THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 27 ■ NO. 10 ■ ISSUE NO. 294 ■ November 3, 2012 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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Safeway Hearing Date
*****CHANGED*****
Safeway/College Ave Project Appeal Hearing date now set for November 13.
See details, page 3.
Also: Sign petition by Nov 12; donate to legal fund.



Inside:
Photos from Rockridge Out and About and the RCPC-RDA Halloween Parade,
pages 7 and 12.

15 AGENDA
November 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Joint RCPC-NCPC Meeting

November 15, 7-8:30 p.m. (*Note time change.*) This is the annual joint meeting of RCPC and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC).

- Meet NCPC and OPD representatives; discuss OPD staffing and priorities
- Review local crime and public safety issues and their resolution
- Identify priorities for new District 1 and at-large City Council representatives to discuss at an RCPC Town Hall in early 2013.

*** See details and more information, top of page 2**

Thursday, November 15 | 7-8:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College at Manila

Fences Gone, Plaza Open, People Gather



/D. Kinkead

Eyes on Rockridge

BART Plaza Creates New Rockridge Meeting Place

by Judith Doner Berne

Like me, Matt Wood is delighted with the new Rockridge BART Plaza.

"I spend a lot of time meeting people here, and now it's a nice place to hang out. A lot of places are getting into these little parklets to create a great sense of community," he says.

Sarah Persing, out for a walk with 5-month-old Liyam, sees the plaza as an extension of the congenial picnic-like atmosphere outside Market Hall. "There are never enough seats." She'll "get coffee and bring it back (to the new benches)."

And Kathleen Kane, a publisher's representative from Minneapolis making her first BART trip ever, was relieved to see the Rockridge sign surrounded by benches as she descended the escalator.

"I am supposed to meet someone to take me around to the local bookstores," she says. "It helped a lot" to see an obvious spot where we would meet.

Their comments certainly fit in with Greer Alley's aim in designing the newly configured plaza that opened in early October, a decade after it was first envisioned.

By day, "I hope it's a place that people gather, meet each other and have community," she says. And at night, when subtle lighting beneath the benches makes them glow, "I hope people are hugging and kissing on these benches."

Alley, a Cal-Berkeley-trained landscape designer who has lived in Rockridge since 1983, took on the plaza's redesign as a pro

High Praise for BART Plaza, page 9



The first bench sitters at the newly-opened Rockridge BART Plaza are nearby residents Sarah Persing and her 5-month-old son Liyam. Persing was excited about the new plaza. "People will get their coffee and bring it over here," she said. /J. Berne

RCPC and NCPC to Hold Annual Joint Meeting

The annual joint meeting of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) will be held Thursday, November 15, from 7-8:30 p.m. (Note time change from regular RCPC Town Hall times.)

The two neighborhood groups will consider local issues of mutual concern including policing, crime and the preservation of neighborhood character.

Specifically, OPD Problem Solving Officers (PSOs) will be on hand, as they are at all NCPC meetings, to report the status of local crime or nuisance problems targeted at previous meetings and to discuss new concerns raised by meeting attendees.

RCPC representatives will discuss the outcome of the Council hearing on the appeals filed challenging the Planning Commission findings on the College Avenue Safeway project proposal.

What is the NCPC?

The Greater Rockridge NCPC was established in 2002 to coordinate with Oakland's community policing program.

It represents OPD's beats 12Y and 13X, as part of Public Safety Area (PSA) 2. Beat 12Y covers Rockridge west of Broadway, while beat 13X covers upper Rockridge east of Broadway and north of an imaginary line from the College/Broadway intersection east to the border of the city of Piedmont at Ramona. Besides these two beats, PSA 2 encompasses Oakland's north hills, Piedmont Avenue, Temescal, and the northwest corner of Oakland.

The NCPC holds public meetings, usually at the Rockridge Branch Library on the second Thursday of each month, at which OPD patrol officers (and, when available, BART police) update participants on area

➧ RCPC-NCPC Meet, page 7

Thanks for the Memories; Board Departures Create Three Open Seats to Fill.... ☑ Are You Ready?

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC boardmember

Three RCPC board members have left the board this fall. We thank them for their service and now need replacements.

Cesar Angobaldo joined the board in 2009 and has served as treasurer for the past two years. His financial expertise will be missed, but he's moving on with a new business and a new baby, so his life will be busy in different ways. **Alex Naughton** joined the board in 2010 and has helped out in many ways, including serving as board liaison to the FROG Park Committee and contributing his efforts to events, including last year's highly successful Halloween parade. A new job is making many demands on his time. We appreciate his service to the community. Lastly, **James Kachelmeyer** was appointed to the board in July of 2011 and was elected to a full board term this last April. Unfortunately, he is now moving

➧ Board Vacancies, page 11

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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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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

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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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Publication date of the next issue is:
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☛ **December deadline is November 22, 2012**
Advertising rates are $26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. This month's meeting: Wednesday, November 28.

Agenda topics include the status of the College Avenue Safeway project approval (see below) and an update on the Rockridge Shopping Center Project.

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.

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project; Corner of College and Claremont Avenues

If you have been following this project, which would replace Safeway's current 22,500 square foot store with a 62,000 square foot shopping center, you know that it was approved by Oakland's Planning Commission in July, that the approval was appealed by RCPC and by a group of Berkeley residents, and that the appeal was scheduled to be heard by the City Council on October 16.

You may also know that the hearing date was postponed. Safeway said their architect and their traffic experts had somehow agreed to attend professional meetings that conflicted with the hearing date. **The hearing is now rescheduled to November 13**. Unfortunately, that date conflicts with the date of the regular Berkeley City Council meeting, so several Berkeley council members who wanted to testify will be unable to attend.

Sign the petition now. A petition, which must be signed by November 12, will be presented at the City Council appeal hearing November 13. The petition is available at several merchants near the Safeway store, including Vino and Star Grocery, and also online at www.rockridge.org, the change.org website, http://vf6f.qr.ai, or use a QR smart phone app to capture the URL from the accompanying QR code.

QR Code for Council Petition

Make a direct connection via your smart phone to sign RCPC's petition to City Council about the Safeway project: Scan this QR code. More info?: http://www.qrstuff.com/

If the council rejects the appeal, the next step would be litigation. RCPC has set up a Rockridge Legal Defense Fund to raise the money needed to mount a legal challenge. (See article below.) Assuming the council approves the project on November 13, a lawsuit would need to be filed by mid-December.

The RCPC board has set up a litigation advisory committee of local Rockridge legal experts to advise the board on this potential litigation, and has hired Michael Graf, local California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) attorney, to represent it.

■ Rockridge Shopping Center Rebuilding Project; Broadway & Pleasant Valley

According to Darin Ranelletti (dranelletti@oaklandnet.com, 238-3663), the Oakland planner handling this project, the draft environmental impact report for this second Safeway-sponsored project is due out some time in November.

The project involves a phased rebuild of the shopping center to add roughly 120,000 square feet of additional retail and office space with a mixture of structured and surface parking.

Unlike the Safeway development staff involved in its College Avenue project, Safeway has been responsive to community concerns on this project, and has made extensive modifications to its designs. RCPC is looking for a few more changes in the area of sustainability, and hopes the project will be able to replace most or all of the important community functions that had been met by the former Longs Drugs store (since taken over by CVS).

Help Safeway/College Ave 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.

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FROG Park News: DMV Planting; Your Opinions; Park Cleanup

DMV Creekside Restoration Update and Community Comment Opportunity

In August 2011, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), without notice, removed 14 trees located along the banks of the creek and in the agency's parking lot at Miles Avenue and Cavour Street.

The community was outraged, and the DMV agreed to work with the community to restore the area. True to their word, the DMV has replanted beautiful trees in the parking lot and has begun work on a creekside plan. FROG, in coordination with DMV Neighbors Association and local residents, has now finalized a creekside restoration plan and submitted it to the DMV, with the hope that it can be implemented soon.

An original plan for the creekside was prepared and presented to the community by the DMV in early 2012. Afterward, FROG retained MIG, the design firm that initially developed the greenbelt, to modify this plan to better reflect a restoration design desired by local residents, Farmer's Market patrons, and the community at large. As a result,



DMV is moving ahead on plans to restore areas of FROG Park damaged by overzealous work crews. At left, a tree newly planted in the parking lot, part of the larger area to be restored.

this restoration plan reflects the character of the surrounding areas and restores the creekside to an urban green space that can be cherished by the community, the DMV and its patrons.

Visit www.frogpark.org to review the plan online. Then, join us with your thoughts and concerns on Thursday, November 8 for the FROG meeting at the Rockridge Branch Library, 7:30-9:30 p.m., or e-mail us at info@frogpark.org. (Plans discussion begins at 8:30 p.m.)

— by Misti Groves, Miles Avenue residents and Carol Behr, FROG chair

Help Your Park: Frog Holds Monthly 'First Sunday' Cleanup Parties

Embrace Your Inner Broom!



FROG holds family-friendly monthly cleanups the first Sunday of each month, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Join your friends and bring your kids to rake, plant and tackle child-sized tasks.

The Oakland Tech BuildOn service club has partnered with FROG on these events.

Meet at Big Frog Park (Hardy Street cul-de-sac) which remains open during the cleanup. Remaining 2012 workdays are November 4 and December 2. Rain cancels. (Calendar of events: www.frogpark.org.)

Online Survey: FROG Wants Your Opinion on Park Planning and Improvements

You can help guide Frog Park improvements and FROG committee decisions by completing a brief online survey: go to www.frogpark.org and click on the survey link, or type www.surveymonkey.com/s/FrogPark2013Priorities-Survey into your browser.

We would like to hear from you in particular and the community in general. Survey results will be used to guide decisions and improvements and, later, to help make planning, funding and purchasing decisions for Frog Park, comprising Redondo and Hardy parks and the Greenbelt connecting them.

— Carol Behr, FROG chair

Next FROG meeting: Thursday, November 8, Rockridge Branch Library, 2nd floor, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

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Wow! Free Holiday Parking in Oakland!

Plus: Snow in Rockridge?

The city of Oakland has announced it is offering free holiday parking as part of its shop local campaign.



Shoppers may park for free in metered spaces and city-owned garages on Saturdays between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. ***But note***: **Posted time limits – typically two or four hours or 30 minutes, for example – will be enforced.** Watch for laminated flyers on parking kiosks and stickers on meters for details.

This program is a key part of the Oakland Grown Holiday Marketing Campaign. Show your support for your neighborhood and your city, and shop local. A shop local guide accompanying this issue of The Rockridge News will help direct you to the many shopping experiences available along College Avenue.

Prepare for Snow in Rockridge

All are invited to join with the Rockridge District Associaton (RDA) and celebrate Rockridge in the Snow.

To help kick off the holiday shopping season, RDA will bring a big pile of snow and a load of entertainment to the Rockridge BART Plaza and parking area on November 24 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Bring your mittens and your kids.

We'll see you there.

— Chris Jackson, Manager, RDA

Looking?: Tech & Claremont Middle School Invite Visits

Oakland Tech Tours and Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

by Ronnie Spitzer, Oakland Tech parent

Every fall, families tour high schools throughout the Bay Area seeking the right fit for their students.

Oakland Technical High School (at Broadway and 45th Street) with over 1,900 students, offers prospective students the nationally renowned Paideia program, our award-winning "schools within a school" academies centered on different career fields, special academic programs, rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the comprehensive Performing Arts program, strong athletics, and involved parents.

Families considering Oakland Tech can learn more about the school through Information Night, school tours, and Shadow Visits.

■ **Information Night** is Thursday, November 8, 6-8 p.m. in the newly renovated Oakland Tech Auditorium. The evening includes staff presentations, school and classrooms visits, and teacher introductions.

■ **School Tours** invite families and students to visit classrooms during a typical school day. The tours start at 9 a.m. on November 27 and 29 and on December 4, 6, 11, and 13.

■ **Shadow visits** begin in January. Eighth graders and high school transfer students spend a day or part of a day with a Tech student host, following the host's schedule. To request a shadow visit, a family must have already visited Tech at least once: at the Information Night, on a tour, or through having another family member already enrolled.

Sign-up for a Tour or a Shadow Day after the November 8 Information Night at http://oaklandtech.com/staff/admissions/prospective-families.

Sports Booster Breakfast

The Oakland Tech Sports Booster Club invites you to the First Annual Oakland Tech Sports Booster Club Pancake Breakfast, Saturday morning, November 10, 8:30-12:30, in the school cafeteria. This event is a great opportunity to support Tech's growing athletic programs, connect with members of the Tech community, experience the amazing Bulldog spirit, and enjoy some great food.

The club's fundraising events supplement the dwindling financial support our sports programs receive from the Oakland Athletic League (OAL) and the school district, currently at an all-time low for basic items for extracurricular programs including uniforms, equipment, tournament fees, and

School Tours, page 13

Claremont Middle School Offers Open House Tours

Come learn about Claremont Middle School (CMS). Tours will be held Saturday, November 3 from 1-4 p.m., and on three Fridays: November 9 and 30, and December 7, all three 9-10:30 a.m.

Meet school and parent leaders, ask questions, learn about the curriculum, and tour the school, including 6th grade and elective classrooms.

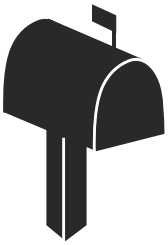
All prospective students and their families are invited to attend.

For more details, contact Tanisha Benjamin (tanisha.benjamin@ousd.k12.ca.us) in the CMS office, 5750 College Avenue, 510/654-7337x5000, or PTA President Amy Vaughan (avaughan@stmaryscenter.org).



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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.

Other Options for Safeway Fix

Editor:

In the October issue of The Rockridge News, Ms. Lightner wrote to complain that the RCPC did not represent her support for the 62,000 sf two-story Safeway planned for College Avenue. She claimed Safeway needed improvement and had "addressed neighborhood concerns and incorporated suggestions from critics."

The fact is, Safeway has not made any substantive changes to its plan. They certainly have not participated in any good faith discussions with the neighborhood groups who fear 258 more cars per hour during peak shopping times.

This is easily confirmed by studying public documents.

Such an oversized building will be destructive to the area, creating a canyon-like effect and pedestrian and traffic nightmares from entering and exiting the underground garage onto College Avenue. Ms. Lightner fails to offer any evidence to the contrary.

While many share her enthusiasm for a Safeway upgrade, there is no reason to pretend the only option for improvement is a mall-sized "Lifestyle Center" that violates Rockridge zoning codes.

These codes were established to protect our thriving pedestrian-based shopping district and the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Approving malignant growth hurts everyone in the long run. Large retail was supposed to "save" downtown Berkeley and Telegraph Avenue near campus; both became blighted neighborhoods with lost tax revenue, increased crime and decreased shoppers for small local businesses.

Rockridge is a healthy community. A sound decision by Oakland's city council at its hearing November 13 can promote a mediated compromise: a one-story 40,000 sf store, like others recently built in the East Bay. This doubles the Safeway footprint but does not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

— Sara Hartley

Added Traffic: I Feel Your Pain

Editor:

I'm not a resident of Rockridge but I read with some amusement and sympathy the articles regarding the proposed Safeway plans.

For example, I was in the Lucky store in the Marina Village Shopping Center in Alameda recently and several ladies ahead of me were shopping together.

After they left, the checker told me that they don't like the lack of parking at your Safeway and come to Lucky's since we have more parking!

However, we face a similar situation with increased traffic in Alameda as a Target store is now being built on former Naval Base property that will bring folks in from everywhere. Maybe even some of you. Every Saturday there is a flea market and every first Sunday there is the Antique Fair. A recent weekend was even busier since there was a two-day street fair as well. Traffic was at its worst going outbound through the Webster Tube.

Our cities need the tax revenue but we are the folks dealing with the increased traffic. I feel your pain.

— Yvonne Alfaro



Skateboards Are Noisy, Annoying

Editor:

I read Karen Ivy's article in the October Rockridge News about riding bikes on the sidewalks. She neglected to mention another problem: Skateboarding on sidewalks is noisy and annoying. I wish the article had also mentioned how disturbing this noise is. Parents may want to think about how the noise of skateboarding destroys the "sounds of silence" that Ortrun Niesar wrote about on page 10, hoping to encourage our sensitivity and appreciation of a quiet neighborhood.

I live in Rockridge and do not like the sound of the skateboard on the sidewalk. At least the bike is silent.

— Sandra Schnabel

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Halloween on College



CAPC Offers Annual Thanksgiving Day Meal

For more than 20 years, the College Avenue Presbyterian Church community has hosted a Thanksgiving Day Community Meal. Designed to deepen the sense of community in our neighborhood and to respond to concrete needs, the meal continues year in and year out to work toward those goals.

When the meals began, Rockridge was still emerging from the shadow of the neighborhood transformation caused by the building of Highway 24 and the BART Station. Rockridge today is an established, vibrant community; a destination for shopping, foodies and families.

Yet, in our current economic and political climate, there is an opportunity for us to gather as a community to respond to the needs of those struggling with hunger, solitude and joblessness.

This year, College Avenue Presbyterian Church holds its Thanksgiving Day Community Meal November 22, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at the church gymnasium, 5951 College Avenue.

The meal is a joint project with diverse members of our Rockridge community, involving congregational members, local merchants and local residents.



/Monte McClain

Volunteer cooks and servers from the 2011 CAPC Thanksgiving dinner. Put yourself in this year's picture: See contact details below.

We generally serve 200 to 300 people with the support of over 50 volunteers gathered in the shared desire to make this event possible.

The meal is open and free for everyone. Donations of money and food are gratefully accepted. It's because of such donations that the meal takes place. You can also give of your time. Help is needed beginning Monday, November 19 through Wednesday the 21st to prepare, set up and decorate the church gym for the meal. Significant help is needed the day of the event to set up, cook, serve and also to clean up. The latter requires the most work and often is the one the fewest people want to do!

To volunteer: sign up online at the Thanksgiving section on the church website at www.capcoakland.wordpress.com or contact the church office at 510/638-3665 or capc1@sbcglobal.net.

— Pastor Monte McClain

RCPC-NCPC Meet

from page 2

crime trends. The meetings provide the opportunity to tell officers about residents' and merchants' concerns and to formulate priorities for crime prevention and response.

Check the NCPC website, http://www.rockridgencpc.com/, for information on Neighborhood Watch, reporting crime, OPD's anonymous tip line, Logitech surveillance cameras, and to confirm time and place of regular meetings.

Find other neighborhood information at the RCPC website, www.rockridge.org.







Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

ON THE SIDE

Every November, cooking magazines, newspaper food and wine sections, and food-related media feature articles and stories on how to prepare a turkey for Thanksgiving. Last year, I even noticed several articles on special Thanksgiving preparations for vegans. We all love the turkey, but for me there is a special place for the side dishes.

In our family, the sides are just as much a tradition as the turkey. We've been preparing many of our Thanksgiving side dishes for more than 40 years. I've got shopping lists stored on the computer with ingredients to make our sides going back 15 years. Each year we have heated arguments over whether we should eliminate an old or include a new side dish. How many cranberry relishes do we need; can we give up the mushroom pie; have we had it with the onion jam; and do we really need pumpkin and apple pie? In the end it's always the same: Why change?

Several years ago, New York Times food columnist Mark Bittman published a list of 101 Thanksgiving side dishes, divided into several categories: relishes, chutneys and jams, soups, salads, stuffings and grains, and vegetables. What stands out for each of the 101 sides is that they reflect the mood of the Thanksgiving tradition by using only seasonal ingredients. None of the dishes overpower or outshine the star of the Thanksgiving dinner. Side dishes should enhance and complement the flavors of the roast turkey.

The turkey may be the main event, but you want your guests to love the side dishes. Traditionally, sweet potato casseroles, sautéed green beans, cranberry sauces, mashed potatoes with gravy, and Brussels sprouts dominate the Thanksgiving plate. But you may want to consider some new offerings.

In our recent trip to the Carolinas, I found that restaurant menus offer diners a long list of side dishes from which to choose. These include corn pudding, brown sugar glazed baby carrots, cheddar-cheese grits, and sautéed greens of all sorts.

Another regional favorite for side dishes is the American Southwest. Those dishes focus on chilies and corn.

Recipes for regional Thanksgiving side dishes can be found on Internet sites like Big Oven and Epicurious. To make your Thanksgiving as easy as possible, prepare the side dishes a day or two before the main event.

Our family has been making onion jam as a standard Thanksgiving side dish for many years – so many, that the source for this recipe has been lost in time. For us, it is not Thanksgiving dinner without onion jam. I know it sounds strange – *onion* jam? The dish can be prepared the day before, and the aroma of slow-cooked sweet onions in the kitchen speaks to the true soul of Thanksgiving.

I hope you try this very special dish as part of your annual Thanksgiving plate.

Onion Jam

Ingredients

¼ cup unsalted butter
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
8 large sweet onions (Vidalia or Walla Walla), thinly sliced
2 teaspoons salt
½ teaspoons black pepper
¼ cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Preparation

Heat butter and oil in a large skillet. Add onion, sauté over medium-low flame until brown. Don't rush this. Add salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low. Cook partially covered until caramelized – about 30 minutes. Stir once in a while. Stir in brown sugar and balsamic vinegar. You want the texture to be jammy.

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

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High Praise for BART Plaza

from page 1

bono project two years ago.

By the time she entered the picture, Alley says, "they kind of knew what they wanted. I got really good support. Sara Wilson (owner and manager of Market Hall) was very helpful. She's been involved from the get-go. She really went to bat for me."

But Wilson insisted, "Greer's the story." And Ann Winterman, RCPC's liaison to the project, agreed. "We told her what we were looking for. Once she did the plan we loved it. BART loved it."

After studying past proposals and spending hours "watching people and how they inhabited the scene at the existing BART site," Alley concluded: "Everything gets too serious in public sculpture. I wanted to have some fun, some whimsy. That's how I came up with the rock ridge slicing through it."

Her creative process "always revolved around creating 'a sense of place.' So many commercial transit plazas are simply cookie cutter scenes that can be replicated in any city. I wanted our plaza to be OURS.

"The image of rocks erupting through land and bench came first," she says. "Being both a play on words and a strong visual, those Sierra Granite boulders quietly let you know where you are and will continue to do so for decades."

A compass rose, set into cement almost as a kind of manhole cover, "furthers that sense of place through imagery with ancient roots," Alley says. "You are in a community surrounded by all the wonderful reasons why we want to live here – oak woodlands, foothills, city and bay – all within a few miles of this spot."

She also envisioned that neighboring



Greer Alley, pictured in the garden of her Rockridge home, designed the new Rockridge BART Plaza on a pro bono basis as part of her philosophy that "people should do more community service." /Judy Berne

Claremont Middle School classes will utilize the compass rose as a way to teach students the difference between magnetic north and actual north.

The sign was the final component. "I've never designed a sign before," Alley says. "It's again a play on words, but also a sculptural, fanciful element."

She admits to being caught by surprise when, at the dedication ceremony which kicked off the annual Rockridge Out and About street fair, children swarmed onto the rock formation and playful sign.

Even a couple of adults could be seen atop one or two of the dozen Sierra Granite boulders.

"We did anticipate kids on the rocks, but not on that sign," Alley says. "I watched one little girl doing flips through the 'O'. We should have had a child on our (plaza) board. We were just a bunch of older people."

At the same time, she hopes the community recognizes the new plaza's mission as a gathering place but not a playground. Although the sign is resistant to high winds and the new plantings are sturdy, "my concern has always been for the redwood trees." They don't do well when the soil is compacted by foot traffic.

As for any criticism of the project, Alley is practical: "You can't please everyone." In her residential landscape business she finds, "a couple has a few different ideas. A community has a thousand different ideas."

The plaza dedication also honored Bob Franklin, a former member of BART's board of directors who worked with the neighborhood to complete the project. "Without Bob Franklin, this never would have happened," Wilson said.

And interim BART Board District 3 Director Mary King lauded Oakland Councilwoman Jane Brunner. "She was critical in getting the city to participate in the project," King said.

It's been 10 years since BART worked with a community (Fruitvale) on one of its 44 stations, reports BART communications officer Jim Allison. "So it is not unprecedented, but welcome."

It's a way of making BART not just stick in, but be part of the community, Allison told me. It's a wonderful example of public-private partnership with BART, Market Hall and community volunteers working together to make a station much more inviting.

"People should do more community service," says Alley. "The way the world is going we're going to need people to just ante-up."

To counter the inevitable graffiti, rock and bench surfaces have been treated with anti-graffiti paint formulated to wipe clean.

A former fashion designer, Alley both lives in and conducts her residential landscape design business from her Ocean View home. She met her husband Dale, a general contractor, at a neighborhood function. "This is one of those neighborhoods that is really social," she says.

They thought about buying a bigger house some years back, but didn't really want to leave their street. Instead, they recently added a second story to their house, including an elevator.

Alley and others involved in the new plaza may not be done yet. There is talk of improving the ivy-covered areas on either side of College Avenue at the station's northern corners.

"I want this plaza to be timeless," she says. "I want it to be fine in 50 years. I don't want it to lose its character and I don't think it will."

That, of course, will be up to all of us.

Judy Berne welcomes your comments and column ideas. She can be reached at judyberne@att.net.

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THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

A Sense of Place

Vintage Rockridge—Cool or Old Fashioned? Trendsetter or Curmudgeon?

Are We Vintage Yet?

It's been at least 40 years since the revitalization of the Rockridge community under the leadership of RCPC. In that time Rockridge has developed a mature, distinct neighborhood character all of its own. I don't know if we have reached the venerable status of "vintage Rockridge" yet, but you do hear that expression now and then.

Let's admit it, living here is great. And folks who come here from elsewhere in the Bay Area and around the world agree. Believe it or not, Rockridge is on the "don't miss" list in many tourist guide books. They tell you that you can come here and meet all kinds of fascinating people, find hip shops, book stores, cafés and fine restaurants. There is also the option to explore the funky thrift stores and clothes exchanges for "vintage" clothes, find vinyl records, antiques and pure junk, expensive or cheap, take your pick. Further, if you are into the gritty side of life, you can get mugged here as well. So, maybe the best way to describe our community and the way we live is "vintage cool," not perfect, definitely alive and full of character and with some degree of longevity in sight.

Cool or Curmudgeon?

The problem with the word "vintage" is that it can mean many things. Usually it's a compliment. But, the fact is that people see us differently depending on age, background, resident or not, and personal agenda.

At recent Planning Commission meetings, for example, every point – no matter how cogent – Rockridge residents made for not wanting a "more of everything bigger" Safeway store was dismissed as "vintage Rockridge" meaning old-fashioned, stubborn and out-of-touch. If you haven't been around this place long enough to feel the rhythm of the community, you might seem right to think so. But, those who spend time in the neighborhood and take on some responsibility for it certainly feel differently about that.

I, for one, salute those who care enough to stand up for the community, call them curmudgeons or not. To call them "old fashioned" would also be wrong, because they are actually the forward-looking ones in so many ways. With the wisdom acquired over many years of living here, they know what it takes to build a lasting, healthy community in a vulnerable zone. So, "curmudgeon cool" with clear vision for the community's future, is a better description for our "community first" fighters.

Cool

That is how I would describe all those fascinating writers, artists and poets who live in Rockridge or its surrounding areas and who often take their inspiration from this unique environment.

I recently picked up a copy of "Telegraph Avenue" by Michael Chabon and thoroughly enjoyed his description of the Lower Rockridge/Temescal/Berkeley Border area as the "subduction zone" between two different cultures. He got it right. In "The Fifth Book of Peace," Maxine Hong Kingston delivers a trance-like account of searching for her former life and personal creativity in the ruins of the Oakland Fire, an unforgettable part of our history. Read Moshe Kasher's tragi-comic "Kasher in the Rye" and you will find yourself wandering the halls of Claremont Middle School.

This is only the tiny tip of the iceberg of the local literary and artistic outpouring in recent years. Diesel Books has a good selection of novels, local history, poetry, cookbooks and a number of very popular children's books ("Ivy and Bean" by Annie Barrows and "Brixton Brothers" by Mac Barnett). If you don't see what you are looking for, ask. Private publications may be offered on consignment only for now. But, perhaps one day, if this proliferation of literary creativity keeps up, we just may be talking about a Rockridge or East Bay school of literature.

I trust we can count on our "curmudgeonly" residents to uphold the "vintage cool" Rockridge neighborhood long enough for this to happen.

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Tip of the month - Be careful using published data to make decisions in your individual situation without analysis from an experienced local agent. Common statistics such as "median" prices, "average" days on market, "% sold price to list price" can be misleading if not applied properly. Data from the media is typically based on too large a geographic sample to apply with any reasonable degree of specificity to your home in Rockridge. Conversely, data based on a sampling of just a few homes in this low inventory area can easily be skewed by 1 or 2 atypical sales and won't accurately reflect the market conditions that apply to your home.

Just Sold
• 2BD, 1BA Rockridge Craftsman Bungalow, Chabot District, Fireplace, built-ins, yard $720,000

What might be coming?
• 2BD+, 2BA in Chabot District w/ FP, large bonus room, yard, detached garage, price and timing TBD.
• 3BD++, 3BA in Chabot District, Grand estate, price and timing TBD.
• Large multiunit investment property in the heart of Rockridge, price TBD.
• 2BD 1BA Rockridge Bungalow for Lease, price TBD.



Happy Thanksgiving!

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New classes are added every season. Friend us on Facebook for the latest updates. Download our brochure at www.studiooneartcenter.net or call us at 510/597-5027. Interns and volunteers are welcome.

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STUDIO HOURS: M-TH; 9 A.M.-9:30 P.M. F, SA; 9 A.M.-4:30 P.M. | 510/597-5027 www.studiooneartcenter.net

Board Vacancies

from page 2

out of Rockridge, and so has had to leave the board.

Joining the Board

We hope others here in Rockridge will take the opportunity presented by these open board seats and also help their community by applying to join the board. RCPC's volunteer board of directors has been helping to support and improve Rockridge for almost 40 years.

Send your letter of interest to: Board Chair c/o RCPC, 3123 Broadway PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org. The board will select new board members at its December meeting.

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.

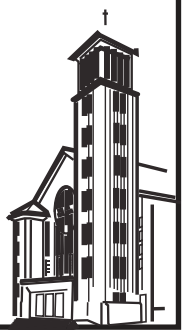
Route	Area
18Ga	Both sides of Claremont Avenue from freeway to Clifton
16D	Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment building at 5248, and 5400 block Claremont Ave, west side only from Clifton to Cavour

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A way to Believe
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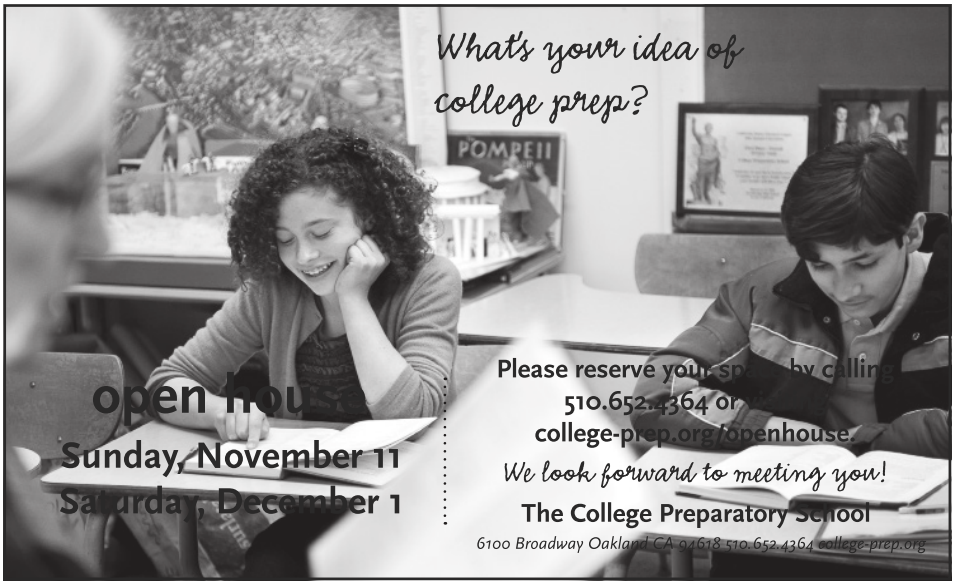
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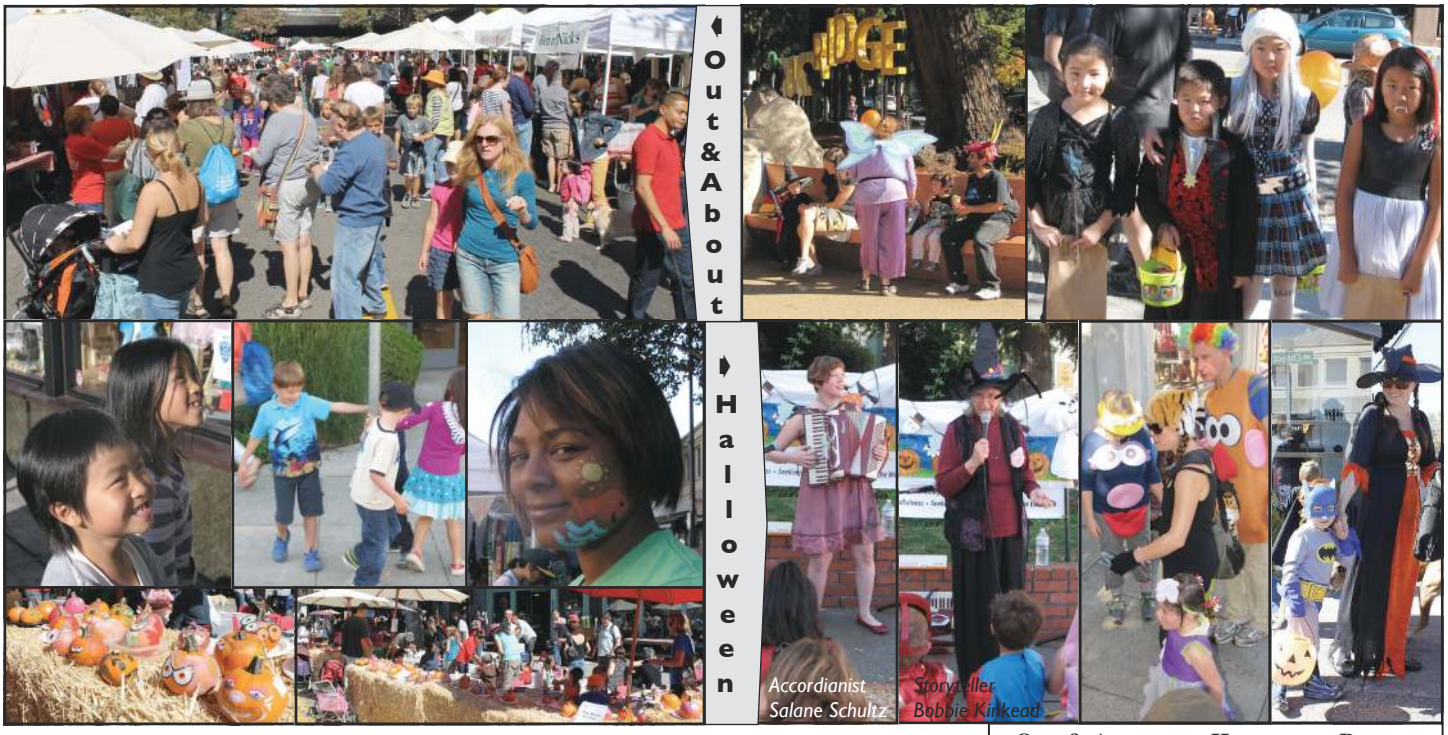
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Out & About and Halloween Photos
Pages 7 and 12: Sara Feinberg, Annette Floystrup, Don Kinkead, Ronnie Spitzer, Susan Strahan.

Home Energy Roadshow Available at Oakland Tech

Homeowners interested in energy efficiency are invited to a Home Energy Roadshow in front of Oakland Tech from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, November 17.

The Home Energy Roadshow is a hands-on demonstration of energy efficiency technology that can save energy, save money, and make for a less drafty, more comfortable home. Up to $4,000 in rebates are available for homeowners who do energy efficiency improvements through Energy Upgrade CA, and participating local schools receive $250 for every energy upgrade job. Participating local schools include Oakland Tech, Emerson, Park Day, Chabot, Hillcrest, Peralta, and Aurora.

Local participating contractors will be at the Roadshow to answer questions. Admission is free, lunch will be provided, and children are welcome. This is the only stop the Roadshow will make in Alameda County. Drop by to learn how to make your home more energy efficient, get thousands of dollars back on your project, and help local schools in the process. Learn more at homeenergyroadshow.eventbrite.com.

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— Edie Irons, Outreach Coordinator

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changes ON COLLEGE

by Theresa Nelson

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School Tours

from page 5

facilities maintenance.

Nevertheless, Tech's athletic programs are thriving. In the 2011-12 academic year, nearly 500 of its 1,800 students participated in at least one sport. Tech has added boys' and girls' lacrosse clubs, boys' volleyball, a coed ice hockey club, and JV teams in both boys' and girls' soccer to its slate of sports.

Pancake Breakfast tickets are $10 for youth (18 and under), and $15 for adults. Day of event tickets are $15 and $20, respectively. Sponsor Tables for eight may be purchased for $150, and include wait service, decorated table with gift centerpiece, beverages, fruit and bread basket at table, OT Spirit items, and raffle tickets.

Purchase tickets online via PayPal: http://tinyurl.com/1st-pancake-breakfast, or request tickets by e-mail to: boosterclubinfo@oaklandtech.com.

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Cuisine and Crafts Boutique

Saturday, December 8, 10-4, St. Peter's, 6013 Lawton at Broadway. CUISINE: Jasmine Rice, Meyer Lemon Marmalade, Minestrone Soup Kits, Pickles, Rubs, Baked Goods... CRAFTS: Aprons, Scarves, Hats, Placemats, Purses… Come see! 925/284-9090.

Write Your Own Will: Free Workshop

Everyone should have a will. Local Attorney Kyle M. Johnston explains estate planning basics and helps you write your own will. Oakland Library, Rockridge Branch, 5:30-6:30 pm Tuesday Nov. 13, 2012. RSVP at 510/527-1880.

Have a Toddler?

Try a 6-week instructional/discussion group with Jess Levith, MA. Explore ins and outs of raising a little one. Class starts Nov 6. Limit 10 parents. Call now for more info! 510/883-3074 (*corrected number*).

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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

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

*****Find out how your library card allows you to get free or discounted passes to museums and cultural institutions with the "Discover & GO" program**. Some participating partners are the Asian Art Museum, the Aquarium, Exploratorium, Oakland Museum Cal Shakespeare Theater, Yerba Buena Ctr. for the Arts and many more.***

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 Event:

Miwok Crafts Session: Thursday, 11/29, 3:30-4:30. Celebrate Native American History Month with crafts from the Miwok culture of California, led by docents from the Museum of Craft and Folk Art of San Francisco. Sign up at Children's Reference Desk: workshop limited to 25.

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 each month from 1-2 pm. To confirm, call Megan Kinney, 597-5017.
- **Rockridge Ninjas:** Watch and talk about Anime. Nov 20 and Dec 11 from 5 to 6:30pm. Info: Lisa Harter.
- **Teen 'Scape:** Play video and board games; make crafts; **light snacks provided**. Every Wed 2:30 to 4:15pm. Info: Emily Weak, 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS

- **PEN Oakland Literary Awards:** presents the Josephine Miles Book Awards (named for the late UCB English Prof. and poet). 22nd Anniversary honoring outstanding books published the previous year. Sat., 12/1, 2 – 5pm. Info: Kim McMillon, 681-5652.
- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 17 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month; 1 to 5pm. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch. 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.

ART EXHIBITS (subject to change; call to confirm)

Gallery:

Nov: **Irving Wiltshire**; photographs.

Dec: **Judith Marcellini**; mixed media paintings.

Lobby Display Case:

Nov; **Lori Anne Fischer**; Dolls 4 Art Sake.

Dec: Kwanzaa display.

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, 11/13 and Thurs-Sat., 11/22 – 11/24.

Diesel Readings and Events

All FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs, 11/8, 7pm. Poetry Reading with **Norma Cole, Sarah Riggs** and **Rebecca Farivar**.
- Sun., 11/11, 3pm. **Dylan Tomine**: *Closer to the Ground*.
- Mon, 11/12, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month)**: All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Thurs, 11/15, 7pm. **Annual Holiday Book Extravaganza**: Three reps from Random House will discuss their favorite books of the season. **Snacks and prizes**.
- Fri, 11/16, 7pm. Co-Launch Party for *Beeswax* and *Monday Night Magazines*. Readings by 4 local poets and writers: **Hough Behm-Steinberg, Diana Aehegma, Sean Craven** and **Valerie Witte**.

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

Donations for Oakland Museum White Elephant Sale

A van is now available for free donation pick up. Drop-off days are also scheduled at the warehouse site on Nov.19, & Dec 10 (and other dates through Feb. 23, 2013). **All items donated to the Oakland Museum Women's Board White Elephant Sale are tax deductible**. For details about how to schedule a van pick-up; where to deliver donations; what items are/are not accepted, go to http://www.whiteelephantsale.org/donation-general-information.

Volunteer at Chabot Space and Science Center

Learn about volunteer program, training and perks. **Register now for next Volunteer Orientation on Saturday, Dec 1, 10:00am-2:00pm.** Volunteers welcome visitors, share exhibits and historical telescopes, and learn how to make earth and space science come alive for visitors through interactive experiences. A variety of volunteer shifts and times are available. 10000 Skyline Blvd., 336-7300. More information and to register for orientation, visit **chabotspace.org/get-involved** or e-mail volunteers@chabotspace.org.

Jazz at the Chimes

Featuring **Marcos Silva – "Made in Brazil"**. Keyboardist and composer from the forefront of the Bossa Nova movement. Sunday, 11/18, 2pm, followed by artists' reception and refreshments. Tickets at the door (cash only).Sales begin 12:30 pm; doors open 1:30 pm. $15 general; $10 seniors (60+) and students. The concert series features Bay Area jazz musicians in a landmarked Julia Morgan venue. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. **Free parking**. Info: 654-0123 or chimesjazz@gmail.com.

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.

North Oakland Senior Center

- **Programs include:** Arts/crafts; health counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers support groups, computer classes/more. Annual $12 membership entitles seniors 55 and older to discounts on activities and trips.
- **Free Flu Shots:** Wed.,11/14, 9am to noon. Bring Medicare card.
- **AARP Driver Safety Course:** Tues. 11/27 and 12/4; 9am to 1pm. (Free for Veterans and spouses; all others welcome).
- **Holiday Shopping Trip:** to Jelly Belly factory and Vacaville outlets. Thurs, 12/6. Call for details.

Mon. – Fri., 9am to 4:30pm. 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.

Temescal Farmers' Market

Open Sundays, 9am to 1pm (all year). Locally grown fruits and vegetables; fresh ranch eggs; home-made bakery items; fresh cut flowers; unique prepared foods, fresh locally caught fish, handcrafts and more. Sample the goods; meet the grower; learn about unique food varieties and cooking tips; and listen to live music. **Bring your own reusable bags**. 5300 Claremont Ave. at DMV parking lot. More info about Certified Farmers' Markets at www.urbanvillageonline.com.

Happy Thanksgiving

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