad, it's not my go-to dish. I grew up on iceberg lettuce and what my mother call Russian dressing – a mixture of ketchup and mayonnaise; 2012 is my year to venture into the world of main-dish salads.

Bay Area cookbook author Joyce Goldstein offers a wonderful compendium of one-plate salad meals and mix-and-match dressings in Mediterranean Fresh. Using seasonal ingredients, I hope to work my way through many of her wonderful recipes. (Check out this month's recipe, for example.)

■ Learn to prepare simple desserts

The truth be told, I'm not very good at preparing desserts. When friends ask what they can bring to one of my dinners, my standard answer is: "Dessert is always welcome." At the Culinary Academy, I took two classes in desserts and pastries. Needless to say, I didn't excel. Dessert and pastry chefs are a class by themselves. I would love to be able to make Linzer Tart cookies, but I just don't have the skills and, most importantly, the temperament. This year, I commit to at least mastering some of the basics of preparing simple desserts such as panna cotta or poached pears. Wish me luck.

Beets, Goat Cheese, and Arugula with Walnut Vinaigrette

(Serves 4)

(Adapted from Joyce Goldstein's "Mediterranean Fresh")

8 small cooked beets, cut into ¼-inch slices (available at Trader Joe's in vacuum sealed bag)
½ cup walnuts, toasted
1 unpeeled tart green apple, cut into ¼" slices
2 small bunches arugula (available at Trader Joe's and Market Hall Produce)
½ cup crumbled goat cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint or dill
Walnut vinaigrette (see recipe below)

- Place beets in a bowl with ½ of the vinaigrette and toss.
- In another bowl, toss walnuts with the other ½ of the vinaigrette.

Let both marinate for 15-30 minutes.

- In a large bowl, toss together the arugula, beets, walnuts and apple slices.
- Arrange on salad plates and distribute crumbled cheese and mint or dill on top.

Walnut Vinaigrette

Whisk together:
2 tablespoons of vinegar (sherry, red wine, or balsamic)
½ cup walnut oil (available at Pasta Shop)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
salt and pepper to taste.

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@comcast.net.

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NCPC to Host Crime Camera Company Presentation at January 12 Meeting

Montclair NCPC Sponsored Camera Program in 2011

by Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen, Rockridge NCPC treasurer

With police officer staffing in full ebb, Oakland and Rockridge residents need to consider how they can make potential criminal acts more difficult for even savvy crooks. The Greater Rockridge NCPC (Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council) believes developments in cyber-based security via video, computers, and smartphones could offer residents a new line of defense.

At the January 12 meeting of the NCPC, a special guest speaker from Logitech will present the company's state-of-the-art surveillance cameras and camera systems. Since purchasing a video security company a few years ago, Logitech has focused on improving the technology so any home or small-business owner could have a high-quality, high-definition, motion-activated surveillance system.

The company now offers a complete home video security system that it says can be quickly and easily installed, and then monitored anytime, anywhere for free through an Internet-connected computer or iPhone, Android, Blackberry or iPad. Plus, the company says, the system can send motion alerts to an email address or a smartphone. The system brings premium features at a price previously unavailable to home users, Logitech says.

According to the company, two types of cameras operate with its new technology: a daylight camera that can be combined with a motion-activated light, and an outdoor, weatherproof night-vision camera. Both have built-in digital recorders so they may be operated independently or backed-up on a PC.

The Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (their NCPC) developed a surveillance camera group discount program with Logitech last year because it was obvious that OPD (Oakland Police Department) resources were becoming increasingly scarce. According to remarks Beat 13 PSO (Problem Solving Officer) Trent Thompson made at a recent Rockridge NCPC meeting, high quality personal video surveillance footage has become a proven means to help OPD solve crimes.

The Greater Rockridge NCPC would like Rockridge residents and businesses to have the same discount opportunity made available to Montclair NCPC, and invited Logitech to the January 12 meeting.

According to Oakland police, Rockridge has several streets that lead directly to freeway on-ramps, making parts of the neighborhood easy places to strike, and then to quickly escape. High-quality personal surveillance cameras, when strategically located, are a way to put a face or a car to the crime and to give OPD an upper hand against its diminishing resources, department representatives have said. With a few hundred such cameras scattered throughout OPD Beats 12Y and 13X, parts of which include Rockridge, criminals would soon learn that residents are watching.

Attend the Rockridge NCPC meeting on Thursday, January 12 at 7 p.m. to learn more details about this technology. The meeting will be held at the Seneca Center for Education and Training, 6925 Chabot Road. The center generously offered to host the January meeting, since the Rockridge Library is unavailable to the NCPC that evening.



Are security cameras, such as this sample pictured above, helpful in deterring crime? The Rockridge NCPC will host a camera company's presentation at the January 12 meeting. See story below for meeting details.

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Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
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12/21/11	5	2	5241 Lawton	$629,000	$629,000	27	$620,000
12/22/11	2	1	5205 Manila	$575,000	$575,000	14	$580,000
12/28/11	3	2	5899 Lawton	$625,000	$625,000	41	$635,000
12/30/11	4	3	5665 Keith	$1,150,000	$950,000	179	$965,000

· Sales volume is down 38% (5 sales in December 2011 compared to 8 in December of last year)
· The average original list price to sales price in December of 2011 was 96% vs 95% last year
· There is currently a 1.7 month supply of inventory in Rockridge
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CAPC Forms New Baby Book Club for Rockridge Babies and Their Parents

by Pastor Monte McClain, College Avenue Presbyterian Church

College Avenue Presbyterian Church announces a new and special reading group just for babies, ages newborn to 12 months, and their parents or caregivers.

From the moment they are born, babies begin to gain skills that they will need to become successful readers. Join the Baby Book Club and learn what those skills are and the simple, everyday activities you can do with your baby to help develop those skills. This free half-hour program will include fun lap bounces, tickle rhymes, books, songs and nuggets of information about early literacy and the six early literacy skills.

Led by Margaret Smith, a church member and children's librarian for over 20 years, the club will meet at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m., from January 27 through April 6. Ms. Smith works for the Contra Costa County Library, Walnut Creek Branch.

For more information, contact the church at 510/658-3666, or e-mail montemcclain@gmail.com. The Church's web site address is: www.capcchurch.org.

Bicycle Dreams: The Race Across America

A benefit film and raffle for the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay (BTCEB)
January 26 | Grand Lake Theater
3200 Grand Avenue | 6–10 p.m.

'Bicycle Dreams," the award-winning feature-length documentary about the Race Across America (RAAM), premieres in Oakland at the Grand Lake Theater Thursday, January 26 at 7 p.m. The screening is a benefit for the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay (BTCEB). The film, which has won numerous awards at film festivals all over the world, "is an up-close look at what RAAM riders go through," says Stephen Auerbach, the director and producer of Bicycle Dreams.

"They deal with searing desert heat, agonizing mountain climbs, and endless stretches of open road. And they do it all while battling extreme exhaustion and sleep deprivation."

Following the movie, the BTCEB will conduct a raffle of donated cycling related items. The items will be displayed in the lobby prior to the show.

Tickets will be $10 in advance and $15 at the door the night of the show. To purchase advance tickets, order online at www.imathlete.com/events/bicycledreams. For more information about the event, visit www.btceb.org.



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Shopping? Shop Oakland, First

FORL, Rockridge Library Open 2012 with Strong Support and New Youth Resource



With construction and furnishing of the Rockridge Branch Library's Teen Zone, pictured at left, close to completion, the area dedicated to patrons aged 12-18 has been opened for business and enjoying high use and popularity. Once a final shipment of furniture arrives, the project will be complete.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FORL

- **Library Teen Zone Open for Business**
- **FORL (Friends of the Rockridge Library) Donations Remain Strong**

by Jennifer James, FORL boardmember

Patrons may have noticed some exciting changes at the Rockridge Library in recent weeks. The much-anticipated Teen Zone has opened with a "soft launch" as we are still awaiting our final furniture delivery – but the area is already seeing high use and is popular with the target audience.

The Teen Zone was envisioned to provide younger patrons an area of their own – to read, do homework, relax and interact. This wonderful project was a true team effort with leadership and commitment from OPL (Oakland Public Library system) and District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner. Look for a full story covering its creation of the teen zoneand the official opening ceremony in an upcoming issue of The Rockridge News.

FORL (the Friends of the Rockridge Library) has also seen strong support from the community during our year-end fundraising drive. As the library continues to face funding cuts due to budget shortfalls at the city of Oakland, maintaining a high level of programming and support is an ongoing challenge.

FORL funding supports many key programs and projects that the shrinking city budget simply cannot cover, including the children's summer reading program; a variety of teen programs, including a teen advisory board and after-school activities; improvements to our well-loved and used furniture; and of course, a variety of needed books and publications for our branch.

We thank our donors for their generosity to the Rockridge Library.

Friends of the Rockridge Library
Supporting the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library

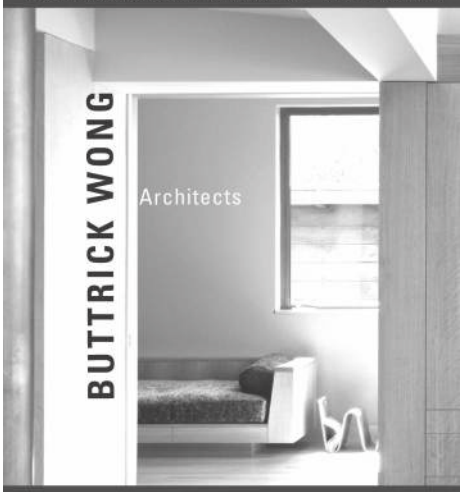
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Rockridge Real Estate: 2011 Review

by Ortrun Niesar, Rockridge News Contributor

Rockridge real estate sales in 2011 were essentially a repeat of 2010. Inventory was low, all good homes sold within a reasonable period of time and prices largely held their own, the variance being hardly more than 3 percent. Patience, preparation for the market and a generally conservative approach to buying or selling seem to have been the key indicators for success. These attributes will certainly apply in 2012 as well.

Statistics we have been keeping for you since 2002 show the Rockridge micro-market continues to defy regional market statistics. Rockridge's unique offerings — an excellent commute to the City, good climate, great walk scores, lovely Craftsman homes, level streets, availability of necessary services, good public and private schools, engaged neighbors and an active and effective neighborhood organization in RCPC — contribute greatly to the stability of its home prices.

What Your Home Is Worth

Many factors determine what your home might be worth if you intend to refinance or sell. It is best to work with your local Realtors, appraisers and mortgage brokers to get a proper evaluation. However, you can get a good snapshot by visiting open houses of similar design and then applying a per square foot measure to your property. Looking at recent sales, here is what you can expect: Our attractive two-bedroom bungalows, few of which made it to market in 2011, sold at a median price of $705,000 and as high as $880,000. Based on this, a good measure for your well-maintained two-bedroom bungalow would be $543 per square foot. A three-bedroom home should bring an average price of $925,000, but of the 36 sold in 2011, a whopping 35 percent sold for well over $1,000,000. A good average measure per square foot for a three-bedroom home is about $456. Four-bedroom homes sold at an overall average of $380 per square foot. Homes of four bedrooms or more tend to be larger newer homes or historic homes that traditionally fetch prices well above the $1,100,000 mark.

Outlook for 2012

All real estate activities — buying, selling or refinancing your home — offer good options right now. Sellers should feel confident about being in this market. Rockridge inventory is extremely low and qualified buyers are out there waiting, bringing respectable offers.

If you are a buyer, consider offering a large down payment, low debt/income ratio and solid employment documentation.

If you plan to refinance, banks are offering attractive options (even for underwater homeowners). This is the big story of the day. Interest rates hover at 4 percent, an all-time low, and banks are generously helping with processing loan applications. Look into this: the amount of money you will save can be significant to your health.

Some home owners have had difficulty dealing with appraisers this past year. Your message is being heard: current appraisal practices are being scrutinized and streamlined to better meet the needs of local home owners. One more time: It's all about location. Appraisers who do not know the neighborhood or your home have no business appraising it. Be adamant about that with your lender or mortgage broker.

If you plan to sell, it is essential in this market that you prepare your home properly for sale. Don't skimp in this category. Check with the building department to make sure you are compliant with the latest regulations. New private sewer lateral inspections and repair requirements go into effect January 16 for single family homes in Oakland, Emeryville and Piedmont.

This analysis covers Rockridge homes sales from the Berkeley border in the north, south to Broadway Terrace and 51Street, west to Telegraph Avenue and east to Hwy 13. Information supplied by EBRD 2011 is deemed to be reliable but not guaranteed. Ortrun Niesar is a Realtor with East Bay Sotheby's International Realty. ortrun.niesar@sothebysrealty.com.

Average Sale Prices by No. of Bedrooms

Year	2BR	3BR	4+BR	No. Homes Sold
2005	$802,513	$956,722	$1,466,920	124
2006	760,782	962,488	1,498,687	112
2007	780,268	986,895	1,330,031	127
2008	757,011	921,476	1,329,080	98
2009	711,967	840,074	1,388,314	79
2010	680, 617	876,609	1,330,676	90
2011	**$702,011**	**924,398**	**1,126,722**	**87**

Rockridge Home Sale Prices 2002-2011

Year	Avg. Price	Percent Change	Median Price	Percent Change
2002	$770,604		$691,500	
2003	847,637	9.9	750,000	8.5
2004	902,000	6.4	805,000	7.3
2005	1,032,139	14.4	930,500	15.6
2006	1,111,317	7.6	903,000	-3.0
2007	1,106,186	-1.0	1,000,000	10.3
2008	1,029,153	-7.0	905,000	- 9.5
2009	904,954	-12.0	850,000	-6.0
2010	962,757	6.4	838,000	-.02
2011	907,628	-5.7	837,000	0

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Scenic Streets

from page 1

Claremont Avenue and Hudson Street last month. Scenic Streets volunteers had also renovated the Claremont Avenue off-ramp at Clifton Street last summer.

To date, the group has installed over 300 drought-tolerant shrubs along the ramps, garnering enthusiastic honks of support from passing motorists. Nearly all funds for the project were donated by local residents.

"It really has been a community effort" says Holly Dabral, Scenic Street's volunteer landscape designer. "But we could use a few more green thumbs to help look after the plants in the coming months when they are most vulnerable."

The shrubs on both ramps are being temporarily supported by sophisticated drip systems fed with water donated from nearby properties. Dabral says this initial moisture establishes deep roots, but it also can encourage invasive weed growth close to the shrubs. A few volunteers are needed to pull weeds for an hour once a month. To offer your time, call the group's leader, Peter Lund, at 510/516-3636.

Scenic Street's final goal is to landscape two Claremont Avenue asphalt-covered medians that parallel Frog Park and the nearby dog run. The medians total nearly 10,000 square feet, so there's lots of room for enhancements. Dabral says native plants, improved lighting, public artwork and a "Welcome to Rockridge" sign are all being considered as potential improvements.

Additional volunteers are being sought to help finalize plans for the medians. The group hopes work would begin in late 2012 once a new round of funding has been secured. Additional information can be found at www.ScenicStreets.org

The group's web site will soon be expanded to include several pages of advice on how to undertake landscaping projects on public lands. "We want to encourage residents all over the Bay Area to beautify their own neighborhoods," says Lund, "so our site will share valuable advice and resources for every step of the process."



Changes on College

by Theresa Nelson

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Lesbians in Piedmont or Rockridge?

Join us for the first event of the Rockridge/ Piedmont Lesbian Social Club at 6 pm on February 25, for good food and good company. Location provided upon RSVP to rpsocialclub@gmail.com.

Deliver Baby Clothes to Newborns-in-Need

Our nonprofit seeks a committed volunteer to pick up weekly from Cool Tops next to Rockridge BART and deliver less than a mile away on an ongoing basis. Contact: info@LovedTwice.org.

Your Role in Public Safety

from page 1

ness, is the knowledge that Oakland offers a robust crime prevention program through a combination of active police resources and civilian organizations. Many citizens and neighborhoods thus fail to utilize even these resources for their own safety.

Tucked into the word cloud on page 1 are acronyms of the titles of some of these programs. The acronyms are bigger than the actual words of crimes because, once deciphered and activated, they can represent more power than the named crimes.

For example, the largest of the acronyms is NCPC. It has appeared in The Rockridge News many times, and is decoded as Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council.

Others listed include NSC (Neighborhood Services Coordinator), PSO (Problem Solving Officer), 12Y, and 13X.

Each of these programs is part of the OPD community policing structure, designed to bring police and citizens together to prevent crime and local nuisance issues.

Too far-reaching to be fully described in a single newsletter issue, the programs will be examined in issues to come.

In the meantime, these community policing resources will fail to reduce crime if neighbors and neighborhoods do not participate. Make a promise now to attend the next meeting of the NCPC, set for Thursday, January 12, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Seneca Center for Education, 6925 Chabot Road.

See page 9 for details of the meeting topic: Video security systems and their potential to lessen or even prevent crime.

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

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. **Note: for Jan 12 only**, meet at Seneca Center, 6925 Chabot Road. Confirm mtg time/place at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

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

Special Events:

- **Celebrate Chinese Lunar New Year: JingMo Lion Dancers** will perform the Lion Dance. Jan 28, 3pm. **All ages welcome**. Stop by to make a Chinese fan and a New Year's dodecahedron.

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, **Note new time:** 1 to 2pm. More info: Susy, 597- 5017.
- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club:** Watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month 5 to 6:30pm.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 17 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 (2/7), 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:

- Jan: **Tomye:** painting.
- Feb: **Tomye:** painting.

Lobby Display Case:

- Jan: Season of Non-Violence Library Display.
- Feb: **MoCHA:** Children's artwork.

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: All branch libraries closed Thurs and Fri, 1/13 and 1/14. Note: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates.**

Diesel Readings and Events

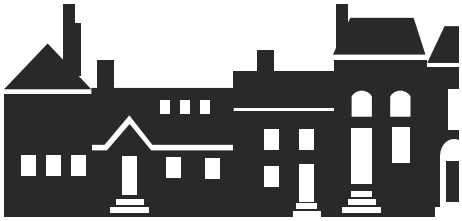
All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Mon, 1/9, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month):** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Fri, 1/20, 7pm. **William Gibson:** *Distrust That Particular Flavor.*
- Thurs, 1/26, 7pm. Local poet **Sandra Gilbert:** *Aftermath*.
- Sun, 1/29, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Terry Wolverton** and **Devreaux Baker.**
- Thurs, 2/09, 7pm. Local journalist **Thomas Peele:** *Killing the Messenger: A Story of Radical Faith, Racism's Backlash, and the Assassination of a Journalist.*

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

Jazz at the Chimes

Return of the concert series featuring Bay Area jazz musicians in a beautiful Julia Morgan venue. Vocalist **Ed Reed** is joined by **Anton Schwartz** on sax and **Randy Porter** on piano. Sunday, 1/15, 2pm, followed by artist's reception and refreshments. Tickets: $10-$15 for concert and reception. **Kids under 12 free.** Cash only at the door starting at 12:30pm. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. **Free parking**. More info at 654-0123 or chimesjazz@gmail.com.



American Red Cross

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

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. $5-10 sliding scale donation. The Niebyl-Proctor Library, 6501 Telegraph Ave. Info: http://squirrellystringband.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Izvorno IcePick: fuses the traditional village dance music of Macedonia with aggressive jazz-inspired improvisation. **Sheldon Brown, Tom Farris, Bryan Bowman,** and **Bill Lanphier.** Saturday, 1/28, 8pm; doors open 7:30 (inside venue; not wheelchair accessible). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

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.

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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