THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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16 AGENDA

Rockridge Library
- **Teen Zone**
- **FORL Plans**

February 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

- **Tour the *new* Teen Zone dedicated study area with Teen Librarian Susy Moorhead.**
- **Hear FORL board members talk about the group's new status as an independent nonprofit group and what it hopes to accomplish during the coming year.**

Thursday, February 16 | 7:30-9 p.m. Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College at Manila

RCPC Invites Candidates for April Board Election

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

— *Margaret Mead*

by Ronnie Spitzer, RCPC boardmember

Are you looking to help promote community projects that enhance the quality of life in Rockridge? Are you concerned about crime, schools, traffic, development issues, or parks? Well, Rockridge needs people like you. Serving on the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) board of directors provides you with the perfect volunteer opportunity to work on these issues and more.

RCPC, a nonprofit, public benefit corporation, represents Rockridge to the city of Oakland on such matters as zoning, development and crime. It acts as a community steward on a variety of issues, ranging from land use to traffic and schools. RCPC has also spearheaded neighborhood

Board Candidates, page 6

BRT Station and Buses, Urumqi, China



This photo, taken from a city bus in Urumqi, China, shows a BRT passenger shelter and two BRT buses in the BRT bus-only lanes. On each side of the cordoned lanes and shelter area, the street is three traffic lanes wide in each direction.

/Don Kinkead

Bus Rapid Transit Meeting: Plans Ignore Concerns

by Jane Kramer, STAND steering committee

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an AC Transit project proposed for Telegraph Avenue, International Boulevard and East 14th Street in Oakland and San Leandro that would remove one lane of traffic for dedicated bus lanes.

Meeting January 20, the East Bay BRT Policy Steering Committee, comprised of AC Transit board members and city council members from Oakland and San Leandro, reviewed preparations for the Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS) schedule and approval process for the project.

BRT Ignores Concerns, page 12

Recently Appointed RCPC Boardmember Explains Her Interest in Board Service



Laura Schlichtmann

Laura Schlichtmann

Clifton Street

I moved back to Rockridge in 2011 after a decade as a litigator on the Peninsula. It was always my aim to return. I love the East Bay's beautiful landscape and built environment; its diverse, progressive, creative population; and its orientation toward smaller scale, public transit, and walking. Now retired, I am looking for volunteer opportunities. In recent months, I have helped distribute the Rockridge News, participated in Scenic Streets' volunteer landscaping of Highway 24 off- and on-ramps, and joined the Labor Day weekend work party that cleaned up the Library's exterior. After Board and Land Use Committee vacancies remained unfilled at year's end, I applied to fill the remaining terms and was appointed to these positions in January.

From earlier years living here, I appreciate the important role that RCPC has played in maintaining Rockridge as a vibrant, enjoyable community. (One example: when our

New Boardmember, page 12

REPT: NCPC Meetings

Logitech Cameras, WhistleSTOP Donation

The Greater Rockridge NCPC (Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council) thanks everyone who attended last Thursday's meeting for the special presentation by Logitech on their state-of-the-art surveillance cameras. NCPC Secretary Karen Ivy will soon announce when the meeting's minutes are available on the NCPC website at www.rockridgencpc.com. (See camera purchase details at end of article.)

February's meeting, set for Thursday, February 9, at 7 p.m.,

Report: NCPC, page 14

Op Ed Essays on matters of local interest are invited for consideration as Op-Ed pieces for *The Rockridge News*. Please limit length to 450 words and submit to editor@rockridge.org.

Mini-Lot Developments: The Underbelly of Planning Revisions?

by Robert Brokl

Our Maccall Street neighbors group lost the $1,352 appeal over a mini-lot subdivision, a vacant lot at 5919 Maccall (two blocks west of Shattuck at 59th Street). Two 1,452 sq. ft., two-story buildings – a project of the Wilson Family, developers of Market Hall – on the substandard 4,140 sq. ft. lot where 5,000 sq. ft. would be required were approved at the Residential Appeal Committee January 11. Two of the three commissioners, Jonelyn Whales, a city of Richmond planner recently appointed by Mayor Jean Quan, and Blake Huntsman, a Dellums appointee, heard the appeal. Both peremptorily voted us down.

Apparently, the zoning we thought we had achieved during the recent rezoning is only advisory if a developer wants to build the maximum number of structures on a vacant lot, back, front or side yard. Conditional use permits and variances are being granted for these mini-lot projects. (We're assuming the project pending at 4812 Lawton in Temescal – www.savelawton.org – is also a mini-lot development.)

Testimony at the hearing by Zoning Manager Scott Miller and developers indicated condo financing is harder to come by, and mini-lot, multi-unit structures on substandard parcels is necessary in a difficult development climate. Miller cited the "flexibility" and "marketability" these mini-lot developments afford developers. (Planning staff are paid primarily through developer fees and permits.) We actively participated in the lengthy citywide rezoning process, but "mini-lot developments," which pre-empt zoning, were never even put on the table.

While nine different households contributed toward the appeal fee, and we had support from more, Commissioner Huntsman used the condescending term NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) to describe us.

The city of Oakland's "A Guide to Mini-Lot Developments in the City of Oakland (Chapter 17.102.320)" states: "Mini-Lot Development is defined by Section 17.09 [Definitions] of the Oakland Planning Code as 'a comprehensively designed development containing lots which do not meet the minimum size or other requirements applying to individual lots in the zone where it is located'."

Mini-lot developments are allowed in all but a few areas of the hills — ranchettes along Skyline Boulevard, where the minimum lot size is four acres.

Rockridge, Temescal, and North Oakland are especially rich targets for such shoehorned projects because of keen developer interest in areas that are weathering the Great Recession better, and because the relatively restrictive RM-1 and RM-2 zoning we thought protected us apparently doesn't.



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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays.
Also: Fri, 2/10, and Sat, 2/11
Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

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

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

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

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

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES
Publication date of the next issue is
☛ **March 3, 2012**
☛ **March deadline is February 16, 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: February 22.

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

January Meeting Notes:

■ **College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project**

College and Claremont Avenues

Peterson Vollman (pvollman@oaklandnet.com, phone 238-6167), the city planner handling the case, indicated that the administrative draft of the final EIR has just come back from the city's consultants. It's about 2,000 pages long, and, as he put it, there's a lot that will need to be reviewed, and perhaps modified, before it will be released to the public. His estimate is perhaps some time in March, or maybe later. At the moment, he is still of the opinion that it will not need to be recirculated for further public comment. No word as yet about whether there will be any further meetings of the Planning Commission's Design Review Committee on the project before it goes to the full commission.

■ **Rockridge Shopping Center Rebuild Project**

Broadway and Pleasant Valley

The Draft EIR for this project, which involves demolishing and rebuilding the shopping center while adding approximately 120,000 sq.ft. of additional retail, is, according to Oakland planner Daren Ranelletti (dranelletti@oaklandnet.com, phone 238-3663), still in process, and an administrative draft has not yet been received. Among other things, the city is still awaiting revised project plans promised by Safeway, the master tenant and project sponsor, in response to comments at last January's design review committee hearings.

The RCPC Land Use Committee, joined by John Gatewood of Urbanists for a Livable Temescal-Rockridge Area (ULTRA), discussed trying to identify a single community alternative for the project. Rather than try to redesign the project, however, the committee recommended a number of principles that should be addressed in the project's final design. The principles are intended to create a pedestrian and transit-friendly urban shopping area. They included:

■ Safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian access to the Safeway store and other shopping from both Broadway and Pleasant Valley shopping center entrances;

■ Extend the city street grid into the center so that extensions of Coronado and Gilbert Streets connect within the center and extend to the quarry pond and all parking structures;

■ Replace most of the surface parking areas with structured parking so that the land is used efficiently and appropriately for an urban area;

■ Activate the quarry pond frontage with restaurants or another activity center;

■ Better AC Transit access to the center, including a possible onsite station;

■ Direct pedestrian access to shopping from Pleasant Valley;

■ Better landscaping and sidewalk amenities on the Pleasant Valley frontage, in surface parking areas, and on the "shopping street;"

■ Prominent pedestrian crossings (e.g., speed tables) across access roads on site;

■ Provide space for a future phase to include housing.

These principles will be reviewed by the RCPC Board and other North Oakland community groups, and if accepted, could form the basis for discussions with Safeway.

February Meeting Agenda

The next meeting of the RCPC Land Use Committee is Wednesday, February 22, 7:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library. Agenda topics will include updates on the Rockridge Shopping Center and College Avenue Safeway projects and possibly discussion of the City's proposed revisions to its off-street parking requirements. Please 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.

The Zoning Counter

The Zoning Counter is a compilation of recent applications filed with the Oakland Planning Department. Individuals may contact the case planner or the Planning Department for additional information by phone or online at http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CEDA/o/PlanningZoning/s/Application/index.htm.

5902 College Avenue

Proposal: To expand an existing full-service restaurant "Toast" into an adjacent vacant unit located on the ground floor of a commercial facility.

Applicant/ Heather Sittig

Phone Number: 510/282-1696

Planning Permits Required: Minor Conditional Use Permit to expand and operate a full-service restaurant activity in the CN-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP);

Survey Rating: Fc3 (modernized)

Case Planner: Mike Rivera at 510/238-6417 or mrivera@oaklandnet.com





rockridge · temescal frog friends of the greenbelt

FROG Park News



FROG Plans 10th Anniversary Celebration and Marks Annual Earth Day: April 21

by Theresa Nelson

It was just over 10 years ago, in mid-October, 2001, that community volunteers finished building the play structures at Frog Park. Prior to 2001, it was a place of delapidated basketball courts under the freeway, partly fenced and overrun with weeds.

More than 1,300 volunteers from around the area came together for 10 days to work from dawn until after dark to build the custom-designed play structures.

Every bit of wood and Trex, every screw and nail, the mosaic turtle and wall, every painted wooden butterfly, flower or leaf, and all the fencing was built by community volunteers who gave their time and energy to make this park a reality.

More than 1,000 tools were lent for the Big Build, we offered childcare so parents could participate in the build, and we fed everyone lunch, dinner and snacks from a field kitchen set up in the park.

People took off from work to serve as captains for the entire build, working with groups of volunteers from throughout Oakland, as well as local corporations, garden clubs, UC Berkeley students, the Junior League, Oakland Firefighters, and many more.

The park has since become a central feature of the neighborhood, with custom play structures, ADA accessible play areas, swings, water fountains, a bathroom, renovated basketball courts, and a stream along a beautiful pathway connecting Big and Little Frog parks.

Save the Date

- **What: FROG Park 10th Anniversary Celebration and Earth Day 2012**
- **Where: "Big Frog" grassy area.**
- **When: Saturday, April 21: Earth Day maintenance, 9 a.m. – noon; Celebration, 12-2:00 p.m.**
- **Who: Everyone is invited; Big Build and Maintenance Day volunteers, and all who enjoy the park**

Earth Day Maintenance and Park Anniversary Begin at 9 a.m.

Join us at the park on Saturday, April 21, for the annual Earth Day maintenance activities — 9 a.m.-noon — followed by our very special FROG 10th Anniversary Celebration — noon to 2 p.m. — to honor the people who made Frog Park and the play structures possible. It will be a full day with family-friendly activities including music, crafts, games and festivities.

We hope all FROG volunteers from the original Big Build can attend, as we want to acknowledge their work and dedication to the community.

E-mail info@frogpark.org for more information or to help on the organizing committee.

FROG'S 2011 Accomplishments

■ Play Structure Renovations

We worked with the city to complete renovations of both play structures so they could re-open after several months of closure. Dry rot and other repairs were made and old Fibar and sand were replaced. An arborist and community volunteers helped remove invasive roots – *January 2011*

■ Earthday and Family Fest

We hosted the Earth Day FROG Fest. More than 100 volunteers took part, followed by games and crafts for children. – *April 2011*

■ New FROG Restroom

We ensured that work on the restroom stayed on track, celebrating the new

FROG Celebrates, page 5

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FROG Celebrates

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structure's opening — *July 2011.*

■ **Parks Coalition Survey**

Completed the Oakland Parks Coalition Stewardship Survey – *September 2011*

■ **Annual Fall Maintenance Day**

Hosted the 10th annual fall Maintenance Day with almost 100 students from College Preparatory High School — *September 2011.*

■ **Response to DMV Unannounced Tree Removal**

FROG and a number of DMV-area neighbors joined to protest and respond to the unannounced tree cutting at the DMV area, surveyed neighbors about preferences, and helped craft consensus for restoration. A community meeting with Councilmember Jane Brunner led to an agreement for restoration. This work is to begin in 2012. — *November-December 2011.*

Planning Activites

As we begin planning for FROG 2012, we seek volunteers – especially families with young children — to participate on the FROG committee or with specific projects. Please e-mail info@frogpark.org for more information about how you can help.

Visit http://www.frogpark.org/ for more about FROG and to view Flicker photostreams.

Welcome New FROG Chair Carol Behr

by Theresa Nelson, FROG co-founder

Please welcome Carol Behr as the new Chair of FROG. Most recently, she chaired last year's successful FROG Fest, where more than 100 volunteers turned out to help take care of our park, and celebrated afterward with music, games and crafts for children.



Carol is a longtime Rockridge resident and lives here with her husband, Gideon, and their 3-year-old daughter Sara.

A certified project manager, Carol has worked for Kaiser Permanente as a senior project manager and consultant, implementing their online medical records and other strategic initiatives.

Carol is also an avid gardener. She understands how important parks are, and the impact they have on our quality of life and community.

She will lead the process to discuss possible enhancements to Frog Park in 2012, and the completion of renovation plans for the DMV creekside area.

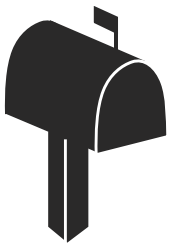
Look for news of the February FROG meeting on the website, www.frogpark.org, or e-mail: chair@frogpark.org.

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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.

Rockridge Library Seeks Money, Rebuffs Volunteers

Editor:

I am writing in response to the articles in the last two issues of The Rockridge News regarding the Rockridge Branch Library. The December article called for donations to the library, and the January article speaks about the New Teen Zone, and finishes with another appeal for more money.

I find it surprising that the very same library that will not accept volunteers is again asking the community to write checks. As I value the contribution the library makes to our neighborhood, and as I am aware of their struggle to provide services during a budget shortfall, I attempted to volunteer at the library but was told that they no longer accept volunteers.

If the library is not willing to accept support from the community, whether it is in the form of time, energy, or initiative, I do not see why they deserve to receive our charitable dollars instead.

Furthermore, there are many people who would love to contribute to the library but cannot afford to give money. Volunteers are not a burden. They are an invaluable resource, and many non-profits should be so lucky as to have such support. Shame on the Rockridge Library for overlooking a resource more precious than money: passion.

— Elizabeth James

Rockridge Branch Head Responds re Volunteer Opportunities

Editor:

In response to concerns regarding the Rockridge Branch Library's moratorium on accepting new volunteers, I'd like to first emphasize how grateful we are to members of the public who generously offer their time to help at the library. Regrettably, due to severe staffing cuts, branch staff members are not presently able to train and supervise new volunteers.

However, exciting volunteer opportunities are offered by the Oakland Public Library system. The library will be hosting Volunteer Information Sessions for members of the public, as follows:

- **March 15** (Thursday) at the Main Library, beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- **March 17** (Saturday) at Rockridge Library, beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Approximately 40 people attended the library's pilot Volunteer Information Sessions in September. Staff representing Second Start Literacy Program, Books for Wider Horizons (a volunteer storyreading program), Main Library Information Desk and Main Library Computer Lab each hosted a table in job fair style with information about their volunteer program. The volunteer coordinator for Public Works' "Adopt a Spot" gardening/beautification program and Friends of the Oakland Public Library/ Bookmark Bookstore volunteers also participated, giving participants a wide range of opportunities to explore.

For more information about the upcoming sessions, contact Winifred Walters at 510/238-6932 or email wwalters@oaklandlibrary.org.

And, again, a heartfelt Thank You! to our wonderful patrons who have offered help and support to the library during difficult times. We truly appreciate you!

***— Pat Lichter, Manager,* Rockridge Branch, Oakland Public Library, 597-5017**

Call for Community Support for Local Bungalow Restorationist

Labeled "the bad girl of bungalow writing," Jane Powell is a restoration consultant, house restorer, lecturer, and author of six books. Now, burdened with a chronic and expensive disease, a major fixer for a house, and a huge mortgage that the bank refuses to modify, she needs your help. We CAN make a difference!

ATTEND: A fabulous event at the "Sunset House" Feb. 12, Sunday, 2-5 p.m.

Singles $25/couples $40 (no one turned away). Sunset House, 2708 Sunset Ave., is east of Fruitvale Ave., at Lynde and 27th.

More information: See Jane's blog at JanePowell.org



Spread the Word to Your Neighbors

The Rockridge News is offering three great volunteer opportunities beginning in March. If you live in the vicinity of any of the three routes and would like to deliver the newsletter to your neighbors once a month, we'd love to hear from you. Call 510/547-3855 or e-mail smontauk@gmail.com. Be sure to include the route number.

Thank you.

Route No.	Description
07G	5800-6145 blocks of Broadway, east side only.
16A	Both sides of Miles between Cavour and Clifton.
05K	Even numbers along Chabot from and including St. Albert's, then College Avenue shops to 5830 College, Claremont Nursery.

Board Candidates

from page 1

improvement projects such as the Rockridge Branch Library, Hardy Dog Park, and the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt (FROG Park). The Rockridge News is published by the RCPC and serves as an important vehicle for neighborhood communication. Recent RCPC Town Hall meeting topics have included Rockridge schools, plans proposed for the Rockridge Shopping Center, and a primer on land use for the layperson.

In April, RCPC will hold its annual election for six board directors, each to serve a two-year term. The board consists of 12 elected directors, one appointed director and the editor of The Rockridge News, who serves *ex officio* as a nonvoting board member. Prospective candidates must be at least 18 years of age, must reside within RCPC boundaries as shown at www.rockridge.org, and must inform the RCPC of their intention to run by February 29. Prospective candidates meeting the February 29 deadline are invited to submit a photo and a written statement of 125 words explaining their interest in running for the board. Statements and photos must be received by March 22

Board Candidates, page 12

Eyes on Rockridge
When Rockridge Was 'Little Italy'

by Judith Doner Berne

The largest piece of art on the walls of Ben and Antonietta Tamburrino's 1907 Rockridge bungalow is a color photograph of the hill town in Italy where they were born.

And some of their most cherished memories date back to a time when the section of Rockridge closest to Temescal was known as "Little Italy."

It wasn't just that Italian immigrants populated their neighborhood along streets like Shafter, Cavour, Desmond and Kales, they explained, but they also worked in and owned grocery stores, shops and restaurants, particularly along Telegraph Avenue.

Tamburrino, 82, is a retired carpenter. His dad, Domiano, who immigrated to the United States in 1921, had four different barbershops along College Avenue over the years.

Three of the shops were across from or close to what is now Zachary's Pizza. His last barber shop is the present-day Rockridge Barbers, owned since 1986 by Marty Hatton and located near Hudson Bay Cafe. "Some of the furniture [the chairs that customers sit on to wait their turn] was my dad's," Ben says.

Domiano returned to Italy to marry and start a family, but they didn't join him in the United States until after World War II. Ben, then 15, spent his teen-age years in their house on Shafter at a time when the Sacramento-Northern Railroad ran down the middle of the street.

It was the first of the three Craftsman bungalows that have been his homes over 66 years in Rockridge.

"My dad found an area that was full of Italians," which made easing into American life and culture a little easier, Ben says.

"We could live within ourselves – if that's what we chose to do," says Antonietta, whom he met and married when he went back to his hometown, between Rome and Naples, for a visit.

In 1961, Ben brought his 19-year-old bride with him to Rockridge. They stayed with his family, who had moved to a bungalow on Harwood, until they bought their own home a few blocks away where they have lived for the last 48 years.

"In the '60s, it was a blue-collar neighborhood," Antonietta says. "People were very friendly. My sister-in-law lived across the street. You didn't always have to lock your doors."





Ben Tamburrino in 1947 – with his hair cut by his dad. The photo was taken at age 17 when Ben got his citizenship papers. Ben Tamburrino's father in one of the barbershops he owned on College Avenue, now the Rockridge Barbers, owned since 1986 by Marty Hatton.

ORIGINAL PHOTOS COPIED BY CAMERA BY JUDY BERNE AND ADJUSTED BY ED BERNE.

Along with their Italian friends and neighbors, they sent their three children to Catholic schools although Ben is proud of graduating from Oakland Technical High School. They attended St. Theresa Catholic Church.

Many Italians gathered at their own social clubs, such as the Columbo Club on Claremont at 55th Street, he says. The Tower Theater, at Telegraph and 51st, showed Italian films.

Ben and Antonietta remember when College Avenue looked very different: the Safeway grocery was in the space now occupied by the Levant Rug Company; the Cactus Tacqueria was the Chimes market; another market, Louie's, was at Chabot; and the Chimes Drug Store had a soda fountain.

They also remember when College Avenue fell on hard times in the '70s, and many stores were simply boarded up.

Ben misses the street cars and trains that once provided Rockridge's public transportation, while recognizing that access to BART and the freeway has helped revitalize the area.

He is proud that he helped build the columns for the SR-24 freeway, while acknowledging that, "I hated all the noise and dust and to see all the homes that were destroyed. Some people had their houses transported to new streets."

When fire swept the Oakland hills above them in 1991, "We filled up two cars with all our pictures and documents," Antonietta says. "I was up all night with the hose. The firemen (successfully) blocked our street."

Once their children were in school, she worked part-time at Maria's, a cheesecake factory which used to be on Broadway across from Oakland Tech. Most recently, she was a cook at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, retiring after 20 years. "I just loved that job," she said. "I cried when I left."

"You know, (Chez Panisse restaurateur) Alice Waters gets credit for a new kind of cooking," Ben says, using only locally, organically and sustainably grown ingredients. "But the Italians were doing it before Alice Waters."

As proof, Antonietta points out her backyard vegetable garden which she supplements at Berkeley Bowl. She also grows orchids alongside her garage.

"When I first came here, I walked Oakland from one end to the other and I loved it," Ben says. And he and Antonietta still walk almost daily – north to Elmwood, south to the Rockridge Shopping Center.

This day, it was through Mountain View Cemetery. "It's so beautiful and there are a lot of Italian names," she says.

Much as they would love it, they don't anticipate that their children and three grandchildren, who all live in the Bay Area, will add to the family's Rockridge roots.

"Who wouldn't want to live in Rockridge?" Antonietta said. "But it's just too expensive."

Judy Berne is a former writer, columnist and editor for local newspapers in metro Detroit. Since moving here in June, she is learning about Rockridge through its residents. You can e-mail her at judyberne@att.net.



Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Too Pooped to Pop

Each year, I look forward to attending the annual Fancy Food show sponsored by the Specialty Food Association at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco. Nearly a thousand exhibitors cover the entire convention center floor, hawking their products to the likes of the Pasta Shops, Whole Foods, Berkeley Bowls and gourmet markets of the country. Exhibitors lavish tastes and product samples to potential customers. It is a three-day gastronomic experience – gluttony on steroids.

In addition to snacking my way through the exhibits, I look for new and "in" food trends. Several years ago it was pasta, the following year tea took home the prize and last year salt was everywhere. This year's "in" food is… drum roll please … POPCORN and popcorn creations.

Who would believe? A very close second: jams, jellies, and marmalade seemed to be everywhere.

A Bit of History

Popcorn predates eating corn kernels. Pre-Columbian corn kernels were too hard to chew. Mesoamericans found that by heating the kernel, pressure builds up in the form of steam that pops the outer kernel skin. Recent evidence has unearthed ancient popcorn in a 6,000 year-old Peruvian archeological site. By 1840, popping corn was the fad in America. Young boys sold popcorn at train stations and on street corners. Popcorn recipes began to appear in early 19th century cookbooks. Many of these recipes gave rise to cold breakfast cereal and popcorn candies. An iconic figure in American small towns and big cities is the red popcorn wagon invented by Charles Cretors in 1885. By 1900, nearly every street corner had a popcorn wagon. By the late 19th century, popcorn was America's first – and favorite – snack food. As movie theaters grew, so did the consumption of popcorn. To this day, popcorn is the most popular movie snack.

In 1893, at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, German immigrant brothers Frederick and Louis Rueckheim sold a confection of popcorn, peanuts and molasses. The brothers named it Cracker Jack and it was an instant hit. By 1909, Cracker Jack was immortalized in the national pastime song "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" with the lilting line, "buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack...."

By 1913, Cracker Jack was the world's largest selling snack food. In 1912, a small toy was placed in every box. The little sailor-boy and his dog Bingo became the icons of American snack food. Gourmet versions of Cracker Jack dominated this year's Fancy Food Show.

Now, here's how you can make your own "gourmet" popcorn:

Caramel Popcorn

(10 servings)

2-1/2 quarts of popped popcorn
½ cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
¼ cup corn syrup
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven 250 degrees, place popcorn in a large bowl

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter.

Stir in sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly.

Boil without stirring 4 minutes.

Remove from heat, stir in baking soda and vanilla.

Pour in a thin stream over popcorn, stirring to coat.

Place in large shallow baking dish.

Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes.

Remove from oven, let cool and break into bite-size pieces.

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

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Auctions • Support • Schools

Tech Annual Fundraising Auction: March

Wonderful food and entertainment and the chance to bid on an enticing array of auction items await you at "This is It!," Oakland Technical High School's 2012 Auction, the school's main fundraising event. Sponsored by the school's Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), the auction provides crucial support for the school, hailed in a front page Oakland Tribune article as "Oakland's new 'it' school."

Funds raised by the auction provide necessary support to all areas of the school and its students: from classroom needs to infrastructure materials; from athletics to music; from lab supplies to technology, and more. This year, we hope to raise over $52,000 and surpass last year's total.

Tech High Auction, page 12

Chabot School Spring Auction: Dancing, Gambling, Bidding and Bond!

by Jennifer James Alper, Chabot parent

The Chabot Elementary community is already hard at work on the school's largest and most sensational fundraiser of the year – our annual spring auction. "Casino Royale," this year's event, is sure to be a crowd pleaser, with an amazing collection of items and unique experiences available for bidding, fabulous food, signature cocktails, music, dancing – and for the first time, a live casino! Are you a high roller? Get in on the action and come try your hand at blackjack, roulette and other casino favorites, while raising funds for Chabot. On Saturday, March 10, at 5:30 p.m., we return to the historic Scottish Rite Temple, 1547 Lakeside Drive, on the shores of beautiful Lake Merritt for the gala event. Step into our version of the world of James Bond, and bring your bank roll for bidding and betting.

The money raised through the auction allows the PTA to fund a wide range of enrichment programs that enhance the core curriculum at Chabot, including art, garden, library, media lab, music, science and Spanish. Through the collective

Chabot Auction, page 13

Peralta-Claremont Yard Sale Planners Seek Temp Storage

by Nicole Aruda and Heather Grillmeyer, Peralta parents

The Lower Rockridge Parents Group Yard Sale Crew is gearing up for the 11th Annual Yard Sale, to be held April 29 on the Peralta playground. This annual event has raised over $30,000 over the years with all proceeds donated to Peralta. Last year, yard sale proceeds (a record at over $6,000)

Peralta Yard Sale Storage, page 11

Rich Array of Prizes Rewards Peralta School and Lively Auction Bidders

by Michelle Quinn

Raffle tickets for keys to wine cellars sold like hotcakes. Children's artwork spurred a bidding war rivaling Christie's. A parent swore off buying a second car after winning a donated bike at a bidding table.

These were some of the highlights of Peralta Elementary School's auction last year. This year's auction on March 3, from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., at the Uptown Body and Fender building at 401 26th Street in downtown Oakland, is slated to be another great party with dinner, drinks, a DJ spinning

Peralta Auction, page 13



A live auctioneer hawks striking items at Peralta Elementary School's 2011 auction. Photo: Ann Becker



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A Photo Finish for Oakland Encounters



Painter Michael Manente and his son John painted "The Carpenter" on the blank back wall of a downtown office building. John Manente recorded the event for You Tube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRCQrpXSVY

Do you have a "Photo Finish" of an Oakland scene you'd like to submit to The Rockridge News? Send your digital files – color or B&W – to the newsletter c/o editor_rn@mindspring.com. E-mail that address if you have a photo printed on paper.

Say what you will about Oakland, you can always count on an encounter with beauty, nuttiness, whimsy or despair whenever you are out and about.

Say what you want about Oakland and you can expect a list as long as your arm.

Say what you like about Oakland and you have only to look around to see wonderful things on any corner.

Seeking a downtown parking spot the other day, a Rockridge driver turned left onto 17th Street after leaving the freeway, turned right at San Pablo Avenue, then right again on 16th Street, and WOW!, found the stunning mural at left on the back of the Haley Law Offices building, an evident tribute to the Oakland Worker.

From a phone call to the artist, who had left his name at the bottom of his work, the driver learned that Oakland billboard painter and muralist Michael Manente of Masterpiece Sign Painting and his son John had painted the first of a series of "People of Oakland" portraits on the erstwhile blank back wall of the Haley building. Lawyer Haley is a friend and gave his blessing to the project. The carpenter is also a friend of Manente's, and posed for the preliminary sketches.

"I was a billboard painter for 20 years, and I have painted murals in San Francisco and Oakland over the years," Manente said, "many in West Oakland, some for San Francisco merchants, and some on Fisherman's Wharf." — Don Kinkead

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PC World Magazine

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

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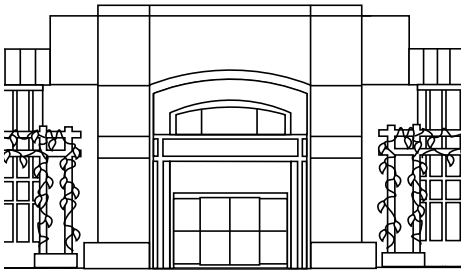
Friends of the Rockridge Library
Supporting the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library

The Rockridge Library – Off to a Great Start for 2012

by Jennifer James Alper, FORL boardmember

The Rockridge Library is clearly a beloved and valued institution in our neighborhood. Once again, the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) are extremely grateful for the continued support the community has shown for our local branch.

Donations to FORL provide the vital funding that bridges the budget gaps faced by many of the popular programs and services we need in our library. FORL funds underwrite a variety of the children and teen programs, as well as popular periodicals, books and continued maintenance for



our library facilities. We thank all of our "friends" for their generous donations and support.

This year, FORL will be working closely with the Rockridge library staff, as well as the larger Oakland Public Library system, to find ways to improve the library experience for patrons.

FORL has also taken steps to register as an independent non-profit corporation and expects our new status to be approved shortly. Originally founded in 1996 as a sub-committee of the Rockridge Community Planning Councl (RCPC), FORL will now operate as a separate non-profit, with the sole focus of supporting the Rockridge branch. The FORL board has enjoyed working with RCPC on a variety of community projects over the years, and appreciates the guidance they have provided to us. We will continue our efforts to best serve the neighborhood and residents through our work with the Rockridge Library.

Keep up with FORL's activities on behalf of the Rockridge branch at our website (www.friendsofrockridgelibrary.org); we look forward to seeing you at the library.



Peralta Yard Sale Storage Space

from page 9

was split between Peralta and Claremont. It is our hope we can continue this wonderful event that brings neighbors and school communities together.

Many things go into making this sale a continued success: dedicated workers; generous donations by community members; shoppers from all over the East Bay; and pre-sale access to storage space for donated items.

Unfortunately, this year's sale is threatened because we are losing our storage space. Wonderful neighbors who have so generously let us use their basement for the past three years are moving next month and we will lose the use of this space for pre-sale storage of donated items.

Having adequate pre-sale storage allows us to collect, sort, organize and price all donations prior to the day of the yard sale. This pre-sale organization is crucial for efficient set up, sales and tear down/clean up. Trying to do it all the morning of the sale is just too difficult.

If you have space you could donate to us, we would greatly appreciate it. Ideally, it would be a ground floor space, located in our neighborhood. We would be using it for about a month. All the stored items would be gone by 9 a.m. April 29.

All leads are appreciated. Send suggestions and offers to Heather Grillmeyer at grillmeyer@sbcglobal.net.

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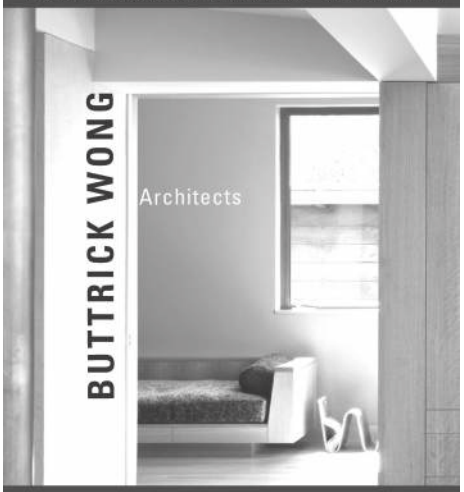


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Tech High Auction

from page 9

We encourage everyone to participate in whatever way appeals to you. Local businesses or community members can sponsor our event, donate merchandise and services or purchase a catalog ad. The entire Rockridge community is invited to the party and to participate in Tech's first online auction this March.

Plan now to attend this exciting event, to be held Saturday, March 24, from 6:00-10:30 p.m., at the Uptown Body and Fender building at 401 26th Street, Oakland. Tickets are $25 per person until February 29, and $35 afterwards.

For more information, to purchase advance tickets, or to donate an item, contact auction@oaklandtech.com or visit: www.oaklandtech.com/ptsa/auction-2012/.

BRT Meeting Ignores Concerns

from page 1

Included in this process are the following steps:

- On or about February 3, the resubmitted FEIS will be released to the public.
- Public meetings for input will be held in March (details at end of article).
- In April, the two city councils will vote on the BRT project.
- In August, the Federal Transit Administration, which oversees and finances the project, will issue a Record of Decision.

If approved, construction of the BRT project will begin in April, 2014, to be completed two years later.

During the meeting, AC Transit staff representatives Tina Spencer and Jim Cunradi announced two possible routes for the BRT:

- One would begin on Telegraph Avenue at the Berkeley border on its way to San Leandro, and therefore would include the Temescal District.
- The other possible route would go from downtown Oakland to San Leandro, and therefore would exclude the Temescal District.

Tina Spencer saw the March public input meetings as a way to include the public in the policy-making process by providing an opportunity for people to make suggestions about such things as bus color, shelters, and lighting.

Community Concerns Not Mentioned

No mention was made of the deeper community concerns that Temescal and Rockridge residents have, such as traffic congestion and loss of parking; the impact on an existing vibrant local merchant economy that has taken years to build; placement of bus stops two blocks apart so that riders (including most disabled) can get local errands and business done in a timely and convenient manner; bicycle lanes; and a clear definition of pollution.

Bring your input and concerns to the District/public impact meeting Wednesday, March 7, 6-8 p.m., at Faith Presbyterian Church, 430 49th Street.

STAND (Standing Together for Accountable Neighborhood Development)
E-mail: standnorthoakland@gmail.com
Contact person: Jane Kramer, 510/522-6423

Board Candidates

from page 6

and will be published in the April issue of The Rockridge News.

At the April 19 RCPC Town Hall meeting, candidates will explain to the audience their interest in serving on the board, and voting will take place. Neighbors unable to attend the April 19 meeting may vote at the Rockridge Branch Library on Saturday, April 21. Further details will be published in the April issue of The Rockridge News.

E-mail your letter of intent by February 29 and a written statement with photo by March 22 to: rcpcchair@rockridge.org, or send your letter, postmarked by the applicable deadline, to: RCPC Elections, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Include your address, phone number and and e-mail address.

Past board members may be subject to terms limits.

New Boardmember

from page 1

daughter was small, we sometimes took her to the location of today's FROG Park; but the setting was far less inviting then, and we often ended up driving to Tilden or smaller Berkeley parks. Determined area residents, with RCPC support, made FROG Park possible.) That role continues as Rockridge faces Safeway expansion plans on both ends of the neighborhood, along with other current issues.

Besides my legal work, I have a Master's in planning, spent several years in Sacramento as a legislative analyst, and worked for Leo McCarthy through his first term as Lieutenant Governor. This background, focused on issue analysis, writing, and dispute resolution, along with my ability to commit significant time, will help me play a useful part in RCPC's work in the months ahead.

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Chabot Auction

from page 9

generosity of parents and local businesses, the PTA raised over $175,000 at our 2011 auction, a fantastic showing! Our goal is to match or surpass that benchmark, and we need support to reach it.

As in years past, the auction has two phases:

We kick off with the online auction of teacher/staff donations, gift certificates and other wonderful items like travel experiences, clothing and jewelry. The online auction runs from Wednesday, February 29 through Thursday, March 8. Link to the Casino Royale event featured at www.chabotelementary.org and view the auction catalog as it's being built, donate an auction item or service, sponsor Chabot or donate money, and buy tickets to the event.

Casino Royale, the gala live auction and silent auction will feature parent-hosted parties, classroom art projects and gift baskets, along with one-of-a kind items and experiences. Items to be auctioned off at the gala include an electric guitar signed by the Rolling Stones; a framed photo signed by all six James Bond actors; a framed photo signed by the cast of Star Wars; and a two-night stay at a Napa bed and breakfast with wine tasting. Festivities will continue well into the evening hours, so be sure to wear your dancing shoes.

Chabot relies on the generosity of its school and local communities to make our annual auction a success. Local businesses are encouraged to sponsor our event, as well as donate goods, services and gift certificates. It's a targeted and effective way to reach the broader Chabot community while supporting our school. Can't attend the live event? Take part in the online auction. Otherwise, join us March 10 to celebrate our fantastic school community. We'll wager that it will be a wonderful night. More information at www.chabotelementary.org.

Peralta Auction

from page 9

disks and tables chockfull of certificates to local restaurants, as well as items and services donated by local merchants. Tickets can be purchased for $20 in advance or $25 at the door.

The entire community is invited to this party as well to the school's online auction, which runs February 20-27. It is a great way to support the school and discover a treasure trove of deals and coveted items. To donate an item or service to the auction, contact Lisa Beyer at 510/384-8724. Donation deadline is February 11.

Peralta's auction supports important programs at the school, which are in jeopardy amid the financial strain of years of budget cuts. Thanks to the community support for fundraisers like the auction, Peralta continues to offer art, music, physical education and other services once considered part of every kid's school day.

"All these things we want at our school," said Star Lightner, chair of Peralta's parent teacher group. "Now, if we want kids to have a truly rich, diverse learning environment, we have to fund it."

To meet the challenge, the community has successfully ramped up the auction, the school's second biggest fundraiser. Since 2009, the auction has more than doubled its revenue, bringing in $55,000 last year.

There is a sense of urgency about funding to ensure that Peralta, honored last year with a U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon School award, can maintain its standard of excellence.

For more information, visit http://www.peraltaschool.org.

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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.

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Report: NCPC

from page 1

The College Preparatory School, 6100 Broadway, will be a special one as well: Margaret Wahlberg and Christine Acker of WhistleSTOP will donate the balance of their nonprofit funds to the Greater Rockridge NCPC as they retire their WhistleSTOP program. WhistleSTOP raised money to purchase and resell keychain whistles as a crime prevention tool. Because the city no longer funds the NCPCs, composed of citizen volunteers who offer their time, office supplies, and other resources, WhistleSTOP's $441 donation to your Greater Rockridge NCPC will help continue crime prevention and awareness in Rockridge.

Plan to attend the February meeting to show your appreciation to Christine Acker and Margaret Wahlberg for their WhistleSTOP work and the donation to the Greater Rockridge NCPC.

Purchasing surveillance cameras: Details about the cameras, how they work, prices and the 30 percent community discount (six camera minimum) will be in the NCPC minutes. To help people get the discount, NCPC has started a list of names of those interested so we may introduce people to each other to meet the purchase minimum. If you need one or two "order buddies," e-mail chair@rockridgencpc.com, noting how many cameras you are interested in purchasing.



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

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Councilmember Jane Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

Saturday, February 25 from 10am to noon. Featured speaker: **City Adminstrator Deanna Santana.** Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz, east of Telegraph). Info: 238-7001, or view Brunner Report at www.oaklandnet.com (the site for all City-related information).

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. **Note: meeting location Feb.9th: The College Preparatory School, Room P1, 6100 Broadway**. 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:

- **Make Your Own Valentines:** Thursday, 2/9, from 3:30 to 5:00; Bring a list of names –make a valentine for everyone in your class. All materials provided. Children under 7 bring a grown-up.
- **African Stories on Film for Children:** Wednesday, 2/15, 4 - 5pm. Watch fables, songs, & stories together on the big screen. Snacks provided. Best for ages 5 to 10.

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.
- **Make your own duct tape wallet:** Saturday, 2/25, noon to 1:30pm.
- **Youth Speaks Writing & Performance Workshops:** Taught by experienced writers **Dyanna Loeb** and **Milani Pelley**. The 10-week on-going series covers everything from fiction to storytelling to desktop publishing, improvisation, poetry, and performance. **Free** and open to anyone 13-19 years old. Thursdays through 3/22, 4 to 5:30pm.

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, 3/6), 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:

- Feb: **Tomye**; Gouache painting.
- Mar: **Rick Nelson**; Photography.

Lobby Display Case:

- Feb: **MoCHA**; Children's artwork.
- Mar: **Women's Studies Month** display; Women, Wealth and Economic Justice.

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 Fri 2/10 and Sat 2/11. Note**: due to possible shut-downs, confirm all dates.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- 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*.
- Mon, 2/13, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month)**: All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Thurs, 2/16, 7pm. Publication party for local author **Nina LaCour**: *The Disenchantments*.
- Fri, 2/17, 7pm. **Ramona Ausubel**: *No One Is Here Except All Of Us.*
- Thurs, 2/23, 7pm. **Gary Taubes** and **Frederick Crews**: *Why We Get Fat: And What To Do About It*.
- Sun, 2/26, 3pm. Poetry Flash with **Willis Barnstone** and **Stanley Moss**.

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

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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.

School Fundraising Auctions

- **Peralta Elementary School**: Saturday, March 3, 5 to 11pm at the Uptown Body and Fender Bldg., 401 26th St., as well as the on-line auction from Feb 20–27. Info at www.peraltaschool.org.
- **Chabot Elementary Annual Spring Auction, "Casino Royale."** Saturday, March 10, starting 5:30pm, at the Scottish Rite Temple, 1547 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, and an on-line auction from Sunday, 2/29 through Friday, 3/9. Info at www.chabotelementary.org.
- **Oakland Technical High Annual Auction Fundraiser:** Saturday, March 24, from 6:00-10:30 p.m., at the Uptown Body and Fender building, 401 26th Street. For more information or to donate an item, contact auction@oaklandtech.com or visit: www.oaklandtech.com/ptsa/auction-2012/

More details in articles beginning on page 9.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Harps Galore: Patrice Haan, Lisa Lynne and **Aryeh Frankfurter**. Saturday, February 25, 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 goods; home-made crafts, and more. Sample the goods, greet your neighbors and listen to live music. **Bring your own reusable bags**. 5300 Claremont Ave. at DMV parking lot. More info 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 African Dance Class** taught by BB Borowitz. Every Thurs through 3/8; 1:15 to 2:15pm.

Open Mon. – Fri., 9am to 3pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Info: 597-5085.

Staff Changes at Rockridge Branch Library: Temporary? No Guarantees

Branch Manager **Pat Lichter** and Storytelling Librarian **Gay Ducey** are being transferred to other branches. Pat is going to be branch manager at the new 81st Avenue Branch, while Gay will be branch manager at the Dimond Branch for six months. We hope their assignments are temporary and that they will return to Rockridge, but there are no guarantees.

The library system has had a hiring freeze in place for a long time. These moves are therefore forced by a promotion and a couple of people going on leave, creating a domino effect.

City budget cuts are also causing a lot of furlough days at the library, which many patrons only discover by accident when they go on a day that the library would normally be open.

— Jennifer Vetter, ardent library supporter



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