THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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On the Nature and Likelihood of Soundwalls Coming to Rockridge

Soundwalls: What are they? What can (and can't) they do? Do we want them? If so, how do we get them? If not, what should we do?

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair emeritus, and Ronnie Spitzer, Fourth Bore Coalition vice-chair

The possibility of the construction of soundwalls along Highway 24 through parts of the Rockridge-Temescal area has raised many questions. This fourth article on soundwalls (following up on those in the May, June and July 2011 issues of The Rockridge News) will consider the nuts-and-bolts of soundwalls, some "urban legends"

On Soundwalls, page 12


/D. Kinkead

Transparent soundwalls installed on I-580 at the Estudillo Overcrossing in East Oakland. Similar to Rockridge area Highway 24 sections that span open space below the roadway.


/Ian Martin

Last year's selection of cakes. You could win one like them this year.

Cakes and Spiders and a DJ, Oh My!

Peralta in Bloom: a Feast of Spring Fun on May 12

by Michelle Quinn, Peralta parent

Mark your calendar for Peralta Elementary School's 10th annual spring festival, Peralta in Bloom on Saturday, May 12, noon to 4. The free event is open to all.

Peralta in Bloom is a celebration of the wider Peralta community, the school gardens and the school's students who will need to blow off some steam after two weeks of testing. As well as a barbecue and other great things to eat, there will be a climbing wall; free bouncy house; arts and crafts; free face painting; carnival games and animals to visit at the petting zoo. Don't forget to bring an old shirt for the silkscreen station.

Peralta in Bloom, page 10

17 May 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting AGENDA

■ **Cycling in the Urban World: Tips for Bicycle Maintenance and Riding Safety**

May is National Bicycle Month. Spring is here and people not yet out cycling are getting ready to do so. Is your bike up to mechanical snuff? Got all your road safety tips in mind? The RCPC May Town Hall program will provide you with helpful maintenance and safety tips for an enjoyable biking season.

■ **City Moves to Improve Cycling Safety**

Also on the agenda is a presentation by a city representative describing planned bike lane improvements in Rockridge for cyclist, pedestrian and motorist safety.

RCPC Town Hall Meeting:
Thursday, May 17 | 7:30-9 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College at Manila

Ride for a Reason: Be There With Us in the Home Stretch— May 12

by Mike Napolitano, ride co-organizer

Now in its fourth year, Ride for a Reason is a bike ride from Oakland to Sacramento to draw attention to the funding crisis for California schools, and to raise critical funds for enrichment programs in several local

Ride for a Reason, page 10

BRT: Downt'n Oakland → San Leandro

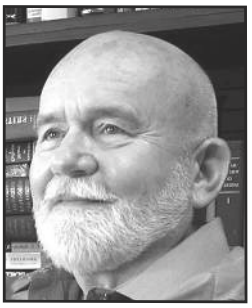
While RCPC has long been a supporter of public transit, the RCPC board has had reservations about AC Transit's plan to convert two lanes of Telegraph Avenue into exclusive bus lanes for a bus rapid transit (BRT) route from San Leandro to Berkeley. The plan threatened to divert traffic from the displaced lanes onto local Rockridge streets. Berkeley rejected the proposal.

At the AC Transit board's public hearing held April 25, RCPC board member Alex Naughton delivered the organization's formal opposition to the plan. At the end of the meeting, the transit board voted unanimously to pursue BRT between downtown Oakland and San Leandro. Details in the June newsletter. — *Stuart Flashman*

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.
Views expressed in Op-Ed essays do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

Peralta Colleges Parcel Tax Opens Doors, adds Support for Community Students

by Cy Gulassa, president, Peralta Community College District board of trustees



Cy Gulassa

Rather than cut hundreds of classes and turn away thousands more students, the board of trustees of the Peralta Colleges – Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, and Laney and Merritt Colleges in Oakland – recently voted to place a local parcel tax, Measure B, on the June ballot.

Measure B, if approved by a two-thirds majority, would provide for a $48 per year tax on each parcel in the college district, raising $8 million annually to help open doors for more community students. The new revenue, which expires in 2020, would help offset the massive reductions in state apportionments that have already forced our community colleges to slash courses and deny access to thousands of local students at a time when demand is soaring.

In its binding resolution, Peralta's board made clear that the funds would "stay in our community and could not be taken away by the state, no funds would be used for administrator salaries, or benefits, and all expenditures would be monitored by an independent Citizen's Oversight Committee." In addition, the district would be obligated to file an annual report every January with the board of trustees that contains the amount of funds collected and expended, and the status of projects.

The resolution also requires that every dollar raised by Measure B go directly to support core educational programs in English, math and science, essential disciplines for acquiring new job skills, training for new careers or transferring to a four-year college or university. Approximately $8 million in revenue for the academic year 2012-2013 alone would help restore nearly 500 classes and create space for as many as 1,500 full-time students. The revenue would also provide academic support for students and preserve quality instruction.

"When the state can't support our students, we have a duty to appeal to our local community for help," said Chancellor Wise E. Allen, Ph.D. The Peralta Colleges, which have seen **Peralta Colleges, page 10**



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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays, and Tuesday, May 29, Memorial Day.
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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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.

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April Town Hall Meeting: Elections and Land Use

by Stuart Flashman, Land Use chair

The April Town Hall Meeting, which doubled as RCPC's annual membership meeting, focused on two traditional RCPC activities – elections for the board of directors and discussion of land use issues.

The meeting began with a candidates' forum, with six of the seven board candidates providing a short statement of their qualifications and interests, followed by a lively question-and-answer period.

After that there was a break in the meeting so that the 32 RCPC members present could vote for the candidates of their choice. The six elected candidates, in alphabetical order, were Bernard Baltaxe, Christopher Chin, Stuart Flashman, James Kachelmeyer, Alex Naughton, and Laura Schlichtmann. (The seventh candidate, Douglas Oliver, was appointed to the one-year appointed board seat at a special board meeting the following Sunday.)

After the break, Land Use Committee chair Stuart Flashman presented a short update on the land use issues facing RCPC, focusing on the two Safeway projects – the College/Claremont Safeway and the Rockridge Shopping Center. (See Land Use Committee Update, at right, for details.) Also mentioned was the city's upcoming reconsideration of off-street parking requirements as part of its citywide rezoning process and AC Transit's pending consideration of the Bus Rapid Transit Project (BRT) on Telegraph Avenue. (See initial report, page 1. A fuller report will be presented in the June issue of the newsletter.)

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: May 23. *Subject to change. Check* rockridge.org *the preceding week for the full meeting agenda.*

Committee Notes: This month's meeting is Wednesday, May 23. Agenda topics include updates on the Rockridge Shopping Center and College Avenue Safeway projects. 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.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

- **College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project: College & Claremont Avenues**

RCPC has retained an attorney who specializes in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) issues, Michael Graf, to advise it during the remaining portion of the administrative process for this project, which would replace the current 22,500 sq.ft. store with a 62,000 sq.ft. shopping center. Peterson Vollman (pvollman@oaklandnet.com, 238-6167), the city planner assigned to the project, is still reviewing the 2000-page administrative draft of the city's EIR consultant's responses to comments on the Draft EIR (circulated for public comment last summer). At the moment, he expects the final EIR will be released to the public and submitted to the Planning Commission for certification some time this summer. (Just in time to conflict with people's vacation plans!) We hope, given the document's size and the inconvenient time, that the city can be persuaded to wait until September to consider whether to certify the document.

- **Rockridge Shopping Center Rebuild Project: Broadway & Pleasant Valley**

According to Daren Ranelletti (DRanelletti@oaklandnet.com, 238-3663), the planner handling this project, Safeway's shopping center division expects to submit revised plans for the major expansion of this retail center very shortly. RCPC, in cooperation with other North Oakland neighborhood groups, has submitted to Safeway a list of ten issues that we hope the revised plans will address. It seems likely that the draft Environmental Impact Report for this project will be published some time this summer.

- **Rockridge Montessori School Expansion Project, 5610 Broadway**
- **College Preparatory School Expansion Project, 6100 Broadway**

Decisions are pending on these two minor conditional use permit applications for expansions of Rockridge private schools. See the April, 2012 Rockridge News (online at www.rockridge.org) for more details on the two projects and RCPC's concerns.

The city planner for the Montessori project is Ulla-Britt Jonsson (ujonsson@oaklandnet.com, 238-3322); for the College Preparatory school it is Aubrey Rose (arose@oaklandnet.com, 238-2071).

- **21st Amendment Beer Emporium (name subject to change), 5330 College Avenue**

At its April meeting, the RCPC board of directors voted unanimously not to oppose this project for a store that would include sale of bottled/canned microbrewery and exotic beers as well as facilities for onsite beer tasting. The board asked that the owner meet with neighboring businesses and residents to assure that any concerns are addressed before a use permit is granted.

Interestingly, a similar proposal has surfaced at the north end of College Avenue, in the block of stores across from the College Avenue Safeway. The land use committee expects to discuss this project with the applicant soon, perhaps at its May meeting.

Claremont School Principal Recommendation Committee Makes Progress

Selecting a permanent principal for Claremont Middle School is moving forward consistent with the hiring plan outlined by Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Regional Executive Officer Mia Settles and Kyla Johnson-Trammell, the district's Director of Talent Development, at public meetings held in February and March.

OUSD policy calls for the creation of a Principal Recommendation Committee (PRC) that includes teachers, school staff, parents or guardians, and one community representative. The role of the PRC is to interview a short list of qualified candidates proposed by the district, and to make hiring recommendations to the district and the board of directors. At the public meetings, Settles and Johnson-Trammell said the goal of the process is to select a principal who is well qualified for the job, and who

Claremont Principal Process, page 5



Earth Day Volunteers Make Frog Park Shine for Anniversay Celebration

Construction Crews Recall Park's Early Days

Pictured at left are some of the Big Build captains and committee leaders. Front row, from left: Barney Smits, Theresa Nelson, Gail Durkin, Kyle Faulkner, Eileen Fitz-Faulkner, Steve Costa, Carroll Moore. Back row: David Jacobs, Ken Cluff, Tony Kay, Peter Hollingsworth, Jimmy Pedersen.

PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.KENRICEPHOTOPEOPLE.COM

Many Thanks to Clean Up Crews

by Carol Behr, FROG chair

A beautiful, sunny Earth Day saw an impressive turnout at Frog Park for a morning cleanup and a fun 10th anniversary celebration in the afternoon as more than 100 volunteers — adults and children — joined in to clean the park, play structures, the creek, and pathway and planted areas.

When children see adults volunteering for an Earth Day cleanup, they see adults as role models making the effort to steward the earth and community resources. A huge amount of work was accomplished, thanks to Rockridge and Temescal neighbors and friends. Our thanks to Mara Gendell for the festive graphics, and the dedicated captains who supervised: Howard Ferrier; Barney Smits; Jimmy Pedersen; and Daniel Orenstein.

Our thanks to Bakesale Betty's for the banana bread, Jean Littlejohn for ably staffing our registration table, and Ronnie Spitzer for acting as our "gofer."

A special thanks to Rockridge's Girl Scout Troop #32619, Cub Scout Troop #274 and the DMV Neighbors Association for their hard work all morning. We are also grateful to local businesses and the Rockridge Library for posting flyers and announcing the events.

Next FROG Meeting: May 10

Rockridge Library,
Thursday, May 10, 7,30 p.m.
Join with neighbors
who care about FROG.



Volunteers Celebrate 10 years of FROG Park

Over 200 adults and kids participated in the 10th Anniversary Celebration, commemorating FROG Park's founding a decade ago. While kids played games on the grass, entertainers enthralled the crowd with magic tricks, juggling feats, and whirling ropes. People instrumental in nurturing and bringing the park to fruition recollected the past and contemplated the park's next 10 years.

"When I started a group of young parents to build a children's park in Rockridge in 1992, none of us dreamed that less than 10 years later, we would have this incredible park and two magnificent hand-built play structures in the midst of our community. After raising about a half-million dollars from our community, plus over $2 million of public funds, together – with more than 1,300 volunteers – we built the park, and now maintain and continue to improve it. Everyone we invited here today to speak played an important role in building this park, and they will tell you this extraordinary story of partnership and the people who made this dream a reality."

— Theresa Nelson, FROG Park co-founder

"There are few moments in one's life or in the life of a neighborhood when you are offered an opportunity to create and taste the spirit of community. For me and for this neighborhood, what we did here 10 years ago was such a moment. Each of us brought to this place our unique skills or learned new skills – hammering, augering, tiling, sawing, staining, cooking. For me, it all added up to be the most meaningful community experience in my 35 years working in Oakland."

—Steve Costa, FROG Chair, Big Build

Special Thanks:

10th Anniversary Program: Theresa Nelson, former FROG committee chair and Mistress of Ceremonies; Jane Brunner, Oakland City Councilmember; Eileen Fitz-Faulkner, Big Build general coordinator; Steve Costa, former FROG committee chair; David Stein, former president, Friends of Oakland Parks & Recreation; Kristen Zaremba, city of Oakland Public Art Coordinator; Brian Carthan, city of Oakland Park Supervisor II, Public Works; Assemblymember Nancy Skinner and Mark Chekal-Bain, district director for Nancy Skinner; Howard Ferrier, FROG Committee Maintenance Coordinator; Carol Behr, FROG Chair and Ronnie Spitzer, event co-organizer; Al Hussian, sound system; Studio One, face painting and crafts; Dana Smith, juggler; Adrian Ehlman (Ace Magic), magician; Karen Quest, cowgirl tricks; stage, Oakland Technical High School; donor signs, Lisa Ferrier and Kappy Sugawara.

FROG Committee Members: Carol Behr, current FROG committee chair; Theresa Nelson; Jimmy Pedersen, construction projects; Barney Smits, creek project; Ronnie Spitzer, Treasurer and website; Alex Naughton, RCPC liaison to FROG.

Other Important Contributors: Annual Fall Maintenance, College Preparatory High School freshman class; Jennifer Cooper, former FROG committee chair and Phase Two coordinator; Mike MacDonald, bathroom project; Kate Runyan, Oceanus Mural restoration project; Phase Two steering committee; Big Build captains, committee leaders and volunteers; City and County staff: Ignacio de la Fuente and staff; Jim Ryugo, Parks Facilities Manager; Zac Wald, Nila Kim and Kate Whitlow; Gene Mazza, Alameda County Public Works Agency; Luciano Cortes, FROG gardener; Rockridge Community Planning Council; Friends of Oakland Parks & Recreation; community maintenance volunteers.

Oakland Tech: 9th Grade Pre-Registration Night; Auction Success

Pre-Registration, 2012-13

Tech hosts a Pre-Registration Night on Friday, May 11, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. in the Girls' Gym, to help each incoming 9th grade family receive information about school programs and electives and to select courses for the next school year. Students ***must*** be accompanied by a parent/guardian. ***Note:*** Meeting time is by student last name: Students with last name beginning with R – Z: 4 p.m.; I – Q: 5 p.m.; A – H: 6 p.m.

Important: Pre-Registration Night attendance is crucial. The school has space for 550 freshmen in August 2012, but a much higher number of incoming freshmen are assigned to Tech for the 2012-13 school year. Your attendance on May 11 is critical so the administration will know you are serious about becoming an Oakland Tech student in August.

This is only pre-registration. You still need to attend registration and orientation in August.



If you are unable to attend, it is essential that you contact our two 9th grade counselors, Mr. Shawn Raeke (shawn.raeke@ousd.k12.ca.us), or Ms. Teresa Williams (teresa.williams@ousd.k12.ca.us) by e-mail or phone (510/450-5400). If you fail to attend pre-registration or to contact the school, you risk losing your spot at Tech.

More information on Pre-Registration is available on the Oakland Tech website: http://oaklandtech.com/staff/blog/2012/04/05/pre-registration-for-2012-13-school-year.

2012 Tech Auction a Smashing Success

Thank you to the Oakland community for supporting the 2012 "This Is It" auction, our school's most significant fundraiser. We are pleased to report that we grossed more than $65,000, a new record. The total includes almost 300 ticket sales, plus online, silent and live auctions.

We appreciate the generous donations from Rockridge businesses and residents to our auction. Your special items, food, and generous gift certificates enabled us to offer a tantalizing array of dinners, clothing, food, wine and outings to the Tech community.

Funds raised at our annual auction touch all areas of the school, from classroom support to grounds beautification, from athletics to music, and from lab supplies to technology.

— Collected and reported by Tech parent Ronnie Spitzer

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Claremont Principal Process

from page 3

is also a good match for the particular needs of Claremont students and the school community.

The PRC has met weekly since early April to develop interview questions for the candidates, who are prescreened by OUSD. Parent and community surveys were tabulated this week. The results will influence questions the PRC develops over the next two weeks.

From the Claremont Middle School News on the school web site: http://www.claremontms.org/. Sign up online for regular bulletins.



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Join Bike to Work Day: Thursday, May 10

Why Bike to Work?

Bike-to-Work Day is held annually statewide to encourage bicycling as a non-polluting and healthy commute option. In Oakland, Bike-to-Work Day is part of the City's strategy to promote cycling as affordable transportation, to improve public health, and to stop global warming.

By cycling, you can:

Reduce air pollution: In the Bay Area, 43 percent of all car trips are two miles or shorter. For short trips, bicycling is an important tool to reduce air pollution: up to 70 percent of emissions from a 10-mile trip occur within the first mile.

Stay healthy and fit: Bicycling to work is a great way to get exercise every day.

Save money: With gas prices rising, bicycling makes more financial sense than ever; a bike's annual operating cost is estimated to be $120 (as opposed to. $5,000-12,000 for a car).

Ease street congestion: 12 bicycles can fit in the space needed to park a single car.

Traditionally, the biggest Energizer Station in the East Bay is the annual pancake breakfast in front of City Hall.

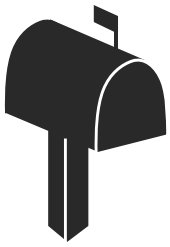
Ed. Note: Hank and Frank Bicycles will host an energizer Station at the Rockridge BART station from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Source: Oakland Web site: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/EC/s/BicycleandPedestrianProgram/OAK024651. Also see the East Bay Bicycle Coalition at: http://www.ebbc.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.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) — Why?

Editor:

I drive daily along Telegraph Avenue between Alcatraz and Bancroft at various times, both peak commute and mid-day. While the 1R articulated buses on that route are often full (but hardly standing room only) in the morning, they are nearly empty during the rest of the day. Who exactly is supposed to flock to these buses if AC gets its way with BRT? Commuters from Contra Costa? Right. Commuters from Rockridge, Piedmont and Montclair, who won't have frequent bus connections with Telegraph Avenue and no place to park if they drive down? The current level of ridership hardly justifies the extra-large buses now much less a complete revamp of Telegraph and resulting destruction of business and bike lanes.

Additionally, even at peak hours, Telegraph Avenue traffic is busy but seldom acutely congested, except around Ashby — which is caused by Highway 13 cross traffic and wouldn't be alleviated by changes on Telegraph.

There is no justification for these proposed drastic changes.

— Claire Lomax

Rockridge News CORE Article Hits the Mark

Dear Ms Berne:

Thank you very much for the outstanding article on Oakland CORE in the April 6 issue of The Rockridge News. I taught a CORE class in the Rockridge area last week and one of the attendees was kind enough to bring me a copy.

The importance of disaster preparedness is a story that can be told in such a way that people just throw up their hands and decide that there is no point in preparing for an apocalypse. You told the story accurately, that is, in a way that emphasized the positive return on careful preparation. Simply put, you got it right, and we who work in the CORE program are grateful.

You mentioned the complete series of CORE classes at the Rockridge Library in May; I will be teaching CORE II on Wednesday, May 9. I do hope to see you there.

— Jim Leeper, Oakland CORE

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

20 New Trees Planned for Claremont Avenue Planting this Spring

by Valerie Thompson, Scenic Streets volunteer

Twenty new sidewalk trees will be planted along the 5200-5400 blocks of southern Claremont Avenue this month. The project is coordinated by Scenic Streets, the local volunteer group who landscaped the nearby highway ramps last year.

The Pyrus Aristocrat (Flowering Pear) trees are a favorite species for the East Bay and recommended by the city. They are hearty, drought tolerant and grow quickly up to 35 feet tall. This attractive species is prized for its small white flowers in spring and brilliant red-orange leaves in autumn.

"We are thrilled to see more trees along our street," says Anna Lawrence, one of the property owners who gave permission for two trees to be planted in front of the well-manicured buildings that have belonged to her family for four generations. "These recent landscaping improvements will make a lasting impact on the neighborhood."

The new trees will be provided a steady supply of water from a sophisticated aqueous gel donated by Dri-Water Corporation of Santa Rosa. Scenic Streets volunteers will periodically fill upright underground pipes with the company's biodegradable goo which slowly releases water to the tree's root system over a period of weeks. The product is ideal for sites where using a garden hose isn't convenient.



Claremont Avenue gets new street trees between Clifton and Telegraph Avenue in a project initiated and coordinated by Scenic Streets.

The trees will be supplied and installed by Urban Releaf, an Oakland-based nonprofit authorized by the city to install sidewalk trees. The group puts local youth to work installing free trees for willing property owners throughout Oakland. More information can be found on its web site www.urbanreleaf.org

This latest Claremont Avenue project is part of Scenic Streets' drive to improve what its supporters refer to as the Rockridge-Temescal Gateway. Although one of the most popular routes serving these upscale neighborhoods, this section of roadway has looked forlorn for years.

Scenic Streets has set its sights on the highway underpass area near the Dog Run as its next renovation project. It intends to improve both the beauty and safety of the dark and dingy roadway. Ideas for potential improvements are solicited by the group on its web site: www.scenicstreeets.org.

RDA Presents a College Avenue Spring Jazz & Wine Stroll

Join Us for "A Taste of Rockridge"

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) has another Spring Jazz and Wine Stroll on tap, another fun-filled evening on College Avenue, for the third spring celebration in a row.

Last year's spring event was well received, with over 12 musical venues and the opportunity for great shopping and dining experiences. Come support your local merchants as you stroll from 5 to 8 p.m. with a little wine, samplings of food and entertaining street music. Spend some time in one of our wonderful restaurants; many will have in-house music as well as offering specials to patrons.

And now for the who, what and where:

Who: that would be "you," your family and friends;

What: come for the Jazz, come for the wine, come for the shopping, come for the food and special offers.

Where: College Avenue, from Alcatraz to Broadway;

When: Friday, May 11, 5 p.m.-8 p.m. for your shopping-and-dining pleasure.



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Eyes on Rockridge

DO-IT-YOURSELFER DEVELOPS TOOL LIBRARY INTO OAKLAND HUB

by Judith Doner Berne

In our move from metro-Detroit to Rockridge, we may have gone overboard in our desire to pare down to essentials in the hammer and nail department.

Putting together the grill our children gave us for a house present – oops, no electric screw driver.

Mounting that corkboard on my husband's home office wall – oops, no electric drill.

Cutting the Christmas tree trunk into haul-away sizes – oops, no Sawzall.

Fortunately, Ty Yurgelevic has 3,600 tools he is willing to lend, from the tiniest screwdrivers and files to demolition hammers and multi-use ladders.

The long-time Rockridge resident has lovingly presided over the Tool Lending Library at the Oakland Public Library's Temescal branch since he was hired to start it 12 years ago.

"I'm a real believer in this place. I would come to this place even if I didn't work here," says Yurgelevic, whose unofficial title is "tool-lending specialist."

He credits local residents who fought for a tool lending library to help rebuild and secure what fire and earthquake had taken from them.

And, "I owe a lot of credit to the (longer established) Berkeley Tool Library," he says. "I pummeled them with questions – what is most popular, what breaks down, what should I buy?"

Born in Oakland, raised in Hayward, and a Rockridge resident since 1973, Yurgelevic kind of backed into a job he obviously loves.

Neither his degree in medieval history from San Francisco State nor 30 years in accounting with the Southern Pacific Railroad were his most important credentials, he says.

"I told them that I've liked working on my house all these years and I think I know what people want," Yurgelevic says.

In retrospect, "We do have some medieval tools," he jokes.

And that accounting experience proved a serious asset as the library, which serves Oakland, Piedmont and Emeryville residents, grew as a hub of free tools and advice.

"We had 325 tools when we opened and tons of room," Yurgelevic says. Now, he catalogues more than 10 times that number in the same ever more crowded space.

"Our very first month in January 2000, we lent 51 tools." Now, he records 4,000 or so per month in spring and summer.

He was first a half-time employee. Now, he works full-time, has a permanent part-time assistant three days a week and three part-time aides.

"So much gets done in Oakland due to the tool library," says David Rosen, a Lake Merritt resident. "So many trees get trimmed and lawns get taken care of. Just check out the line snaking out the door at opening time."

To Rosen, who often stops in several times a week, "It's amazing that Ty and the staff keep it all so well organized and somehow manage to create a personable and helpful environment."

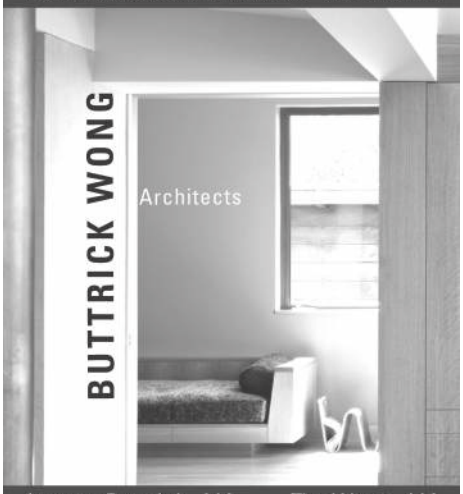
"One of our emphases is encouraging people to do their own retrofitting and bolting," Yurgelevic says. Although their normal borrowing period is three days, retrofitting tools can be kept for three weeks if the work is done with a permit.

Rockridge resident Matt Duplessis borrowed tools to secure his home around the time that the tool library opened.

"I really appreciate having all those tools as a resource," Duplessis says. Just the other day, "I was in the middle of a project and

Community Tools, page 9

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Community Tools

from page 8

my circular saw broke down. I was able to run right over."

''We've had a tremendous number of generous people who have donated expensive tools," Yurgelevic says. Still, 80 percent are purchased through his annual $18,000 tool budget that includes repairs, replacements and additions.

He's proud that a ready supply of weed eaters – the library's most popular tool – "has kept a fair number of our patrons employed. These aren't big contractors," he says. "They depend on us."

It's also not unusual to see neighborhood kids working on their bikes at the tool library's entrance. "If we're not too busy, we'll help them," Yurgelevic says.

So it was not surprising that members of the community raised their voices when the city's financial difficulties threatened the tool library's continued growth.

"We needed to galvanize our support," says Brian Laczko, an architect and a driving force behind the Friends of the Tool Library group that formed in 2010. "We showed up at one city budget meeting wielding all kinds of tools" – successfully.

In addition, the Friends group, which meets at 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month at the Kingfish Pub, has taken over responsibility for the free classes the tool library offers several times a year.

In his spare time, Yurgelevic continues to work on many aspects of his 1911 Craftsman home – also the site of wife Lauren Larson's day care center, "Home Away From Home."

In addition to the outdoor furniture he recently built from salvaged redwood, the yard features a Yurgelevic-constructed swing set and portable sand box surrounded by the synthetic turf he substituted for grass.

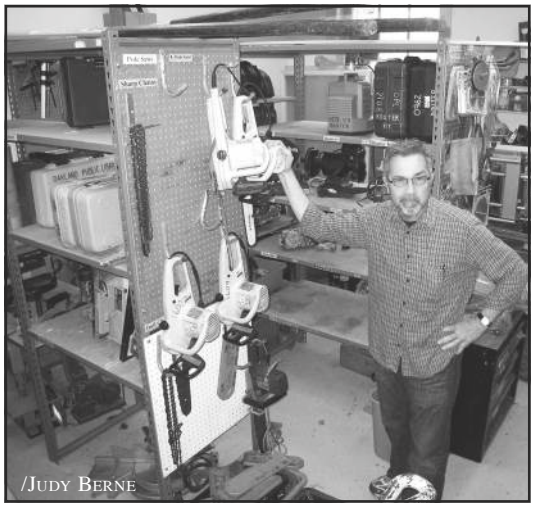
Their adult children, Jacob and Kate, work alongside Larson at the center where new granddaughter Zaira, four months, is a built-in participant.

"There always seems to be things to fix in the back yard where the children do most of their outside play," Yurgelevic says.

And, oh yes, like you and me, he knows a good place to borrow tools.

The tool library is free to residents of Oakland, Piedmont and Emeryville. First time borrowers will need an Oakland Library card – tool library staff can issue one on the spot – a photo ID, and a piece of mail addressed to them at their local address.

Judy Berne was a writer, columnist and editor for local newspapers in metro-Detroit. Since moving here in 2011, she is learning about Rockridge through its residents. Her e-mail is judyberne@att.net.

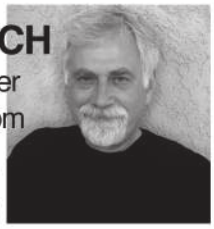


/Judy Berne

"I don't get tired of talking about the tool library," says Rockridge resident Ty Yurgelevic, who was hired to launch it 12 years ago.

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http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/Branches/temtll.htm
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Ride for a Reason

from page 1

Oakland public schools. California funds its schools at 25 percent below the national average. The future of our state is at stake.

The ride takes place Saturday, May 12. We are in the home stretch. There are many ways to show your support:

■ Pledge at www.rideforareason.dojiggy.com. One hundred percent of every dollar raised goes to enrichment programs at Claremont MS, Oakland Tech, Emerson School and Oakland International High. Donations are tax deductible.

■ Come to the rally at Claremont Middle School Friday, May 11, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the gym to hear speakers including Assemblymember Nancy Skinner and Oakland Board of Education President Jody London.

■ Whether you bike or drive, join the rally at the California State Capitol building, 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, Saturday, May 12, from 4 to 5 p.m., to hear keynote speaker Patricia Rucker of the state Board of Education.

With your support, we will make a difference.

Peralta in Bloom

from page 1

This year's theme is Cultivating the Local. The barbecue will feature locally pastured pork and tofu burgers made from organic soy in Oakland. The festival will include a veggie rolls station for kids to make and explore new tastes of locally grown vegetables and grains from organic farms. There will be a smoothie station of locally grown fruits from farms near Watsonville.

Not to be missed is the cake walk, where you can win one of dozens of delightful and colorful cakes. It is Peralta's version of musical chairs with a DJ spinning the records.

Many local non-profits will be at the festival as well, including Studio One and the East Bay Depot for Creative Re-Use. Our basket raffle will feature a range of prizes from local businesses, museums, and community supported agriculture.

While the event is free, Peralta in Bloom is a fundraiser; proceeds support the school's many programs, such as arts and sports. Think of the day as a way to have fun and help the school at the same time.

Peralta Colleges

from page 2

their budgets cut by some $20 million by the Legislature over the last several years, serve the 800,000 residents of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont. The community has a history of strong support for the Peralta Colleges.

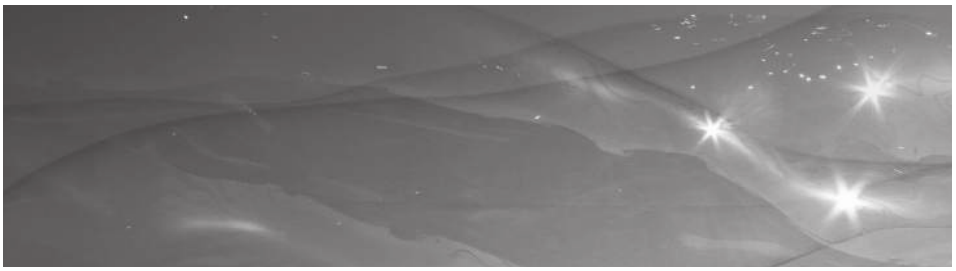
Since taking office in 2010, Chancellor Allen has reorganized management, overhauled finances, implemented all the recommendations of the accrediting commission and instituted many reforms that have invigorated morale and brought acclaim for the Peralta Colleges throughout the state.

Chancellor Allen believes Measure B is key to reversing the downward spiral in service to students forced by relentless state cuts to community college budgets. "The strategic goal of Measure B," he said, "is to ask the community to help us end rationing and assure all students in our district a fair chance to fulfill their educational goals." The Peralta Colleges Trustees and faculty and staff strongly support the proposal.

Measure B is endorsed by an array of political and civic figures, labor unions, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, the Oakland Tribune, Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, State Assembly Members Loni Hancock and Nancy Skinner, and Congresswoman Barbara Lee, among many others. There is no formal opposition.

Trustee Cy Gulassa, a resident of Rockridge, represents Peralta Board Area Six, which includes North Oakland and the Berkeley hills. He is a former editor of The Rockridge News.

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Checking In On the Status of the Arts

THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

In Our Schools

Times are definitely changing. Recently there has been discussion nationwide about the need to bring the arts back into schools. It's none other than the corporate world that is leading the charge. It appears the near-surgical excision of the arts from our children's school curriculum is producing robots instead of the creative, innovative work force needed to help build a sustainable future for our country. This comes after school boards and government decried for years the "wasteful spending" for crayons and paint brushes, causing virtually every public school to rely on their PTAs to support any kind of art program at all. Thank you, parents and teachers at Chabot and Peralta for never giving up your fight. Peralta in Bloom Spring Festival will be held Saturday, May 12, from noon to 4 p.m. at the school grounds, 460 63rd Street. Join the fun and help support a good cause.

In Our City

Come check out the happenings Downtown where the arts are driving an economic revival. Did you know condo vacancies have dwindled to a paltry few? Galleries are opening up; restaurants, music and theater are flourishing. Earlier this month, the historic presentation of the silent film classic "Napoleon," accompanied by the Oakland Symphony at the Paramount Theater, drew over 3,000 attendees from across the nation. The Fox Theater is drawing mega-crowds as well.

Additionally, First Fridays is taking on gargantuan proportions, with thousands of visitors strolling up and down Telegraph Avenue, hungry for the unique creative energy Oakland's diverse community has to offer.

Open Studios

The opening salvo for East Bay Open Studios took place on First Friday, May 4, with a preview gala and artists' reception at Pro Arts Gallery in City Center, 150 Frank Ogawa Plaza. It was a great way introduce the East Bay Open Studios weekends coming June 2-3 and 9-10. Several Rockridge artists, including Marsha Balian, Linda Lemon, Alec MacLeod, Liz Maxwell and Dodie Shoemaker, will be participating again this year. Visit www.porartsgallery.org or call 510/763-4361. At the web site you will find the online gallery featuring the work of nearly 1,000 member artists.

Music

Bookending the month, BACH (Bay Area Classical Harmonies) Last Friday Concert Series brings classical works to the public every last Friday of the month at Pro Arts Gallery. Billed as the "most versatile classical music organization in the Bay Area," this fine group of vocal and instrumental ensembles uses classical music to reach across generational and cultural lines. Under the direction of Andrew Chung, BACH gives young musicians the opportunity to work alongside seasoned artists. Go to www.bayareabach.org for information on auditions and coming performances.

Jason Hoffman, a recent Rockridge newcomer, has similar visions for budding musicians in our public schools. He is collaborating with Yoshi Akiba, co-owner of Yoshi's Oakland/SF, to bring professional musicians into the schools and our talented kids to the stage at Yoshi's, strengthening music and the arts in public school education. The program is in its beginning stages and can use a lot of help. Learn how to participate at the program's web site, http://51oakland.org/.

Storytelling

Storytelling is close to the heart of the Rockridge community, being that we have several famous performers living right here among us. Who has not thrilled to the stories of Gay Ducey and Diane Ferlatte? The 26th Bay Area Storytelling Festival is Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19 at the historic Craneway Pavilion, Marina Bay, Richmond. There will be master storytellers from across the nation; workshops on developing stories for children; music; good food; arts and crafts and more. On Saturday, 1:30-3:30, join the first ever Story Slam and win a prize, maybe. Go to www.bayareastorytelling.org for all the details. If you go, take your bike to get there. It's a great ride.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oneiser@sbcglobal.net or 510/652-6664.

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On Soundwalls

from page 1

surrounding them, and the processes by which they are or are not constructed.

Sources of Freeway Noise

Freeway noise comes from many sources: tires on pavement, including noise as they hit bumps, potholes, and cracks; engine noise, which varies with the type of engine— cars make some noise, diesel trucks and motorcycles make much more. While the noise originates in the engine, most of it comes out from the exhaust pipe, reduced somewhat by the muffler; and the noise of air displaced by cars and trucks as they travel. Trucks create a distinctive and particular sound when the driver applies engine braking or Jake's Brakes, a compression release mechanism that releases a mechanical gargling sound.

All of this noise increases with the number of cars and their speed. However, as the number of vehicles nears the freeway's capacity, speed diminishes, as does noise. Thus, a traffic jam produces far less noise than free-flowing traffic. Weather also affects noise levels, with perhaps the biggest effect being increased noise from tires moving on wet pavement.

What Can Soundwalls Do?

A soundwall's basic act is to block or deflect freeway traffic sound. Sound travels as waves, but often behaves as if it were a series of little balls. When the soundwave balls hit a soundwall barrier, they bounce off the wall in an organized manner (reflection); they bounce off the wall in random directions (diffusion); or they stick to the wall (absorption). A small amount of sound will pass through the wall.

A street-level view of the Estudillo Overcrossing shown on page 1. The transparent panels are lighter than the more usual concrete soundwall construction along Bay Area freeways.



/D. Kinkead

Because sound generally travels in straight lines, placement of a soundwall blocking the straight-line path between the noise source and the listener serves to deaden the noise. Conversely, if the line-of-sight isn't blocked, neither is the sound. Soundwalls usually don't help people living on the upper stories of buildings.

People often worry whether the sound reflected off a soundwall will increase noise on the opposite side of the freeway. The answer is: generally, no.

First, sound dissipates over distance. A truck's diesel exhaust noise, for example, drops by five decibels (dB) with each doubling of the distance from the truck. [A decibel is a unit of "loudness." A 10 dB noise difference will make a noise sound half as loud.] The truck noise that travels across the freeway, hits a soundwall and bounces back, will be five dB softer when it gets back to where it started

The second factor is diffusion. If the soundwall has a rough surface (as do most, by design), a lot of the sound will bounce back in random directions, spreading out and dissipating its energy and noise level. Even when sound bounces back the way it came in, it is reflected back, like light hitting a mirror, at the same angle that it came in. Most freeway noise starts near the roadway surface. When it hits the sound wall, it's going up. When it bounces off the soundwall, it keeps going up. By the time it gets to the other side of the freeway, it's many feet above the freeway. That reflected sound generally dissipates harmlessly.

On Soundwalls, page 13



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On Soundwalls

from page 12

A Legacy of the Past

If Highway 24 were built today, soundwalls would most likely be installed. Federal and California regulations mandate sound protection when new freeways are constructed. However, Highway 24 was built before these regulations were in effect. Therefore, soundwalls, if built, would be a retrofit. That complicates matters. Not only was the roadway not designed to accommodate soundwalls, but the surrounding area comes very close to the freeway, leaving little room to put them up.

The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

A plus for soundwalls is the protection they can offer to people living next to the freeway. This is important in Rockridge where the homes and the freeway are old. Most Rockridge homes are not equipped with double-paned windows and newer insulating materials that could reduce noise in the home. It is possible that soundwalls could reduce freeway noise by 5 to 10 dB for homes near the freeway.

However, the esthetics of Caltrans' concrete block soundwalls are stark, at best. Happily, that type of soundwall is not likely to be built in Rockridge since Highway 24's elevated structures weren't built for the extra weight of heavy concrete walls. Caltrans has recently installed transparent soundwalls on some nearby overpasses, as shown in the accompanying photos. While somewhat less effective in blocking noise, they preserve views and a sense of the roadway's openness.

Building Soundwalls, or Not

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA*) Freeway Soundwall Policy adopted in 2002 and later revised, defined a review and ranking system for retrofit soundwall projects. The policy defines four criteria for determining if a soundwall is warranted:

- The existing or future predicted exterior noise level is 65 dB.
- A reduction of at least 5 dB resulting from the installation of a soundwall can be achieved.
- The projected cost will not exceed $45,000 per dwelling unit (based on year 2002 costs) affected by the soundwall.
- The residences were developed prior to opening the freeway to traffic.

The process for implementing sound walls is twofold: 1. the initial screening process; and, 2. the Noise Barrier Scope Summary Report (NBSSR) process, a detailed noise study analysizing the four criteria above.

The screening process starts with a request for a soundwall. The jurisdiction, in this case the city of Oakland, agrees to sponsor the request and take responsibility for coordinating public input. As one element of the city's settlement agreement with Caltrans, an initial screening, or pre-NBSSR study, was conducted by Caltrans' consultant along Highway 24 between Highway 13 and I-580 to determine whether soundwalls were warranted. The pre-NBSSR study identified four areas along SR 24 that meet the criteria of the ACCMA soundwall policy and are considered cost-effective.The study, accepted by the ACCMA, is available at http://tinyurl.com/6oejbee.

The next step is evaluating support in the neighborhood for soundwalls through property owners' petitions.

A petition favoring construction of a soundwall must be signed by a property owner from 100 percent of the households with a property line immediately facing the proposed soundwall and 75 percent of the households with a property line not immediately facing the proposed soundwall, but experiencing a minimum 5 dB in noise reduction (typically 200-300 feet from the roadway). If the required quotas of petition signatures aren't submitted, the city can appeal to the ACTC, if it feels public support is nonetheless strong.

If enough qualifying signatures are gathered and the city of Oakland supports moving forward, a Noise Barrier Scope Summary Report (NBSSR) process is initiated. It must include:

- A detailed cost estimate.
- Life cycle of the soundwall.
- Consideration of the environmental impacts such as blocking residents' views or scenic vistas.
- Engineering feasibility.

Upon completion of the report, the city of Oakland must hold a public meeting and adopt a City Council resolution in support of the proposed soundwall. The final step is funding the actual soundwall construction.

The Oakland Settlement Agreement provides Caltrans funding for Highway 24 NBSSRstudies, should they progress to this stage, significantly shortening the development process. Two soundwall sections, eastbound from Vicente Way to Broadway and westbound from Ross Street to Telegraph Avenue, would receive $554,000 and $628,000 respectively for the studies.

If the NBSSR studies will not be pursued, the agreement's $8 million funding line will be moved down to projects lower on the final list (see http://tinyurl.com/7na7jhj).

An informational meeting on soundwalls and the process of having them studied, approved, funded and constructed will be held in the near future. Check the RCPC website at rockridge.org for more information or contact info@rockridge.org.

* The ACCMA has since been replaced by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). Same job, different name.



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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 address crime and public safety. 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. Confirm mtg. date 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.
- **Toddler Story Time:** (up to age 2) Every Thurs, 10:30am, upstairs (followed by Playtime).
- **Family Story Time:** Stories/songs/rhymes (to age 5). Every Saturday, 10:30am.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **Origami for Mother's Day projects:** cards and other decorations. Tues 5/8, 7 to 8pm and/or Thurs, 5/10, 3:30 to 5:30pm. All ages welcome; kids under 8 come with an adult.
- **Historical Fiction Book Clubs:** 5/5 and 5/19
  - **Ages 7 to 9:** 11:30am to 12:30pm. Book discussion followed by a craft.
  - **Ages 10 to 13:** 1:30 to 2:30pm.

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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, 1 to 2pm.
- **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). **Note: date change for May; 4th Saturday, 5/26, 1 to 5pm**.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice and referrals.** First Tues. each month, 5 to 7pm (advance sign-up starts 4:45pm at adult reference desk). **Note:** volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present.
- **East Bay Chronic Pain Group:** 1st and 3rd Tues. each month from 3pm to 5 pm. **Free**. Susan Malley: 655-3278 or susanmalley@yahoo.com.
- **Social Security and Retirement Planning:** Tuesdays, 5/15 and 6/12, 7 to 8pm. Presented by West Coast Financial and Insurance Services. Info: Joseph Karni, 869-9990.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

May: **Sherry Qwint-Cattoche**; Merritt College figure drawing.

June: **Oakland Art Assn.**; Paintings

Lobby Display Case:

May and June: **Rob Anderson Atelier**; student work.

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 Tues, 5/29 for Memorial Day.

Diesel Book, Poetry and Events

All events FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs, 5/10, 7pm. Oakland author **Tupelo Hassman:** *Girlchild*.
- Fri, 5/11, 4:30 – 6:30pm. Rockridge Jazz and Wine Stroll with live music by the **Fineberg-Seeling Quintet**.
- Fri, 5/11, 7pm. Publication Party for local author **Kenna Lee**: *A Million Tiny Things: A Mother's Urgent Search for Hope in a Changing Climate*.
- Mon, 5/14, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month)**: All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Fri, 5/18, 7pm. Annual event for **Students in UC Berkeley Extension's Post- Baccalaureate Writing Program**: poetry, fiction and non-fiction.
- Sun, 5/20, 3pm. Poetry Flash with **Julie Bruck** and **Sunnylyn Thibodeaux**.
- Wed, 5/23, 7pm. Poet **Dana Gioia**: *Pity the Beautiful*.
- Thurs, 5/31, 7pm. Local author and retired judge **Lise Pearlman**: *The Sky's the Limit: People v. Newton, the REAL Trial of the 20th Century?*

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

Jazz at the Chimes

John Santos Latin Jazz Sextet. Sunday, 5/20, 2pm, followed by artist's reception and refreshments. Tickets: $15 ($10 srs.60+ and students). Cash only at the door starting at 12:30pm. A concert series featuring Bay Area jazz musicians in a beautiful Julia Morgan venue. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. **Free parking**. More info at 654-0123 or chimesjazz@gmail.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert

Claudia Schmidt: folk, blues and jazz with guitar and dulcimer. Sat., June 2, 3pm; doors open 2pm (outside venue; wheelchair accessible). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. Reservations: RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Living Arts Playback Theater Ensemble

Benefit performance for the St. Augustine Kenya Orphanage Project. Fri, 5/18, 7:30pm. St. Augustine Church, 400 Alcatraz Ave. Read about the project at www.staugustineoakland.com; more info or tickets: Carol, 654-9709 or amaesing19@yahoo.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Giant Community Flea Market: Sat, June 2nd, 8an to 3pm. Purchase vendor space $15 (Sr. Center members $10). 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.

★Studio One Art Center

Wanted: community members to participate in an Advisory Council open to the public at large. Meetings 4th Wednesday each month (5/23), 7 -8pm, 365 45th St. For more info: Director Karis Griffin, 597-5096.

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