THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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

Safeway, Community Groups Find Accord on College Ave Project

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair emeritus

A scant five days ahead of the date when the City Council was to hear appeals challenging Planning Commission approval of the Safeway on College rebuilding project, three neighborhood groups reached a tentative settlement with Safeway over its plans for rebuilding the dated shopping center at College and Claremont avenues.

The result of a 13-hour marathon mediation conducted by outgoing District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner, the settlement was endorsed by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), Berkeleyans for Pedestrian Oriented Development (BPOD), and Friends and Neighbors of College

Safeway Accord, page 12



Lowney Architects

The graphic at left – from a May 2011 posting on the architect's web site – shows how the 63rd Street and College Avenue intersection could have been affected by automobiles exiting the store's garage directly onto College (arrow). The agreement reached recently with Safeway moves the garage to the roof-top and the store to street level. Drivers will now enter and exit the garage from a ramp farther north on College. Claremont Avenue will also have garage entry and exit points.

On Jan 17

Coming in January 2013

RCPC Town Hall Agenda: January

Building on the Foundations of Yesteryear

How much is there to know about Oakland's history? Find out at the January Town Hall.



Oakland and Rockridge of today are the result of what Oaklanders of yesterday built or demolished, fostered or neglected.

Petition Process: Yea or Nay for Soundwall Study

by Victoria Eisen, consultant to the city of Oakland

Soundwall studies are on the agenda of RCPC's January 17, 2013 Town Hall meeting, to follow up on the city-organized community meeting held this past September.

City representatives will review the policy that will guide whether or not

Both announcements continued page 11

COMMUNITY MEETING

Report on Safeway Settlement Negotiations

The negotiators who reached the settlement with Safeway on its College Avenue project will explain the process and the resulting settlement at a special meeting on Wednesday, December 12, 7 p.m., at Peralta Elementary School Auditorium/ Multi-Purpose Room, 460 63rd Street.

Gather Ye Tax Breaks While Ye May... New Rules May Come A-flying

These fundraising buckets at the bottom of the page want you to place them at the top of your year-end giving list.

Of the six buckets that appeared in the December 2011 newsletter, the EIR Grant and the DVD Project have been retired as "Goal Reached," and FORL has moved to its own site. Great progress!

Consider one or more of the three remaining buckets for your attention this month. Donations are tax-deductible.



RCPC General Donations Online: rockridge.org/donations.html. **Mail/Payto**: RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB #311, Oakland, 94611



FROG Park Online: frogpark.org/donate/ **Mail/Payto:** FROG Park, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, 94611



Rockridge BART Plaza. Online: rockridge.org/rockridgeplaza.html. **Mail/Payto:** RCPC/BART Plaza, 4123 Broadway, PMB #311, Oakland, 94611



NO RCPC Town Hall Meeting in December. Happy Holidays! See you in January, 2013. Best wishes for a Happy New Year!



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.

Soundwalls, Band-Aids, and Imagination

by Tony Kay, Rockridge resident

When I attended the September 27 meeting on soundwalls, I did not have a strong opinion about them. I still don't. I left without a true understanding of how much sound would be cut out (what does 5 decibels [dB] actually sound like?) and feeling uninspired by the proposals. Following are some ideas to address these issues.

Instead of explanations of dB and logarithmic scales to describe how soundwalls reduce sound, CalTrans could bring a boom-box, a recording of traffic noise, and a decibel meter to the next meeting. Then we could actually hear what 70 dB sounds like, and how it sounds when it is reduced by 5 dB. That demonstration would yield a truer understanding of what can be expected from soundwalls.

I was also struck by how little imagination was displayed as to how soundwalls could be implemented. It made me think of Band-Aids. Once, Band-Aids were just Band-Aids; bland and functional. Then cartoon characters, patterns and color were printed on them. Suddenly, a scraped knee was an opportunity to accessorize.

Apparently, there are just two options for soundwalls: concrete block or glass. Covering parts of the walls with vines was the only upgrade suggested. We can do better.

We are fortunate to have UC Berkeley next door. Its College of Environmental Design is always looking for projects for its students. They could generate creative ideas to solve the problems. At the least, we can make the shape and color of these walls more unique to Rockridge. At most, we could do something that makes a significant contribution to our environment.

Why Not Creative Soundwalls?, page 13

RDA Brings Holiday Security to College Avenue



/Chris Jackson

by Chris Jackson, RDA manager

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) has once again hired V.M.A. Security to provide ambassador service to College Avenue during the holiday season. V.M.A., an Oakland-based company, will provide security ambassadors to walk the avenue greeting customers, offering directions and generally doing all they can

Holiday Security, page 13

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Tue: 12:30 – 8 p.m.
Wed, Thu, Sat: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays.
ALSO: Sat., Dec 22 through Tues., Jan 1.
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 the board: chair@rockridge.org
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To subscribe to ***The Rockridge News***, send your check for $20, payable to *Rockridge News* Subscriptions, to: *Rockridge News* Subscriptions at the address below.

Contacting *The Rockridge News*

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising/Deadlines

Publication date of the next issue is:
☛ **January 5, 2013**
☛ **January deadline is December 20, 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 generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m.
Note: ☞ *There will be no December meeting.*
Contact Stu Flashman (652-5373 or stuflash@aol.com) for further information about meetings or about joining the committee. Land use committee meetings are generally open to the public.

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

There will be no Land Use Committee meeting in December. Happy Holidays, and see you in January!

■ **Rockridge Shopping Center Rebuilding Project**
Broadway and Pleasant Valley

This project, the second Safeway project "bookending" College Avenue, is a rebuild of the shopping center that will add 120,000 sq. ft. of retail and office space. Darin Ranelletti (dranelletti@oaklandnet.com, 238-3663), the Oakland planner handling the application, now says that the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) will be released for a 45-day public comment period in December or January. He estimates that the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing some time in February to receive comments on the EIR.

The RCPC land use committee is suggesting adding solar panels above the project's rooftop parking, as well as perhaps some charging spaces for electric cars.

We also continue to hope that the project will include some commercial tenants of the type to restore most — if not all — of the important community functions once provided by the Payless/Rite Aid/Longs/CVS variations that have cycled through the store space over the many years of the shopping center's existence.

Help RCPC Accomplish its Many Goals: Join the RCPC Board

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC chair emeritus

I'm now in my fifth year of serving on the RCPC board of directors, including four years as board chair. Prior to joining the board in 2007, I'd had almost nothing to do with RCPC, other than reading The Rockridge News and occasionally contributing financially to projects like the Rockridge library. I finally found myself feeling guilty about how much RCPC was doing to benefit my neighborhood and how little I was helping in the effort, so I ran for election to the board.

So, you might ask, what has RCPC been doing, and how could I help?

During the past four years, RCPC has advocated for an improved and appropriately-sized College Avenue Safeway. With last month's mediated settlement, it looks like we will get a much-improved project. But making the deal is only half the battle. We will still need to monitor the project as it proceeds to ensure that we get the project we negotiated for. We'll also need to keep tabs on problems the project creates (there will probably still be some) and figure out how to use the $300,000 that Safeway has agreed to set aside for mitigation to address those problems.

The rebuild of the Rockridge Shopping Center is another big project waiting to happen. RCPC has spent four years trying to make that project better too. There's still more work to be done here.

Crime is a major concern in Rockridge, as it is anywhere in Oakland. The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (GRNCPC) is the primary vehicle for addressing public safety here in Rockridge, but RCPC has also worked with the city to encourage formation of block groups to improve the community's emergency preparedness and training. Much more needs to be done.

Groups are also working on assisting the Rockridge Library (Friends of the Rockridge Library; FORL) and maintaining FROG Park (the FROG Park Committee – a part of RCPC), and RCPC has also taken on individual neighborhood improvement projects such as the Rockridge BART Plaza, putting on the Halloween Parade with College Avenue merchants, and assisting Scenic Streets with relandscaping Rockridge freeway ramps.

So you can see RCPC works in many different ways to keep Rockridge a place we can be proud to call home, and to make it an even better place to live. But, this doesn't happen by magic.

The all-volunteer RCPC board of directors meets monthly to consider what

How You Can Help, page 4

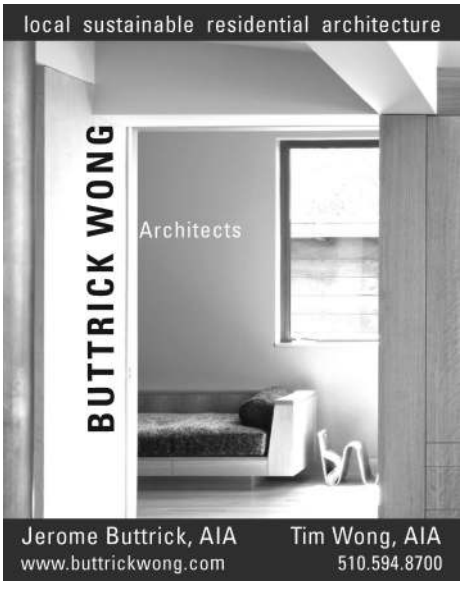
Help Shape the Future of Studio One

Studio One Art Center is looking for arts-minded members of the community to join the Studio One Advisory Council.

Meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7 to 8 p.m. at Studio One. The January 23, 2013 meeting will be the kick-off to creating the Studio One Strategic Plan. Please join us!

Studio One, a city-run, state of the art studio facility, is located at 365-45th Street between Broadway and Shafter Avenue. The Studio has been a valuable part of the Oakland community for over 60 years and offers classes in ceramics, jewelry, photography, painting, and much more, for both children and adults.

For more information, please contact Alethia Walker, Program Designer, 510/597-5027.



How You Can Help

from page 3

things RCPC should become involved in. Between those meetings, board members, working with RCPC's committees, help bring those things to life.

Right now, the board is short-handed and could use your help. Being on the board requires neither special skills nor fancy degrees. It does require a commitment to helping your community and a willingness to spend some time to make good things happen.

Ready to join in? E-mail RCPC at info@rockridge.org or write a letter to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, 94611, so we know of your interest.

Tell us a little bit about yourself — such as where you live and what you're interested in — so we know you're eligible (only those residing within the RCPC boundaries can serve on the board) and how you'll fit in with the board's needs. See Rockridge.org/boundaries.html for the boundary map.

We have several board vacancies to fill now, and more seats will be coming up for election in April. It's time to give it serious thought. RCPC can't help Rockridge without your help.

In January: Claremont Science Night

Space, Robots, Science! Please join the students of Claremont Middle School on January 17 for a night of hands-on, minds-on science fun.

Bring the family and interact with scientists, learn about their jobs and participate in student-led science activities.

Watch for more details and an official schedule to be released in the January Rockridge News. Mark your calendar now.

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Peralta Kindergarten Tours and Applications

Peralta Elementry School, 460 63rd St., is hosting mid-December/early January parent-led kindergarten tours for prospective kindergarten parents.

Forty-five minutes long, the tours start at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays: December 11 and 12 and 18 and 19; and January 8 and 9. If you have kids entering kindergarten next year, call Peralta secretary Jan Seagren at 510/654-7365 to sign up for a tour.

Kindergarten applications are available at school district offices in downtown Oakland, and on the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) website (address below).

Applications must be in by 2 p.m. January 18, 2013. An application must be submitted on behalf of all prospective kindergarteners (including those with siblings already in OUSD) during that time frame to have the best chance of getting in to your neighborhood school of choice.

Assignments will be mailed in March. If your first choice is not your neighborhood school, you can appeal in March if you did not get your first choice school.

More info at http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/site/default.aspx?domainid=18.

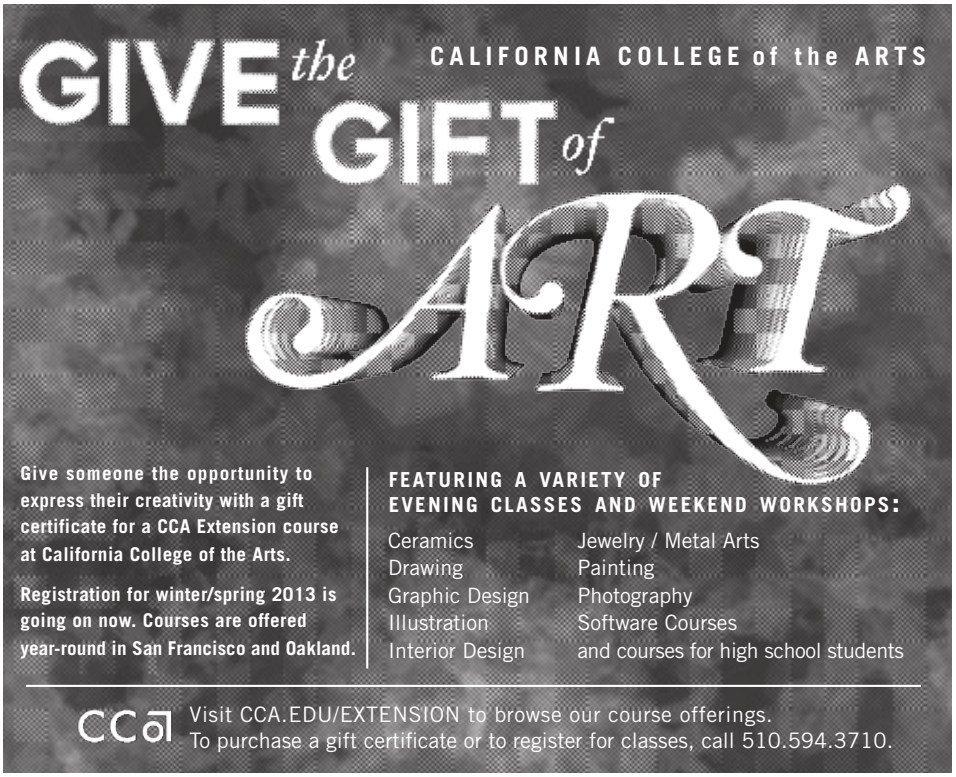
— Peralta PPTG

Start the New Year Off Right: Join the Rockridge News Family of Volunteers

We owe our thanks to two generous volunteers, Donna Hertz and James Kachelmeyer, who have been delivering The Rockridge News to neighbors on Roanoke and Claremont Avenue. They have both moved so we hope someone will step forward to replace them in time to begin delivery at the start of the New Year.

If you live in the neighborhood and can help for 15-30 minutes a month, please call 510/547-3855 or e-mail smontauk@gmail.com and let us know the route(s) you would like to take on.

Route	Area
02B	From Hillcrest down Roanoke along Chabot Road to Chabot Crest
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



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

DMV Creekside – Restoration Update

The city of Oakland's Public Works Department is expected to begin staking the locations of the planned new trees, shrubs, boulders and picnic table at the DMV Creekside the first two weeks of December. FROG, DMV Neighbors Association and Miles Avenue residents' representatives will review the placement and staking of the area, which is to be based on planning and design company MIG's design as announced in the November 2012 Rockridge News. The plan is available for review on our website: www.frogpark.org.

Next FROG Meeting: Thursday, December 13, Rockridge Branch Library, 2nd floor, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Details: info@frogpark.org

Two features shown on the plan will not be implemented: the creek will not be moved; there will be no new pathway from the current greenbelt path to the DMV parking lot. This decision was reached by FROG, DMV Neighbors Association and Miles Avenue residents' representatives over multiple meetings with our committees, the city, and Assemblymember Nancy Skinner's office. To join us in reviewing the staked area, please e-mail info@frogpark.org to get dates and times within the first two weeks of December.

During this time, we have asked and anticipate that the DMV will work on an implementation plan and work to resolve discrepancies between the community plan and the DMV's plan in the number of boulders to place. Once the stakes are placed, agreed to by the city and community, and we receive the implementation plan from the DMV, we look forward to a beautiful restoration of the DMV creekside area for the community, DMV patrons and staff, Temescal-Rockridge Farmers Market patrons and other visitors to enjoy.

Please contact info@frogpark.org with any questions.

— Carol Behr, FROG chair, and Misti Groves, Miles Avenue Residents

Complete the FROG Online Survey

Help guide Frog Park improvements and FROG committee decisions by completing the brief survey now. At www.frogpark.org, click on the survey link, or type www.surveymonkey.com/s/FrogPark2013Priorities-Survey into your browser. Also, ask your community friends and neighbors to complete the survey. The results will guide decisions and improvements and will ultimately help make planning, funding and purchasing decisions for Frog Park (Redondo, Hardy and the Greenbelt connecting them). Results will be available early February 2013.

— Carol Behr, FROG chair

Volunteers and Donations Built, Support the Park



Please consider supporting FROG's work, either through a tax-deductible donation or as a volunteer. FROG contributes money as needed for park enhancements, maintenance, and repairs. Projects funded to date include approximately $10,000 toward the 2010 repairs, funds for the current DMV Creekside restoration plan, purchasing supplies and plants for areas needing replanting, Maintenance Day supplies and Earthday events. We anticipate spending more money in the next few years on initiatives that are a priority for you, our community.

The Greenbelt Parks were built by volunteers, with community donations. Let's continue Rockridge's proud tradition, and support our park.

Two ways to help:

- **Monetary Donation**: You can make a tax-deductible donation using a check, credit card or PayPal. Visit www.frogpark.org/donate for details. Help fill the bucket.
- **Volunteer:** We have specific short term projects and other opportunities. All are welcome. If you have a general interest in the upkeep or enhancement of Frog Park, please e-mail us: info@frogpark.org

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



Ronnie Spitzer of FROG, left, Oakland Technical High School BuildOn volunteers, and a 4-year-old community helper at November's First Sunday cleanup. /Carol Behr

FROG holds family-friendly monthly cleanups the first Sunday of each month, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. In November, students weeded, re-planted and mulched our butterfly garden. Community members and students removed debris from the stream bed and spruced up the park.

The next monthly workday has been re-scheduled to Sunday, January 13, after winter vacation. Meet at Big Frog Park (Hardy Street cul-de-sac), which remains open during the cleanup. Rain cancels.

Join your friends and bring your kids to rake, plant and tackle child-sized tasks. The Oakland Tech BuildOn service club partners with FROG on these events.

Calendar of events: www.frogpark.org. E-mail info@frogpark.org with questions or for information

a cross-cultural congregation striving to partner with the Rockridge community in lifestyle and service.
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Rockridge Merchants Stepped Up to Support Claremont School

On October 27, the Claremont Middle School PTA held its annual fundraising auction at Uptown Body and Fender. That night, 128 members of the community showed up to bid on items offered by over 160 donors, raising more than $29,000 for the school. The money will be used to support Claremont's library, art, music, and media programs. The PTA wishes to thank the many members of the Rockridge District Association who donated goods and services, and helped to strengthen the connection between the school and our community.

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Scenic Streets of Oakland

Keep the Changes Coming

Thanks to you, our Rockridge neighbors and donors, the gateway to Rockridge and Temescal has changed a lot this past year. Hundreds of native shrubs now line our freeway ramps, 17 new flowering sidewalk trees adorn southern Claremont Avenue, and litter has been reduced dramatically along this busy roadway leading to our community.

We are planning more improvements for 2013. The city is reviewing our proposal to add greenery, artwork and lighting to Claremont Avenue's neglected highway underpass area. We also plan to make needed safety improvements to Hardy Park Dog Run. Our web site has all the details.

These proposed renovations will be our most ambitious yet — and the most costly. Unfortunately, the statewide budget crisis means this new work must be funded by neighbors like you. That's why many of our supporters are making a second or even third donation to Scenic Streets. Won't you join them this holiday season?

Make your tax-deductible contribution quickly and securely on our web site, www.ScenicStreets.org

On behalf of the neighborhood volunteers at Scenic Streets, thank you again for making the gateway to our community a bit brighter and safer.

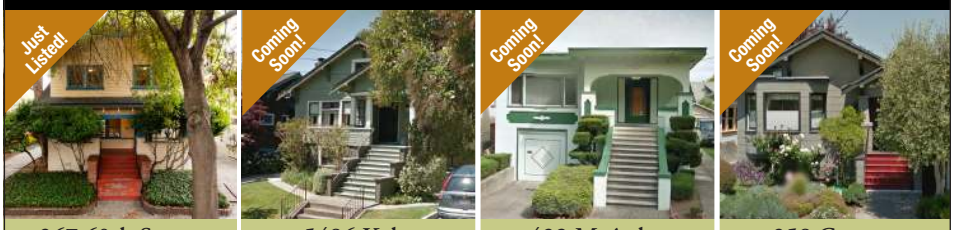
— Peter Lund, founder and volunteer

LOST AND FOUND

While walking up Claremont from near the dog park on her way to Trader Joe's the other day, Rockridge resident Jacqueline J. lost her favorite cane somewhere on Claremont, Forest or Miles. Have you seen it? It is a slim, plain wooden cane with a curved black handle. The shaft of the cane is plain, blond-colored wood, and is distinguished by a yellow, non-skid rubber tip.

If you have seen this cane or know where it may be, e-mail The Rockridge News at editor_rn@mindspring.com, or phone 510/499-0229. There is a small reward.


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Keep the Rockridge Library Vibrant

It Takes a Village – Support Rockridge Library Friends This Holiday Season

by Sarah Washburn, FORL board member

Imagine Rockridge without a library, without a place for children to learn or for teens to engage, without a place to find information with professional assistance, without a place where anyone can enter. Where would our neighbors get the latest e-book, or access the Internet, or receive free legal help, or find a quiet spot to read?

We don't have to answer these questions because we're fortunate the Rockridge Public Library is in our neighborhood. But the library can't do it alone. It takes a village to sustain a library, and the reality of budget shortfalls in Oakland makes this task that much more difficult.

This past year, donations to the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) bolstered teen programs, reupholstered furniture in reading areas, and beautified the grounds; funded maps, a globe, art supplies, story time materials, and other children's educational materials; and provided support for the library's teen intern program that connects Oakland schools to Oakland libraries and our community's youth to skills and experiences that open doors and expand minds.

The Rockridge Public Library continues to offer programs and services that position the library as a vital center of public life. Generous donations from our community made this happen. Please help us maintain our community's vision for the Rockridge Branch Public Library. Donate to the Friends of the Rockridge Library using the form below or visit http://www.friendsofrockridgelibrary.org.

Your donation makes a difference. Thank you.

Yes, I want to be a Friend!

Friends of the Rockridge Library

Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) is a nonprofit neighborhood committee which works to enhance the Rockridge Branch Library by providing books, magazines, equipment, furnishings, and amenities not covered by the City of Oakland Library budget.

Name (as it should appear on the donor roll inside the front door)

Street City Zip

E-mail (please include for library news and FORL up-dates)

Make a donation online at www.friendsofrockridgelibrary.org or send this completed form and your check made payable to FORL to: Friends of the Rockridge Library, Post Office Box 3723, Oakland, CA 94609

Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax ID No. 45-3951826

Support Your Library:

- ❒ $200 Book Lover
- ❒ $100 Book Worm
- ❒ $50 Book Friend
- ❒ $35 Family
- ❒ $ 25 Individual
- ❒ $15 Senior/Student
- ❒ Other $ _____
- ❒ My employer will match my contribution.

Specializing in Real Estate in Rockridge

As the agent with the most real estate transactions in Rockridge 2011-2012, let me use my local expert experience to guide you.

Tip of the month - Inventory of homes available for sale in Rockridge remains historically low, down as much as 40% from peak times over the last 8 years, partially causing prices to increase by nearly 10% over last year. Interest rates have held steady at near all time lows. Basic real estate economics of supply and demand combined with low interest financing makes it a great time for those considering selling. At the same time, with cost of money so low and prices on the rise, it is a good time to buy before rates and prices continue to go up further, a rare mutuality in the market. Fiscal cliff worries? Rockridge sustained values better than most areas with mostly single digit vs double digit losses during the worst of the prior 3 year financial meltdown. The key is being able to sell your home when the market is 'right', rather than feeling forced to sell during a down market. I had a client relocating from Rockridge to the east coast and instead of selling their home last fall, we made the strategic decision to wait until this spring. They sold their home for over $200,000 more in the spring than the market in the fall would have yielded, based on reliable market data.

Pending

- Triplex in Rockridge, One 3BD 2BA, Two 1BD 1BAs. Listed at $749,000. Representing buyers.

What's 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.
- 3BD 2BA apartment for Lease @ $2,895/mo, 1BD 1BA apartments for Lease @ $1,595/mo January 2013.



Happy Holidays!

LAWTON ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE
Call for a real local expert opinion.
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Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and city/neighborhood must be included for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity at the editor's discretion. Views expressed in any letter are the writer's own, and may not necessarily be shared by the editor, or by RCPC.

Stop Dragging Out the Safeway Renovation

Editor:

I'm tired of people dragging out the process of Safeway renovation. It's already been vetted to multiple community groups, it's in a weird part of the neighborhood anyway, traffic will be fine, and directed to Claremont Avenue.

So stop dragging your heels! Visit the North Berkeley renovated store; it's awesome!

— Rob Selover

Rockridge Snow Day Should be a Tradition

Editor:

Was this the first snow day or is it a tradition? If not a tradition, it should be. Good job Chris Jackson, who brought the truck load of snow from Fremont.

Use this link to read a story I wrote for the examiner.com site on the event: http://www.examiner.com/article/christmas-snow-day-at-rockridge-bart-oakland-california-for-kids-and-dogs

— Cindy Warner

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Eyes on Rockridge

Meet Dan Kalb: Up Close and Personal

by Judith Doner Berne

I must say, I was super impressed with Dan Kalb after sitting down with him at Hudson Bay Café on a sunny afternoon a week after the election.

The Rockridge resident still hadn't heard for sure that he was the winner among seven candidates vying for the District 1 seat on the Oakland City Council.

"I feel good," he told Rockridge editor Don Kinkead and me that day. "But I want to respect the process."

Respect for process seems to color his approach – first in deciding to run for office, then in conducting his campaign and now in envisioning his new position as the vote totals confirm his win.

"We will see in Dan as a councilmember the same qualities that he exhibited during his campaign: hard working, creative, strategic, respectful and filled with integrity," predicts Bob Franklin, a friend and neighbor.

Kalb, 53, grew up in Los Angeles. But like a lot of UC Berkeley graduates (B.S. in Conservation of Natural Resources) "once you come to the Bay Area, you don't want to leave," he says. He went on to get a master's degree in non-profit administration from the University of San Francisco.

He and his wife, Valarie Kalb, met at a community picnic and married, each for the first time, in their 40s. She's an attorney for the California Supreme Court and an avid swimmer and cyclist. He goes to the gym and joins her on easier rides. They moved to their Rockridge house seven years ago.

Valarie's approval was crucial to his decision to run, Kalb says. "I wanted to make sure she was okay with it. I would be taking a pay cut. She told me, 'It means a lot to you. Let's do this thing.'"

"I did a lot of exploration to find out who else was running and what people are concerned about. I didn't want to run unless I had a realistic chance of winning."

He hired a professional campaign consultant known, Kalb says, for running "positive campaigns." He picked Rockridge resident Olga Bolotina as his campaign manager, enlisted "a lot of volunteers," and began the work of campaigning.

He saw it as "a blessing in disguise" when his job of nine years as policy director at the Union of Concerned Scientists in Berkeley was eliminated this summer. It meant he could campaign full-time.

Kalb was backed by the Sierra Club and spent the second highest amount in his race. But, like President Barack Obama's reelection experience, it may have been his ground game that made the difference. "I knocked on a lot of doors and made a lot of phone calls," he says.

I first met Kalb as he went door to door in early summer. I do live close by, but he was the only council candidate to come to my door. My daughter got a personal phone call shortly before Election Day. "His call made a difference in my mind," she says. "That's serious commitment."

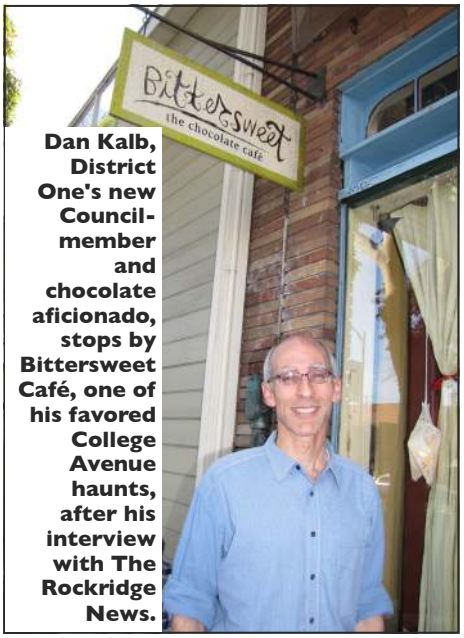
Like the President who was faced with Super Storm Sandy, Kalb also got an "October surprise" that, frightening as it was, may have helped him in the long run.

Kalb, who campaigned on hiring more police and crime investigators, was mugged near his Rockridge home on the way back from a crime prevention council meeting in the Golden Gate neighborhood.

"It was scary. The guy had a gun," he says. The mugger took his wallet and phone and sent him high-tailing down the street with an order to "Run!" The incident brought the police (three patrol cars within eight minutes) and local television stations and press to his door.

"It wasn't exactly the publicity I was looking for," Kalb says. "Before that, you struggled to get a reporter to cover your views. It gave me an opening to talk about crime prevention," he says. "It could have had an impact."

"I plan to be a full-time councilman,"



Dan Kalb, District One's new Councilmember and chocolate aficionado, stops by Bittersweet Café, one of his favored College Avenue haunts, after his interview with The Rockridge News.

Kalb says. But he has no plans to take the city by storm. As one of three newly elected members, he will start out cautiously.

He anticipates holding a series of "listening sessions" in different parts of his district over the first few months. "I'll also do outreach to neighborhood groups."

Part of Kalb's platform is strengthening the city's ethics commission. He also firmly believes in public access to the council. "If you want to do big things, you need to have the public behind you. I feel strongly about involving the community."

"I get along with the mayor," he says. "If I want to do what I want to do, I need to get along with the other council members. I want to find a way to get to 'yes.'"

Before Kalb knew that his predecessor, 16-year-councilwoman Jane Brunner, had successfully mediated the proposed College Avenue Safeway project (see story, page 1), he told us he wants to meet with the San Francisco owners of the Safeway shopping center property at Pleasant Valley and Broadway, also awaiting the bulldozers.

"I'm not a NIMBY and I'm not a rollover," he says. "I'm a tough negotiator. It's an opportunity to make that corner a shining example of development. It could set the tone all the way down Broadway."

Noting that the council district encompasses many North Oakland neighborhoods, Kalb also talks of the importance of revitalizing the San Pablo corridor as an example of other plans he has. "The neighborhoods west of MLK have become the stepchildren of the city. Within

Dan Kalb, page 11

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THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

A Silent Christmas — Not

During the December holidays, the sound of song, joyful and festive, sacred or secular, will once again fill the air. There is something wonderful and exhilarating about human voices, young and old, male and female, raised together in song. For those who would like to give vocal music other than the ubiquitous pop tune variety a try, here is a selection of vocal performances that will be taking place in our area. Enjoy!

The Christmas Revels

This will be the 27th year for this long-running annual musical revelry, brought to you through the incredible energy and dedication of our talented local performing volunteers, together with professional lead actors. You have to see this wonderful smorgasbord of color and sound at least once. Remaining performances are December 14-16. Call 510/452-8800 or go online (http://californiarevels.org/) for more information and tickets.

Oakland Youth Chorus

The Oakland Youth Chorus (OYC), featuring our city's children ages 15-18, will perform their annual holiday concert Saturday, December 15, 6 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 2619 Broadway. Tickets can be ordered on-line: http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/287903. Consider making an extra donation to help sustain the chorus for the benefit of future young singers.

The Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs

These young singers have a full plate before them as well. But then there are about three hundred singers to do the job. On December 15 there will be two different concerts performed by the training groups at the Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (2 and 5 pm) . These concerts are free. Other more experienced groups of singers will be performing in Mark Morris' "The Hard Nut" at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Theater this year.

"Let us Break Bread Together"

The Piedmont Choirs will also be participating in "Let us Break Bread Together," Oakland's annual gala choral and orchestral holiday celebration with the East Bay Symphony under the direction of Michael Morgan at the Paramount Theater. The event includes numerous other choral groups, such the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, and the Klezmer Band Kugelplex. The date is Sunday, December 9, at 4 p.m. You will need tickets for that one. They can be purchased online.

"A Chanticleer Christmas"

The Bay Area's marvelous Chanticleer singers will perform at the First Congregational Church of Berkley, corner of Durant and Dana, December 10 at 8 p.m. Tickets are online (http://www.chanticleer.org/), not cheap, but how wonderful to be able to hear this fabled group in person.

"Wild Woods and Starry Nights"

Songs, motets and hymns from the middle ages to the present will be brought to you by the San Francisco Choral Artists at 4 p.m., Sunday, December 9, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland. Price for tickets at the door is nominal.

"Yes: The Sing-along Messiah"

For those who can't do without, I found a posting for a sing-along Messiah performance with soloists and orchestra under the direction of Dr. Bryan Baker at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Road, Kensington, phone 510/525-0302. Soloists include Marcella Dronkers and Michele Voilleque, sopranos, Rod Lowe, tenor, and Barry Zuckerman and Richard Fey, baritones. The event is scheduled for December 16, 6 p.m. Tickets are $10. If you don't own your own score, that's no reason for despair; there will be loaner copies available at the door.

Happy singing, happy listening and Happy Holidays, one and all!



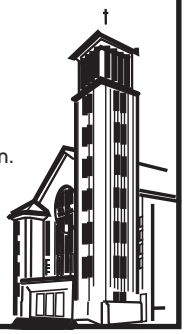
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Dan Kalb

from page 9

District 1, they have more challenges. They are more diverse racially and economically and they have more crime. I have that responsibility."

"The Oakland City Council has been beset by so much conflict," says Gretchen White, president of the Metropolitan Greater Oakland Democratic Club where Kalb serves on the board. "Dan's basically a scientist. A lot of time data doesn't support gut feelings. He'll look at the data.

"He can bring a process of rationality, calm and reasonableness to the council," White, a Rockridge resident, says.

Rational, calm, reasonable – hmm, who else does that describe? I hope that approach works for both Barack and Dan – and for all of us.

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

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January 2013 RCPC Town Hall Topics

Oakland History

from page 1

Long time Rockridge resident Annalee Allen discusses the origins of the Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA), a non-profit group dedicated to the study and preservation of the city's history.

Allen will speak about Beth Bagwell, an early key OHA leader and a Rockridge resident when the group formed in the early 1980s. Bagwell's book "Oakland: A Story of a City" has been reissued and will be available to buy at the meeting.

Soundwall Process

from page 1

Oakland will go forward with a full study of potential soundwalls (known as a Noise Barrier Scope Study Report or NBSSR) on either side of SR 24 between approximately Broadway and Telegraph Avenue.

The presentation will focus on the petition process Oakland will use to make this determination.

In Memory

Ronald Eugene Ciraulo, a well-loved Ocean View resident since 1968, left this life on September 29, 2012. Ron had an infectious personality and was truly one of a kind.



A native of San Francisco, Ron and his twin brother, Lt. Col. Robert (Bob) L. Ciraulo, were born to Mary and Frank Ciraulo at St. Mary's Hospital on May 31, 1935. Ron graduated from Saint Ignatius College Preparatory (S.I.) in 1953. He continued his Jesuit education at Santa Clara University (SCU), where he received a BS in Engineering and was part of the U.S. Army ROTC.

Upon graduation, Ron worked for the State of California as a Civil Engineer and led ski tours to Squaw Valley. He went on to work for Hetch Hetchy Water & Power as a Civil Engineer for more than 33 years.

For more than 44 years, he was an active part of the Fratellanza Club, one of the largest social clubs in America founded by Italian pioneers. Upon retirement, Ron fished and volunteered for San Francisco Tyee Club.

Ron leaves behind his wife of 48 years, Marie Lucille (Audo) Ciraulo, and loving daughters and sons and their families.



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10/30/12	2	2	5635 Miles Avenue	$629,950	$629,950	15	$652,000
11/2/12	2	1	5457 Broadway	$575,000	$575,000	11	$717,000
11/7/12	2	1	5237 James Avenue	$649,000	$649,000	8	$745,000
11/8/12	2	1	5701 Oak Grove Avenue	$690,000	$690,000	13	$750,000
11/9/12	2	1	5394 Bryant	$659,000	$659,000	12	$685,000
11/14/12	4	3	5748 Ivanhoe Road	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	40	$1,455,000
11/21/12	2	1	5522 Taft Avenue	$779,000	$779,000	7	$789,000

Average original list price to sales price is currently 107% vs 99% last year · Median sold price is currently $747,500 vs $837,500 last year · Properties are selling in an average of 14 days · Currently no active inventory

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Safeway Accord

from page 1

Avenue (FANS).

The mediation resulted from the intensive efforts of RCPC, FANS, and BPOD to meet with Council members to explain the appeals and their objections to Safeway's plans. Those meetings, along with the urging of Councilmember Brunner, convinced two council members, Libby Schaaf and Ignacio De La Fuente, to push Safeway to accept Brunner's offer to mediate the dispute; something Safeway had previously rejected.

The tentative settlement, accepted by all parties and generally favorably received by the Council at its November 13 public hearing, includes the following points:

Main Store, Loading and Noise

Safeway's store moves back down to the first floor, replaced with 148 rooftop off-street parking spaces. There will be two entrances to the off-street parking: one from College and one from Claremont. Both will be at the north end of the store. The rooftop parking and College Avenue ramp to the parking will be screened to reduce potential noise and lighting impacts on neighbors. The 10-foot buffer zone between the store and Alcatraz Avenue neighbors will be retained.

Safeway's loading docks will be placed in an enclosed "doghouse" at the northern corner of the project along Claremont Avenue to counter the light and noise impacts of loading operations on neighboring residents.

Store and Shop Sizes

The Safeway store will be reduced from 51,500 square feet to 45,500 sq. ft.; the small shops on College Avenue will be reduced from 11,500 sq.ft. to 9,500 sq.ft. for a total store size of 55,000 sq. ft. This is an 11 percent reduction from the prior 62,000 sq. ft. project proposal.

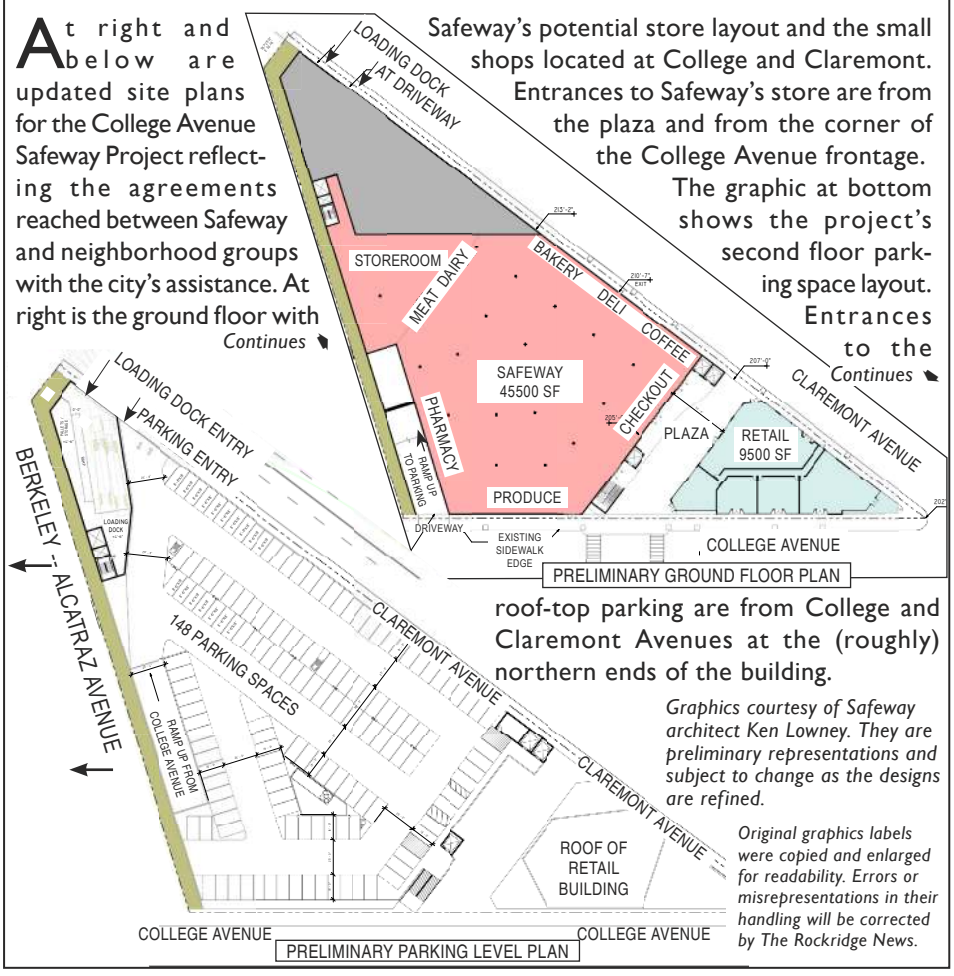
In addition, Safeway agreed to eliminate the full-service restaurant proposed for the corner of College and Claremont Avenues because of its large traffic and parking

Safeway Accord, page 13

Safeway Preliminary Ground Floor and Parking Level Plans

At right and below are updated site plans for the College Avenue Safeway Project reflecting the agreements reached between Safeway and neighborhood groups with the city's assistance. At right is the ground floor with Safeway's potential store layout and the small shops located at College and Claremont. Entrances to Safeway's store are from the plaza and from the corner of the College Avenue frontage. The graphic at bottom shows the project's second floor parking space layout. Entrances to the roof-top parking are from College and Claremont Avenues at the (roughly) northern ends of the building.

Continues



Graphics courtesy of Safeway architect Ken Lowney. They are preliminary representations and subject to change as the designs are refined.

Original graphics labels were copied and enlarged for readability. Errors or misrepresentations in their handling will be corrected by The Rockridge News.

The Negotiations

The three local groups were represented in the mediation by Jerome Buttrick and Zack Walton (FANS), Glen Alex and Joel Rubenzahl (BPOD), and Stuart Flashman, Ronnie Spitzer, and Andrew Charman (RCPC). RCPC's representatives included an alternate member because some members were unable to stay for the full 13 hours. Also attending for part of the meeting was RCPC's transportation consultant, Kevan Shafizadeh.

On Safeway's side, negotiators included Steve Berndt, Safeway Vice President for Real Estate, local real estate manager Todd Paradis, architect and Rockridge resident Ken Lowney, attorneys Deborah Kartiganer and Anna Shimko, and political consultant Elizabeth Jewel. All except Berndt had been participants in prior unsuccessful direct negotiations.

Also present, in addition to Jane Brunner, were Sam Tabibnia, a representative from Fehr & Peers who did the traffic analysis for the EIR, and Assistant City Administrator Fred Blackwell, who had helped out during the Oakland Army Base negotiations. Councilmembers Schaaf and De La Fuente also sat in as observers on portions of the negotiations.

Councilmember Brunner deserves a tremendous amount of credit for her successful mediation effort. Charting the route to a settlement required recognizing and avoiding a host of potential points where negotiations could have reached impasse and broken down. There were also a few places where surprising agreements were reached that had previously seemed impossible. Chief among these was Safeway's agreement to move their store back down to the ground level, with rooftop parking. That had been Safeway's initial plan, but the store had been shifted to the second story when the small shops were added to the project in 2009.

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Safeway Accord

from page 12

impacts. (A restaurant may be built later, with the consent of RCPC and BPOD, if it can be shown it will not create any parking or traffic problems.)

Also, Safeway agreed to allow RCPC, FANS and BPOD to identify specific uses that would be problematic (e.g., fast food restaurants) in the street-level shops. National chains will be restricted to no more than 40 percent of the project's retail space. A list of specific chains and store types (e.g., convenience stores) to be totally excluded will be agreed upon by the parties.

Parking and Traffic Management

Safeway agreed that the project would be managed to eliminate the parking deficiency at peak hours (4-7 p.m. weekdays, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays). Safeway also agreed that during peak hours, it would, as necessary, prohibit project employees from parking in the on-site lot so that space could be reserved for retail customers.

To reduce neighborhood parking and traffic impacts, Safeway will pay, for the life of the project, to establish and maintain residential permit parking on streets within two blocks of the project that don't already have it.

Safeway will generally allow non-project retail customers to use the on-site parking for up to two hours. (While this currently occurs, parking in Safeway's lot is posted as limited to Safeway customers.) At peak hours, Safeway will have the right to limit non-Safeway customers to one-hour parking. The restriction to half-hour hour parking for non-Safeway customers during the Thanksgiving and Christmas crunch times — included in the Planning Commission approval — was eliminated.

Design Changes and Mitigations

With the reduction in project size, the project's internal pedestrian street joining College and Claremont avenues will be moved northward and expanded to become a pedestrian plaza extending east from 63rd Street to Claremont.

All current mitigation measures included in the planning commission approval will remain. Safeway will set aside up to $300,000 to address and mitigate neighborhood problems that develop after the project has been approved and constructed.

Next Steps

Safeway and the three community groups are working to convert this list of "deal points" into a formal settlement agreement that would be executed before the revised project comes back to the City Council for approval December 18. Safeway's architect has prepared a revised site plan, shown on page 12.

It should be kept in mind, however, that until the design is finalized, details are subject to change.

Why Not Creative Soundwalls?

from page 2

If soundwalls are not the best solution, let's use the money to mitigate the effects of the freeway in other ways, such as masking the noise with the sound of falling water. It's an opportunity for creative solutions.

If we want soundwalls, let's be the neighborhood that has the vision to see beyond the concrete and glass to visually and sonically enhance our environment.

Rockridge has been, and can continue to be, at the forefront of pedestrian-scale design. Let's not let the highway dictate the sonic atmosphere and aesthetics.

Holiday Security

from page 2

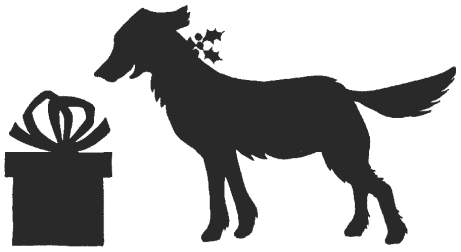
to make your time on the avenue enjoyable.

In addition to the V.M.A. staff, Market Hall's security officer, Chad Carlin, will be on the avenue, especially near the busy Market Hall/BART intersection.

We also have assistance from OPD: a walking officer on College Avenue.

RDA Manager Chris Jackson will help coordinate security services for the district.

Happy Holidays to all from the RDA.



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Queen Anne light purple print: $95; plush burgundy: $450. Both excellent condition. 510/658-9530. janebcal@yahoo.com.



Retired Teacher Looking to Rent

...for one year or more in Rockridge area. References. Michele, 510/547-4791.

Piano Lessons in Rockridge

Patient, experienced teacher with B.A. in Music and 18 years' experience. Jazz, pop, classical, ear training, technique, music theory, improvisation. All ages and levels. Janet. 510/653-6783.

Mills Grad Student Seeks Rental or Housesitting

Mature and trustworthy Mills College graduate student is seeking a furnished bedroom and private bath to rent or housesitting opportunity in Rockridge area. Please contact Sarah Ellis at 510/604-2994.

Shopping? Find it in Oakland!





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**. among participating partners are the Asian Art Museum, the Aquarium, Exploratorium, Oakland Museum Cal Shakespeare Theater, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.***

FOR CHILDREN

- **Family Story Time:** Stories/songs/rhymes (to age 5); every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** (ages 2 to 5); every Thurs, 10:30am.
- **Toddler Story Time:** (up to age 2); every Thurs, 10:30am, upstairs.

All story times followed by Play Time; parents and caregivers invited.

Special Event:

Winter Gift-making – Sewing Felt Creatures: Make an ornament, toy or pocket snuggly for someone special. Saturday, 12/8, 3:30 to 5pm. Best for ages 5 to12 (if under 7, bring a grown-up).

FOR TEENS

- **Teen Advisory Board:** (ages 14-18) Advise the library how to better serve teens. Get community service credit for school. Snacks provided. 1st Sat. each month, 1-2 pm. Confirm; Megan Kinney, 597-5017.
- **Rockridge Ninjas:** Watch and talk about Anime. 12/11 and 1/8 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

- **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. Note: No lawyer in Jan. (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:

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

Jan: **Oparna Ewing;** quilts by Oakland Quilt Group.

Lobby Display Case:

Dec: Kwanzaa display.

Jan: quilts by Oakland Quilt Group.

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: Sat., 12/22 through Tues., Jan1.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

No Dec Mtg. Next mtg. Jan 10, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs, 5366 College Ave. Confirm mtg. info at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.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 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.

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.

Ski & Snowboard Waxing Basics Class

Free class with expert technician will focus on base preparation, structure, major/minor repair, stone grinding and in-depth examination of how and why waxes work. Not necessary to bring personal equipment. 12/13, 7 to 8:30pm. **Call to sign up**. Berkeley REI, 1338 San Pablo Ave., 527- 4140.

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.

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. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot. More info about Certified Farmers' Markets at www.urbanvillageonline.com.

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