THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 27 ■ NO. 9 ■ ISSUE NO. 293 ■ October 6, 2012 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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

Halloween Parade Sunday, October 28

Grab your kids and your costume! Continuing our neighborhood's great, ghoulish tradition, the Rockridge District Association (RDA) and the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) invite you to celebrate a spoooky Halloween on College Avenue from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, October 28.

Participating merchants will host trick-or-treating along both sides of the avenue from Alcatraz to Broadway. Highlights include the Haunted Church, the Pumpkin Patch at Eddie's Liquors, and a fire truck near Market Hall.

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

Join in this holiday fun for kids of all ages. Parade is on, rain or shine.



Trick-or-Treat break time on College.

On the Nature and Likelihood of Soundwalls Coming to Rockridge

City Discusses Study Process, Soundwall Technology With Residents

by Andy Charman, RCPC chair

More than 80 Rockridge residents crowded into the Rockridge Library meeting room on September 27 to hear about soundwalls and the process that might lead to their construction in the Rockridge area.

Organized by the city of Oakland, the meeting presented a wealth of technical information on sound wall functionality, the sound wall study process, landscaping considerations and the preliminary technical report evaluating noise levels in Rockridge.

Following overviews by Zac Wald, chief of staff for Councilmember Jane Brunner, and Victoria Eisen, consultant to the city for the settlement project process, Wlad Wlassowsky, head of Oakland's transportation services division, talked about funding and the projects. He explained that the decision facing the city and the neighborhood was not about building soundwalls, but whether to do the additional studies known as Noise Barrier Scope Survey Reports (NBSSR) needed prior to construction decisions.

Studies for two sections of SR 24 in Rockridge – eastbound from Vicente Way to Broadway and westbound between Ross Street and Telegraph Avenue – could proceed if supported by a two-thirds majority of affected property owners (generally the first two rows of residences along the freeway). This is the same level required for other transportation projects on residential blocks, such as permit parking and speed humps.

Caltrans engineer Glenn Kinoshita said soundwalls could be most effective for residents whose line-of-sight to freeway traffic would be blocked by a soundwall 10-14 feet high. For other residents, a change in sound volume is possible, but likely not noticeable.

Kinoshita said various soundwall designs are approved by Caltrans. More expensive than masonry walls, transparent soundwalls were justified on I-580 in San Leandro because their lighter weight did not require retrofitting the elevated superstructures. In Rockridge, there is too little space bordering the freeway to use trees or other vegetation as natural sound barriers.

Invited to comment or ask questions, two residents said the study money, drawn from the $8 million Caltrans settlement with the city, would be better spent on other

Soundwalls and Rockridge, page 13

18 AGENDA: October 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

■ Pros and Cons of the November Ballot Propositions

Mary Bergan and Julie Waldman of the League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO) present background information plus neutral pros and cons for each of the 11 state and 3 local propositions on the ballot. Ramifications of the tax measures continue to come to light, and will be considered.

Thursday, October 18 | 7:30-9 p.m. Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College at Manila

Hearing date set for College Avenue Safeway Project Appeal: October 16.

See article, page 3

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.

Bicycles and the Safety of Oakland Pedestrians

by Karen Ivy, NCPC secretary

At the September meeting of the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) meeting, residents complained again about bicyclists riding on College Avenue sidewalks, often nearly running people down. Elderly residents are concerned, as are women with young children.

When challenged, these bicyclists often say, "But it's perfectly legal." It is not perfectly legal. The NCPC hears this complaint regularly. A former Problem Solving Officer (PSO) used to run occasional "bicycle busts" to control the practice.

Myth: It's legal to ride bicycles on the sidewalk in Oakland.

Fact: FALSE. Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) §10.150.16A says: "No person shall ride a bicycle which has wheels of twenty (20) inches or greater in diameter or a frame of fourteen (14) inches or greater in length on *any sidewalk within the city*.

This prohibition shall not be applicable to Oakland police officers operating a bicycle while engaged in their assigned duties."

So only police officers and small children on small bicycles may *legally* ride on the sidewalk.

Myth: You don't have to have a license to ride a bicycle in Oakland.

Fact: FALSE. OMC §12.60.010 says: "It is unlawful for any person to operate or use a bicycle, defined in Section 39000 of the California Vehicle Code, upon any street in the city of Oakland without first obtaining a California Bicycle License therefor."

The problem with this ordinance, and other sections of OMC §12.60 (Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places – Bicycles), is that the code is not enforces. The ordinance states that the Police Chief is authorized to issue annual bicycle licenses (§12.60.020), ensure that licenses are attached to bicycles and that the loss of a bicycle license be reported (§12.60.030). The police don't have the resources to enforce these codes.

In Rockridge, College Avenue, the major north-south artery, has no bicycle lanes – it's too narrow. Many cyclists apparently choose to ride on the sidewalk for its perceived comparative safety: Adding cyclists to College Avenue's pedestrian crowd increases the likelihood for bicycle-pedestrian accidents.

Are there solutions? The NCPC would like to see signs on College Avenue stating that cycling on the sidewalk is illegal.

In areas without formal bicycle lanes, cyclists should detour to the many nearby

Coexistence Cycling, page 12

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Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

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

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

Newsletter Advertising/Deadlines
Publication date of the next issue is:
☛ **November 3, 2012**
☛ **November deadline is October 18, 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.)

It's Almost Halloween: RCPC Is Looking for New Blood



Vote RCPC Board:
Picture Yourself Here



Following a number of lifestyle and residence changes, several members of the RCPC board of directors have resigned or plan to resign from their positions. As a result, the board is looking for a few good people interested to participate in the organization's mission 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
- Provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

The requirements for a board position are:

- To live in Rockridge within the RCPC boundary (see map at http://www.rockridge.org/boundaries.html)
- To be able to contribute about 3 hours a week to a board committee and to attend monthly board meetings (except in August and December as events permit).

If you are interested in joining this working board, submit a statement of your interest and experience to RCPC c/o 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, 94611, or e-mail chair@rockridge.org/

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. This month's meeting: Wednesday, October 24.

Contact Stu Flashman (652-5373 or stuflash@aol.com) to confirm meeting location and to get a copy of the agenda. Land use committee meetings are generally open to the public.

Oct 16 Date for College Avenue Safeway Project Appeal

The City Council hearing on Safeway's College Avenue Shopping Center project is tentatively set for October 16. RCPC and a group of Berkeley residents each appealed the Planning Commission's July 25 approval of the project.

In July 2012, almost exactly two years after release of the draft EIR, the city released the final EIR, including responses to public comments. The Final EIR did not acknowledge any deficiencies in the draft analysis. At a three-hour Planning Commission hearing, Rockridge and Berkeley residents and business owners lambasted the EIR and the project, and pled for consideration of a reduced-size project. Safeway insisted it needed all the space it had asked for. The city's planner, Peterson Vollman, recommended approval, and said he expected Berkeley would eventually accept the mitigation measures proposed in the EIR, which, he asserted, would mitigate all the project's traffic impacts. The commission disregarded the protests and approved the project.

The October 16 hearing will be the last chance for the city to reconsider its decision on the project.

Will the Council pay any more attention to the community's concerns about traffic, parking, and the disregard for zoning requirements than the Planning Commission did? If not, the next step would be litigation.

Donate to help fund appeal costs. See article at left.

Help Safeway/College Appeal; Donate to Legal Defense Fund

Do you believe the proposed Safeway project is just too big for beleaguered, two-lane College Avenue? Do you think it will overwhelm the neighborhood, threaten nearby small businesses, and/or worsen already congested traffic flows?

The RCPC board shares your concerns, and suspects the issue may ultimately play out in the courts. This could be expensive.

In the past, RCPC has used legal means to push for a better design of the Dreyer's building, and to help win funds for the community and public schools to mitigate Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore project impacts. Similar steps may be necessary to encourage Safeway to listen to community concerns; your support will be critical.

RCPC has established the Rockridge Legal Defense Fund to prepare for legal costs. If Safeway's plans and power concern you, please send a check, or use the donate button on the RCPC website. Donations are tax deductible; all donations are welcome.



Mail checks to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Make online donations at www.rockridge.org. (Tax ID no. 94-3011284).

Funds not used for legal fees connected with this project will be retained for future cases when RCPC may need legal help to uphold meaningful zoning regulations for the neighborhood.



Shopping? Find it in Oakland!

Numbers Tell the Story: DMV Neighbors Creek to Bay Clean-Up

by Leonora Sea, DMV Neighbors chair

Bright and early on September's Creek to Bay Day, lively and enthusiastic volunteers from all over the neighborhood and the larger community arrived at the DMV Neighbors Association check-in site on Temescal Creek. Armed with rakes and brooms, shovels and hoes, trimmers and shears, they spread out along the creek from the Redondo tot lot past the DMV offices to Clifton Street, and accomplished an astonishing amount of good work.



Neighborborhood volunteers take a break from Temescal Creek cleaning. /Leonora Sea

By the numbers: 92 volunteers spent 3 hours, removed 2 tons of plant debris, trash, and recyclables, ate 60 Bakesale Betty pastries, drank 30 cups of Alem's Coffee and 6 gallons of water, and seemed to have an infinite amount of fun.

Warm thank-yous to the Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, OneBridge, Park Day School, students from UC Berkeley, and all the other volunteers who gave their Saturday morning to care for the creek.

Many thanks also to Chris Staller of Oakland's Public Works Department (DPW), who welcomed volunteers at the sign-in table, and to Luciano Cortes-Nicolas, also of DPW and the park's regular gardening angel, who managed the extensive debris-bag pickup.

Check out the Oakland North Website for a slideshow of the DMV Neighbors Association Temescal Creek cleanup. And, come take a stroll along the creek: Enjoy the changes autumn brings.

FROG Park Support: A Constant Presence

FROG Fall Maintenance Day

Saturday, September 22 was annual maintenance day at FROG Park. One hundred students and teachers from College Preparatory School and a dozen community volunteers cleaned the path, sifted sand, swept the basketball courts, removed graffiti from the kiosk and sealed wood structures (playground, fence and kiosk). (See volunteer group photo, page 5.) We also unclogged a main drain in Hardy playground and, with the help of our city gardener, Luciano Cortes, made a quick fix.

FROG Park is an ongoing project for the community, and maintaining it is key to the facilities being available for children and families to use and enjoy safely. Check on upcoming maintenance work days and plans at www.frogpark.org. Thanks again to all who helped and a special thanks to the volunteers and teachers from College Preparatory School.



City Gardener Luciano Cortes and Rockridge neighbor Barney Smits repair a park play structure.

— Howard Ferrier, Maintenance Officer and Volunteer Coordinator

Frog Park Monthly Cleanups

FROG is establishing family-friendly monthly cleanups to be held the first Sunday of every month, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Keeping FROG Park in Shape, page 5

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Fall Carnival Time at Chabot Elementary

The Chabot Fall Carnival has been a Rockridge tradition for years; this year's event is on Sunday, October 21, starting at 11 a.m. and continuing through 3 p.m.

While the event is a fundraiser for Chabot Elementary School, all residents and neighbors are welcome to join in the fun and festivities. As always, entrance is free!

Located at 6686 Chabot Road, the school's renovated grounds are a perfect setting for Fall fun. After a few years of post-construction work, the garden has come to life with a bounty of fresh produce in planting beds, a beautifully designed metal sculpture, and a tree mosaic "growing" on the side of the school's multi-purpose building.

Jeremy the Juggler performs at 11:30 a.m., the Halloween Costume Contest is at 1 p.m., Fernando Carpenter, owner of Oakland's VAMP Music & Art, provides music for the event. Carnival activities including face painting, an inflatable slide, a pumpkin patch, and a variety of games for kids of all ages. Plan on winning some prizes, testing your bravery in the Haunted House, and improving your aim at the Dunk Booth – Principal Mayer beware!

Enjoy a family lunch from one of the food trucks, including Bay Area favorite El Tonayense, then satisfy that sweet tooth by building your own sundae at the Dreyer's Sundae bar, or playing your chances at winning a delicious dessert at the hourly Cake Walk.

For those with an artistic interest, a Craft Fair debuts this year, featuring designers from our Chabot community offering fine jewelry, hand knit accessories, upcycled vintage and pre-owned goods, onesies and kids' t-shirts, girls' dresses and handmade fabric hair accessories.

Please join us in celebrating all the fun that Fall has to offer – games, food, prizes, crafts, music and entertainment promise something for everyone.

Special thanks go to sponsors Jeff Robarts of The Grubb Company and Jill Martenson of Piedmont Avenue Dental. All proceeds from this family-friendly event benefit the Chabot Elementary PTA to fund enrichment programs including the library, music, art, computers, science, Spanish, and the garden, and coordination of numerous after-school programs, help in the classrooms, and much more.

A Principal at Risk



Principal soaked for a good cause.

Keeping Frog Park in Shape

from page 4



Volunteer Coordinator Howard Ferrier describes the work to be done by the volunteer group.

Join your friends and bring your kids to rake, plant and tackle child-sized tasks. Oakland Technical High School clubs are partnering with FROG on these events. Meet at Big Frog Park, which is open during the cleanup. Hope to see you this month! Rain cancels.

— Ronnie Spitzer, Treasurer and Maintenance Officer

Parks Survey; Frog Survey; Find a Project

Frog completed the Oakland Parks Coalition (OPC) all-city park survey, as it has for many years (sponsored by OPC, oaklandparkscoalition.org, a city-wide association). FROG continues to advocate for park maintenance, improvements and coordination with city officials and volunteers to maintain and improve Frog Park.

Coming Soon… Get ready to share YOUR opinion about Frog in a coming survey planned to learn opinions about Frog Park priorities. Findings will guide the committee on projects to come (e.g., more swings, art). Be sure to fill out the survey, to be announced in the November Rockridge News.

Jump In… for a short dip or longer swim; we have specific short-term projects and other volunteer opportunities. We need those with a general interest in Frog, and with skills in marketing, website development, event planning, landscape, maintenance, and surveys.

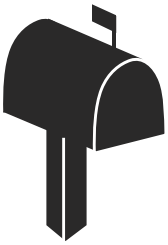
— Carol Behr, Chair

Next Frog meeting: November 8, Rockridge Library, 2nd floor, 7:30 p.m. Please e-mail info@frogpark.org for more information.



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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.

I and Others Support College Safeway Plans; RCPC is Not the Sole Voice of the Neighborhood

Editor:

Having grown up in Rockridge and having lived here most of my life, I consider myself a "neighbor" and part of the "neighborhood." So I had to shake my head (again) when I saw the headline of the September Rockridge News: "College Ave Project: Safeway, 1; Neighborhood, Zip".

My husband and I support the renovation and expansion of Safeway on College, and we know many other Rockridge residents who feel the same way. That store has been cramped and difficult to maneuver since the 1960s and my mother (also a Rockridge resident and Safeway expansion supporter) avoided it whenever possible. I've attended meetings and paid close attention to the evolution of the designs Safeway has presented, and have been impressed with the way Safeway has addressed neighborhood concerns and incorporated suggestions from critics. I very much look forward to a better utilization of that triangular parcel and what is currently an ugly parking lot.

I would appreciate RCPC not pretending to be the sole voice of "the neighborhood" and at least acknowledging that not every neighbor is opposed to this project.

— Star Lightner

RCPC Board Replies: We Support a Thoughtful Remodel

The RCPC board is aware that some community members support the Safeway on College project as proposed. But surveys of customers and nearby residents have indicated that a large majority of respondents prefer a smaller store. The board itself is not opposed in principle to enlarging and upgrading the aging store, but we are advocating for a size and design more in line with the scale and character of the neighborhood, and more consistent with the spirit and letter of our pedestrian-oriented zoning.

RCPC's concern (and that of survey respondents) is that the oversized store that Safeway insists on will generate oversized impacts, exacerbating already awful traffic on College Avenue, adding to cut-through traffic problems on neighborhood streets, worsening air quality and noise pollution, threatening pedestrian and bicycle safety, discouraging pedestrian activity on Claremont and College avenues, and endangering the economic vibrancy of the small shops across the street during still precarious economic times.

With plans also set in motion to re-build a very large Safeway store on nearby Pleasant Valley Road, we believe the size of the proposed expansion on College Avenue is as unnecessary as it is misguided. Safeway seems to be doubling down on an outdated and misplaced obsession with a large, suburban-style, automotive-oriented store on College Avenue just as it is facing internal financial challenges and increasing outside competition, and the industry as a whole is moving locally and nationally to smaller stores in urban settings.

As for "the way Safeway has addressed neighborhood concerns and incorporated suggestions," the RCPC board remains underwhelmed. Although some much needed design changes have been adopted, Safeway discontinued the public stakeholder process some time ago, and has never shown any willingness to negotiate regarding the primary concern of RCPC and the local neighbors, namely the sheer size of the store and its concomitant impacts. Last month's scorecard in The Rockridge News was intended to highlight how neither Safeway nor the Oakland Planning Commission has responded adequately to this overarching issue.

Soundwall Study a Good Use of Fourth Bore Settlement Funds

Editor:

I am delighted that, at long last, our lower Rockridge neighborhood will have a chance to get soundwalls to reduce the ever-present freeway noise we live with 24/7. For years my neighbors and I have tried to get soundwalls, but CalTrans had no interest in responding to the noise pollution created when they built Highway 24 through the middle of this dense neighborhood. The effects of the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel made CalTrans have to listen to us; we were glad that the settlement with Oakland included funding for some soundwall studies.

All we're asking for is the same consideration given to large suburban housing tracts, protected by giant soundwalls even though the nearest home is sometimes 1,000 feet from the freeway. In Rockridge, we have homes as close as 20 feet to the freeway. Our beloved Frog Park is built under the freeway, affected by the extraordinary noise overhead, and by falling debris. These problems would be solved with soundwalls, and would make the area more pleasurable for all of us. And we know that these are not going to be large brick walls found in suburban areas; they will likely be the less-costly, safer transparent walls suitable for overhead freeways.

This is a good use of the CalTrans settlement funding some of us fought hard to obtain. Getting full studies done is important.

— Theresa Nelson

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Tech Drama Invites the Public to Fall Production: "Metamorphosis"

Oakland Technical High School's fall 2012 Drama class production is Mary Zimmerman's astounding play "Metamorphosis." Based on the transformative tales told by the Roman poet Ovid some 2,000 years ago, these stories of love, greed, loss, pride, life and death still touch the heart. Oakland Tech invites the public to evening performances on October 24, 25, 26 and 27 at 7 p.m., and a matinee show on October 27 at 2 p.m.

All performances are in the auditorium, located at Broadway and 42nd Street (enter on 42nd). Tickets will be available at the door: $10 general admission and $8 for Oakland Tech students and staff.



Firsts for Tech

The play represents some "firsts" for Oakland Tech. For the first time, the Fashion and Design Academy at Oakland Tech's Upper Campus (formerly Far West High School), under the direction of Katita Johnson, is designing the costumes for an Oakland Tech play.

Also, this will be the first production to use Oakland Tech's new stage lighting system, installed in September and early October 2012.

The stage lighting work signals the near completion of Phase 2 of Oakland Tech's auditorium renovation project. Prior work has included painting, acoustic treatments, a Meyer sound system, and a lighting and sound booth. The only remaining work is the purchase and installation of a high-quality projector and projection screen, for which the PTSA is raising $25,000.

To contribute to the renovation project, send your tax-deductible donations to: Oakland Tech PTSA, c/o Pat Williams, 3708 Lakeshore Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610, or donate online at http://oaklandtech.com/staff/performingarts.

Rockridge Branch Library: Teen Zone Anniversary; Dir. Pat Lichter at Helm

The Rockridge Branch Library celebrated the first anniversary of its new Teen Zone, constructed with funding and support from Councilmember Jane Brunner, who, along with Library Director Carmen Martinez and Associate Director Gerry Garzone (who also was MC of the event), joined the celebration to mark the occasion.



Kudos went to architect Chris Noll (of Noll & Tam) and to the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL), who have provided funding for teen interns and for teen program refreshments throughout the year.

A trio from East Bay Young Musicians added to the festivities and rocked the library.

— Library staff

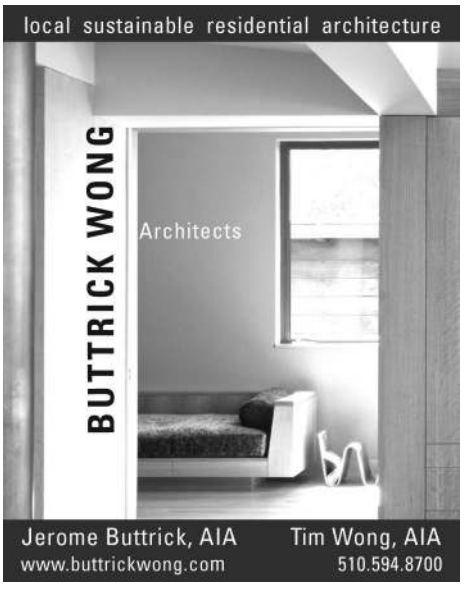


/D. Kinkead

Wecome back, Pat

Pat Lichter, Rockridge Branch Library director, has returned to the branch after a posting to the Elmhurst Branch on 88th Avenue. Her substitute during this time was Sandra Toscano, right, who returns to her director's position at the Golden Gate Branch on San Pablo Avenue.





Eyes on Rockridge

Despite Every Effort, a Car Is Towed

by Judith Doner Berne

So there was this vintage white car parked across the street for days, then weeks, then months.

We live on a typical Rockridge street with a majority of single-family homes mixed in with a few duplexes and apartment-style dwellings.

It features skinny, hump-backed driveways and garages that are used for everything else but cars – quite unlike the ample driveway and two-and-a-half car garage I left when we moved from suburban Detroit.

Here, as in many Rockridge neighborhoods, residents park on the street – often turning the process of finding curb space into a game of musical (if your radio is on) cars.

This car, which didn't have a current registration, "was there over two months," one neighbor said. "I made a good faith effort to find out who owned it." Another posted a note on the windshield requesting it be moved. A third finally e-mailed the Oakland Police Department's Vehicle Enforcement Unit.

To no avail; the car seemed an immovable object.

At last our block captain turned to the city's Neighborhood Watch Coordinator. "I keep in contact with her and thought when the car wasn't being removed by the city that she would be a good place to try to get in the 'back door' so to speak," she said. "And it worked!"

Enter Officer Andrew "Just call me Andy" Luty.

Luty, a former beat cop, has been in charge of the OPD's Abandoned Auto Detail for the last 11 of his 23 years on the force.

The unit once had eight civilian Police Service Technicians, but now is down to four.

However, that's not as bad as it sounds: With the increased price of scrap metal, cars, trucks and boats – once abandoned because they were old and/or not drivable – are now saleable.

Luty drove me down to the docks, where an approximately 50-by-50-foot pile of crushed cars spilled over the pavement, in wait to be funneled into a cargo ship.

"It's recycling at its finest," he said. "It's where the steel meets the ship."

In 2010, the Vehicle Enforcement Unit had 13,168 calls for service; in 2011, 10,659, Luty detailed. "It's gone down slightly," he said, "but it's still pretty high."

Could that be why the initial requests went unheeded?

"We're primarily complaint driven," Luty said.

Although it took an extra push to get the police involved, Luty insists: "We're obligated to get out there as quickly as we can. With four people it's all about putting orange stickers on cars," he says.

And that's what finally happened. The official sticker warned the car owner in three languages – English, Chinese and Spanish – that it had to be moved within 72 hours. "Our goal is to educate and that usually solves the problem," he said.

Luty, who has three teen-aged daughters, doesn't live in Oakland but his roots are here – from his great-grandfather on down to his dad, who graduated from Oakland Tech.

"Oakland can be very difficult," he said. But, even as a patrolman, "I've never been hurt, been shot at, never shot at anyone and never used my night stick.

"This (police) suit gives me a chance to hear people's stories. My badge just says 'Andy' and that's on purpose. It kind of sets the tone." Then it becomes "how can we work together and solve the problem. Sometimes it just doesn't work. Enforcement is the last resort."

Unfortunately, it came down to that when, 72 hours later, the stickered car hadn't been moved. So Luty called the towing company, which came within the hour.

Evidently, its owner(s) got the car out of tow, since I've seen it pop up occasionally on a nearby street.

The game may still be musical cars. But now everyone seems to be playing by the rules.



Although Oakland Police Officer Andy Luty says the department doesn't get many calls on abandoned cars in Rockridge, Luty and Rockridge News writer Judy Berne spotted this orange-stickered car during a ride through the neighborhood. Photo: Judith Berne

---

Is there an abandoned car on your block? For police response, leave a voice mail at 510/777-8622, e-mail AbandonedAuto@oakland.com, or fax 510/777-8880. Include the vehicle's location, description and license number, if the last is known.

Judy Berne moved to Rockridge from metro Detroit last year. If you have a good story about living in Rockridge, her e-mail is judyberne@att.net.

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Projects: RCPC and the Community Build a Neighborhood Library

"Rockridge is the only community in the nation to finance and drive to completion the building of a local library."

— State Librarian Kevin Starr, September 1996

by Bernie Baltaxe, RCPC board member

The city of Oakland has had a public library since 1878. In 1919, a branch library opened in Rockridge and, in 1924, was moved to a former bank building at 5701 College Avenue. This small library served the community until 1987, when the landlord decided to convert the space to commercial use. The library's rent jumped 10-fold from $500 a month to $5,000 a month. The library could not afford that amount; the branch was closed in September, 1987.

Unwilling to lose a community resource as important as a library, RCPC formed a Library Committee whose first order of business was to obtain a temporary site so the second busiest library in Oakland would continue to function. The next was to find a suitable location to establish a permanent home for a true, community-based, Rockridge Branch Library.

The first task was accomplished by placing a small modular building at Birch Court and College Avenue on the northwest corner of the grounds of Claremont Middle School. The limited size of the temporary building meant that the already small library space (1,731 square feet) would be reduced to a total of 1,400 square feet of which only 1,000 square feet would be accessible to the public.

Working with the city's director of libraries, then-Councilmember Marge Gibson Haskell, the City Manager's office, and the city's Department of Public Works, the library committee planned and executed the relocation to Claremont Middle School (then known as Claremont Jr. High). After that, the real work began.

RCPC initiated a planning effort that grew to include many members of the community. The library committee, headed by Nancy Dutcher, an RCPC board member, created the separate Neighbors for a Rockridge Library committee. With the help and assistance of several local businesses and residents of the neighborhood, a plan evolved to make a permanent home for the library on a specific site on College Avenue.

The most desirable location at that time, known as the Art Stone property, was located at Manila and College. The site consisted of two lots, each with a house: a corner lot with a large Victorian residence containing a corner grocery on the ground floor, and the adjacent lot with another Victorian home and the remnants of the Art Stone business that had manufactured ornamental concrete bird baths, statues and fountains. Many houses in the neighborhood still have these concrete ornaments in their backyards, including my own. The city agreed to purchase the two lots using its Merchants Off-Street Parking Fund, and to donate a portion of the site to build a permanent Rockridge Library. This agreement is why the library has metered parking.

Having determined where the library should be, the next task was to obtain funding. A lot of money needed to be raised within Rockridge to fund the improvements, construction, furnishings and books that make up a library. If the community was to raise the money necessary to make this dream come true, the whole community would have to become part of the process. The first of a series of surveys regarding the neighborhood's desires for the library was printed in the Rockridge News to start the ball rolling.

A committee known as RCPC/CAMA (Rockridge Community Planning Council/ College Avenue Merchants Association) proposed neighborhood funding through an assessment bond that would create a fee on each residential parcel in Rockridge. That yearly fee would pay for a substantial part of the cost.

One alternative was also considered. It was proposed that a mixed-use building, including rental housing units to generate

RCPC Projects, page 13

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In Search of Silence

THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE
by Ortrun Niesar

Paul Simon wrote "Sound of Silence" in 1964. At that time, acoustic guitars were very in. Since then, the world has gotten noisier and noisier. In fact, today the problem has become so great worldwide that the European Union (EU) has issued mandates to all member countries to create sound maps to try to get some understanding of the psychological and physiological effects our increasingly noisy soundscape has on us and our environment.

In 2009, WHO, the World Health Organization, made a similar policy statement. There is today serious concern about the impact of noise on cardiovascular health, sociological and emotional well being, and the growing incidences of autism, decreasing learning capabilities, hearing loss, and more. It's time to pay attention to what is happening in our own backyard.

Our Noisy Place

Rockridge, with freeways and BART traversing our space, is a noisy place. Most days, helicopters fly freely over our homes and gardens without concern for the impact that might have on the organic life below. Leaf blowers and construction tools disrupt our quiet afternoons. Our restaurants serve up near unbearable decibels of noise along with the latest drink concoctions. Conversation and thought are not wanted here. The din of 50,000 shouting football fans becomes part of our Saturday afternoon soundscape. Traffic provides an overlay of constant din. But, biggest of all is the intrusion of electronic sound almost everywhere we are. This is what concerns researchers most. It turns out that our uncanny ability to adapt to ever-higher levels of surrounding sound is not good for us. What we can't stomach we know how to overlay with white noise, mostly electronically generated sound from our iPods plugged directly into our brains. As the din gets louder, we just turn up the volume some more. Nobody knows what the outcome of that will be, although we are seeing signs of it.

Hearing Loss

Not many people talk about hearing loss. It's like a silent secret. And yet, statistically, one in three Americans suffers from some type of hearing loss. Americans are going deaf even faster than they are growing fat. Many of the sufferers of hearing loss must therefore be wandering among us, silently, while the rest of us keep noisily pushing past them. Of course, we think, hearing loss will never happen to us; in fact it may have already manifested in many of the boomer generation. As we become older, we too will find ourselves having to deal with the damaging effects of many years of exposure to dangerous levels of sound, whether from blasting music in our ears, or the unbearable screeching of BART wheels, sirens, traffic noise or the screams of football fans.

What Should We Do?

Reading "In Pursuit of Silence" by George Prochnik (found it at Mrs. Dalloway's bookstore in the Elmwood District), it is clear there are many arguments that can be made for and against noise mitigation. Prochnik points out that first, qualitative noise or sound needs to be differentiated from quantitative noise. Good noise can be energizing; raise mood levels. White noise actually helps some people to concentrate better. But some also think that white noise for babies as they sleep is not the best idea. Studies are showing that certain frequencies can also trigger emotional shifts toward greater serenity and gentility. This may be a good thing or, shades of its misuse in George Orwell's book, here we come, "1984."

Try to fix one problem and another one will certainly spring up. There are ongoing discussions concerning the construction of a sound walls through Rockridge, the benefits of which on the health of our community are still not clearly understood. The wrong barrier, according to Prochnik, can even transpose visual noise to more audio noise. Noiseless electric cars are great, but now we need to add sound to warn pedestrians.

Prochnik ends his exploration of noise versus silence with some insight: Let's try to lessen the din if we can, but more importantly, let's develop greater sensitivity toward – and appreciation of – silence. Find places where you can hear silence, because it is laden with meaning and a different kind of sound. Visit a museum, escape to the library or your studio; enter a place of worship when there is no service going on. In the theater, don't clap right away; savor that moment of silence when the music stops. Create a Zen garden; a neighborhood park; a pathway; architecture that respects silence as well as sound. And turn off your iPhone. As Plutarch said, "We hear silence from the gods, speech from men."

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-578 Forest 675 sqft, 2BD, 1BA, upper unit w/balcony, 2 blocks from BART $2,300/mo
-6000 Broadway 2BD, 1BA Rockridge In-Law off Ocean View, 3 blocks from BART, $2,450/mo

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Scenic Streets of Oakland

Gateway Survey: Shrubs and Safety Top Priorities



A first step to a cheerier, safer Claremont Avenue underpass will be improvements along the adjacent dog park fence.

Photo: Google Maps

by Sean Riley, local resident

Scenic Streets has released the results of its survey exploring further renovations to the Rockridge-Temescal Gateway.

The local volunteer group sought community feedback for Claremont Avenue improvements underneath Hwy 24 and the Hardy Park Dog Run, asking local residents to rank the leading ideas to transform this dreary space adjacent to Frog Park.

"Residents clearly want more greenery and improved lighting," said Scenic Streets founder Peter Lund. "The underpass is barren and dingy, so shrubs and trees will add life and color. If we collect enough donations through our web site, the work could begin with planting as early as this winter."

But improving lighting will be a tougher challenge, Lund emphasized. Residents want better illumination along the sidewalks and inside the dog run. Many reported that they don't feel safe in the area after dark. This improvement faces a myriad of obstacles with the city and CalTrans, but Lund said Scenic Streets volunteers intend to explore the possibilities in early 2013.

Simple upgrades to the dog run, such as better drainage near the entrances, more durable seating and an improved watering station also ranked highly. Adding public artwork to the area, such as murals and sculpture, also got strong support.

Full survey results can be found at www.scenicstreets.org.

Two Rockridge News Routes Open Up

James Kachelmeyer has been doing double duty delivering The Rockridge News to houses on two contiguous routes for the past couple of years as well as serving on the RCPC board. Sadly, he is moving out of Rockridge and we are losing an exemplary volunteer. We are looking for one or two people to fill his shoes.

If you live in the neighborhood and have an extra 15-30 minutes a month, please call 510/547-3855 or e-mail smontauk@gmail.com and lay claim to the route(s) you would like to take on.

Route	Area
18Ga	Both sides of Claremont Avenue from freeway to Clifton
16D	Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment building at 5248, and 5400 block Claremont Ave, west side only from Clifton to Cavour







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Merchant Links Web and Learning in Store Display

The September issue of The Rockridge News brought a bit more of the digital world than URLs – web and e-mail addresses – to the newsletter: Pages 9 and 11 presented QR (Quick Response) Codes.

Looking like little more than pixelated graphic images, the codes are passive containers of Internet connections, waiting for activation via a smart phone and its translator app.

Originally designed to monitor automotive production, the little tags have spread to the commercial world. Advertisers, especially, use them for web links to stores, special offers, and marketing.

Rockridge storekeeper Fred Womack of Maison d'Etre, 5640 College Avenue, believes QR codes have uses beyond mere commerce. He has designed a storefront window display that subtly illustrates informative and educational sites he offers to passersby via QR code images posted on the glass.



/D. Kinkead

On your way to BART or while enjoying windowshopping, point your smart phone camera at each code to read it. You'll need a translating app, available for free on the Web.

See Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QR_code for more information.

Fred Womack, left, and friend Eric Neville stand next to window postings of QR links to thought-provoking web sites. They collaborated on a storefront design that hints provocatively at the destination of each link. /D. Kinkead

Coexistence Cycling

from page 2

streets with sharrow lanes (autos and cycles coexist) or dedicated cycling lanes.

Public officials, our NCPC groups and cycling associations must continue to stress the hazards of cycling on sidewalks.

View code listings: http://www.municode.com/library/CA/Oakland

Cycling information:

- Google *Bicycling associations in the East Bay*. Two examples:
  East Bay Bicycle Coalition (EBBC); http://www.ebbc.org/
  Bay Area Bicycle Coalition: http://www.bayareabikes.org/content/bay-area-bicycle-clubs

In Memory

Ruth Isaacson, a beloved Lawton Avenue resident since 1956, was born Ruth Ettlinger on July 28, 1921, in Karlsruhe, Germany. To escape Nazism, she immigrated to the U.S. by way of England, then married Robert Isaacson in New York, and raised five children while living in Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, and the Rockridge neighborhood.



A volunteer and employee with the Oakland Public Schools, Ruth received the Marcus Foster Distinguished Educator Award while working as secretary at Claremont Middle School. In retirement Ruth became a healer and masseuse, hosted visitors from around the world, and was often seen zipping around on her bicycle, long gray braids flying, while shuttling food from a local café to a women's shelter.

Confined by a heart ailment during her later years, Ruthie continued to see friends and give massages. She passed away June 17, 2012, with family and friends by her side. Memorial gifts may be given to Claremont Middle School PTA, 5750 College Avenue, Oakland, 94618, or may be made online at:
http://www.claremontms.org/claremont-pta/online-contributions.

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Inventory Continues to be Low in Rockridge

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9/7/12	3	2	5845 Lawton Avenue	$625,000	$625,000	12	$670,000
9/20/12	1	1	5625 Broadway	$250,000	$125,000	193	$150,000
9/20/12	3	1	5615 Broadway	$679,000	$600,000	193	$450,000
9/21/12	2	1	355 Glendale Avenue	$699,000	$699,000	12	$837,000

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RCPC Projects

from page 9

income, be built at 5380 College Avenue. This proposal did not require creation of a parcel tax. However, as pointed out in the article I did on zoning issues in Rockridge (The Rockridge News, September, 2012), creating a multi-story apartment building on College Avenue was not what RCPC or area residents wanted. The village atmosphere of the neighborhood was at stake and the library project would have to be done without a large apartment building to provide the funding.

A petition drive was organized to obtain signatures from at least 10 percent of the residents within specific boundaries. Those boundaries later formed the first boundaries for RCPC, which, at around the same time, was incorporated as a non-profit organization. Non-profit status gave RCPC certain privileges, including fundraising and handling funds for the library. Using the authority of the Community Facilities District Act, commonly called a Mello-Roos taxation district, the petition was eventually signed by 1,214 residents, well above the 10 percent needed, and Measure L was placed on the ballot in November 1990.

None of the many volunteers had ever run a political campaign before, but signs were printed and thousands of phone calls made to educate the public on the benefits of the library. This intense campaign resulted in 81.6 percent of voters within the assessment district approving a $25 per year parcel tax for 30 years. The law required a two-thirds vote to pass the measure. Thanks to the tireless efforts of dozens of committed citizens, that threshold was far surpassed.

With one source of funding secured, and the commitment of the neighborhood made clear, volunteers began the process of seeking additional funding from the State Library Committee. The economy was struggling, and funding was drying up. Projects already planned and funded were being eliminated. A community effort was needed to lobby the state and ensure that the funding needed would be approved for the Rockridge project.

For the next year, a letter writing campaign was waged and telephone calls were made. Shortly after the Oakland Hills Firestorm in October 1991, residents trekked to Sacramento wearing Rockridge Library badges sporting colorful cellophane flames to lobby personally for funding for the Rockridge Library. In early 1992, the state allocated the funds.

For the next four years, community involvement was harnessed to determine the footprint of the new facility, the architecture, the color scheme, furnishings, books and equipment.

At the request of the community, a large community meeting space and a dedicated children's wing were included. The expertise of Rockridge residents was involved in every step of the process. Merchants also helped raise money by donating food and material for fundraising events. Great Harvest Bread Co., Market Hall and Rockridge Café were all instrumental in assisting the project. Granite pavers in the lobby and walkway were sold as fundraisers and engraved with whatever people requested, including family names, the names of parents and grandparents and faithful pets. Every conceivable effort was made to raise money for important equipment including what one article in The Rockridge News referred to as a "MacIntosh multi-media computer," which itself cost $4,000. A total of almost $158,000 was raised to buy books, furnishings and other enhancements for the library.

The diligence and perseverance of those involved cannot be overstated. Over 100 volunteers put in thousands of hours for 11 years before the doors opened in September, 1996. The willingness of the community to come together, offer their time, energy and money, plus the leadership of RCPC and a handful of dedicated individuals, created a prized and heavily used community asset that will stand for decades to come.

Special thanks to Don Kinkead and Annette Floystrup for providing the history and material needed for me to research and write this article.

Soundwalls and Rockridge

from page 1

projects. Most other comments were either neutral or supportive of the study process. Several speakers urged consideration of more aesthetically pleasing transparent soundwalls such as found in Europe and Asia.

Before year's end, the city will identify relevant property owners and distribute official petitions. Soundwall studies may proceed if sufficient support is shown by the end of the petition period, probably next September.

Information from the meeting will be available on the Fourth Bore Coalition or RCPC websites.

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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 can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. 2nd Thurs each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs, 5366 College Ave. Confirm mtg. 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.
- **Family Story Time:** Stories/songs/rhymes (to age 5). Every Saturday, 10:30am.

All story times followed by Playtime.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **Re-Create Art Session with MoChA:** Thursday, Oct 18, 3:30 to 5pm. Make art out of recycled stuff; enter work in the Annual Re-Create Art Contest. All ages: kids under age 8 must be accompanied by an adult.
- **Altar-Making for Dia De Los Muertos:** Tues, Oct 23, 7 to 8pm. Local artist **Rachel-Anne Palacios** teaches how to make an altar for Day of the Dead. Bring mementos to put on the altar in our children's area.
- **Historical Fiction Presentation:** Saturday, Oct 27, 3pm. Readers ages 10 to 16, teachers, and adults invited to a presentation of a Historical Fiction reading list. Historical snacks will be served. RSVP to Erica at 597-5017, or stop by the Children's Reference Desk to let us know you'll be coming.
- **Halloween Stories:** Tues, Oct 30, 7pm. A slightly spooky story time for children: Everyone is invited to come in costume and get some early treats.

FOR TEENS

- **Teen Advisory Board:** (ages 14-18) Advise the library how to better serve teens and get community service credit for school. Snacks provided. 1st Saturday of each month from 1-2 pm, starting Oct 6. To confirm, call Vicky Chen, 597-5017.
- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club:** Watch and talk about anime. **Oct date change: Tues 10/16,** 5 to 6:30pm.
- **Rockridge Teen 'Scape:** Play video and board games; make crafts; light snacks provided. Every Wed from 2 to 3:30pm during school days.

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. Sponsor: the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch. Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice and referrals. First Tues. each month, 5 to 7pm. (Advance sign-up starts 4:45pm at adult reference desk). Volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present.
- **Volunteer DVD Work Party:** Saturday, Nov 3, 9:30-12:30. Many great DVDs donated. The Rockridge DVD Project needs volunteers to put them in cases and attach labels. Bring a friend. **Call to sign up: 597-5017**.

ART EXHIBITS (subject to change; call to confirm)

Gallery:

Oct: **Eric Grbich;** figurative oil paintings.

Nov: **Irving Wiltshire;** photographs.

Lobby Display Case:

Oct; **Lorie Fischer;** Dolls for Art's Sake.

Nov: TBD

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm.
Closed: Sundays and Mondays. Also: Tues, 10/9.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings, Events

All FREE and open to the public.

- Mon, 10/8, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month):** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed, 10/17, 7pm. **Ayelet Waldman** and **Robin Levi:** *Inside This Place, Not of It: Narratives from Women's Prisons*.
- Sun., 10/21, 3pm. Poetry Flash with local poets **Lucille Lang Day** and **Katherine Hastings**.
- Wed., 10/24, 7pm. Publication Party for local author **Rachel Neumann:** *Not quite Nirvana: A Skeptic's Journey to Mindfulness*.
- Fri, 10/26, 7 – 9pm. **Live Music** with local acoustic band **Smooth Toad** (music, poetry and theater). Preview the band on myspace.
- Sun., 10/28, 3pm. Publication Party for **Mariah K. Young:** *Masha'allah and Other Stories*.
- Fri, 11/2, 7pm. Publication Party for local music journalist **Steven Roby:** *Hendrix on Hendrix: Interviews and Encounters with Jimi Hendrix.*
- Sun., 11/4, 3pm. Poetry Flash with **Kathleen Fraser** and **Laura Walker**.
- Thurs, 11/8, 7pm. Poetry Reading with **Norma Cole, Sarah Riggs** and **Rebecca Farivar**.

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

Halloween Parade on College Ave.

Sun, Oct 28, from noon to 2pm. Kids of all ages, put on your costumes and **meet at 11:45am at "Halloween Central" in front of the College Ave Presb. Church, 5951 College Ave**, to join the parade. **See story pg. 1**.

Claremont Middle School 6th Annual Auction

Sat, Oct 27, from 6 to 10pm. **Halloween Party and Auction:** a festive Halloween-theme fundraiser (for **adults only**). Costumes are encouraged. Freaky food, deadly drinks, mad music and fabulous items to bid on. Tickets (also available at "Out & About"): $20 in advance; $25 at the door. Proceeds support enrichment programs for band and orchestra; digital media and film; garden; art; library and much more. Uptown Body and Fender, 401 26th Street. Info and to purchase tickets: Michelle, 917-1780 or mdb.pta.oakland@gmail.com or www.claremontms.org.

Chabot Elem. School Fall Carnival

Sunday, Oct 21, 11am to 3pm. Performances and activities for all ages: Craft Fair with creations from the local community. Chabot School, 6686 Chabot Road (cross street Patton). More info: www.chabotelementary.org. **See story p 5**.

Square Dance in North Oakland

Music by The Squirrelly String Band. Calling by Jordan Ruyle (with occasional guest performers). 1st and 3rd Fridays each month, 8-10pm. All levels welcome; all dances taught on the spot. $5-10 sliding scale donation. The Niebyl-Proctor Library, 6501 Telegraph Ave. Info: http://squirrellystringband.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert

Mozaik Vocal Ensemble: Women's group with a unique style and harmonies from world-wide folk traditions. Saturday, Nov 3, at 8pm; doors open 7:30pm (inside venue; not wheelchair accessible). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. Sample tunes at www.myspace.com/mozaikvoices. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Oakland Tech Centennial Celebration

CALLING ALL BULLDOGS— All alumni, teachers and staff are needed to be volunteers to plan and staff a series of events to honor the 100 Year Anniversary of Oakland Tech. The Centennial will take place over the 2014/2015 academic year. **Planning meeting on Sat., Oct 20**, 11am in the school Library. Add your name to the growing list of volunteers (which so far span the classes of 1943 to 2013). More info at 740-8030 or ot100years@gmail.com.

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