

THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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Sponsored by The Rockridge Community Planning Council • 5245 College Ave. PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94618 • 814-6060

agenda: RCPC General Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.

NOTE: Regular location, special start time!

Rockridge Branch Library
Community Room
5366 College Avenue (at Manila)

■ The Caldecott Tunnel Project and Other Traffic Issues

Review the current status and timeline of the Caldecott Improvement Project. Review and prioritize local traffic & pedestrian safety issues and add any newly identified concerns. See article at right and at bottom for details.

Caldecott Plan = Rockridge Gridlock?



Will another tunnel bore in the Caldecott complex worsen traffic problems in Rockridge?

PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

Traffic challenges for Rockridge

by Michael Whitfield, Chair, RCPC
Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Committee

The impact on Rockridge of the Caldecott Improvement Project is at the

top of a list of traffic issues that will be discussed at the Rockridge Community Planning Council's January 23 meeting.

The Caldecott Improvement Project, in particular the addition of a fourth bore, presents the most significant long-term challenge to traffic flow and capacity in Rockridge. CalTrans is currently gathering public input on its proposals for the area (see box at bottom of page). The decisions that follow could lead to mind-numbing "gridlock" in Rockridge in the not too distant future.

That project and a variety of other traffic safety issues are on the agenda of the newly reorganized RCPC Traffic and Pedestrian Safety (T&PS) Committee.

Now chaired by Michael Whitfield, newly appointed RCPC Board Member,

Brunner Meeting Hosts Top Crimebusters

by Susan Montauk

OPD listed six armed and strong-armed robberies along College the second week of December. Lt. Green: "We have the tools to deal with the problems."

Oakland police stand ready to protect College Avenue pedestrians and shoppers despite voters' refusal in the last election to approve funding for an expansion of the understaffed Oakland Police Department, OPD leaders assured North Oakland residents recently.

Chief of Police Richard Word and Police Service Area 1 Lieutenant Lawrence Green met with residents at Councilmember Jane Brunner's December Advisory Meeting, describing strategies to curb a

CRIME MEET, PAGE 6

CALDECOTT, PAGE 3

CALDECOTT PLANNING: Hurry for Input at Final CalTrans Scoping Meeting

January 9 is the date of the last in a series of Public Scoping Meetings that CalTrans is holding to gather community feedback on its plans for the Caldecott Tunnel, including a possible fourth bore. The first was in Orinda on December 11, and the second was in downtown Oakland on December 12. The final meeting will be held

Thursday from 7 to 9 pm at Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd Street.

CalTrans has built a display that represents the overall approach, the options moving forward and their current thinking about the development needs of this transportation project from now through 2030.

The scoping feedback pro-

vided by individuals or the community at large (through RCPC) will be integrated into two reports on environmental impact required by federal and state law respectively. CalTrans will use these two reports to move the project forward through funding approval and construction. Residents will have one final opportunity to provide

feedback after Caltrans has completed the option screening and evaluation phase and selects the project option it plans to implement.

RCPC urges Rockridge residents to stop by the CalTrans meeting on January 9, then bring their concerns to RCPC's General Meeting on January 23.



Around the Neighborhood

by Jacqueline Tasch, Editor, The Rockridge News

“Isn’t it interesting how Rockridge is being taken over by women between, say, 45 and 60?” my host says from the head of the dinner table, appearing not at all dismayed by this situation.

It’s easy to see how he drew his conclusion: three out of five people at the table were women between, say, 45 and 60—one of them being his wife. But is Rockridge being taken over, demographically or otherwise? As a former newspaper journalist, I think maybe I’ll look for some facts on the subject, so I head for my trusty laptop and check out the 2000 data on the U.S. Census Bureau’s website.

Like my friend’s dinner table assumption, a lot of our ideas about the neighborhood may depend on where we go and who we see. Rockridge is 77% white, 5% Hispanic, and 5% African American, but you wouldn’t think so if you shop in Safeway or Albertson’s. One coffee shop is full of students bent silently over laptops and books, the next has clusters of folks over 40, engaged in conversation.

On College Avenue at midafternoon, the place can seem overrun with young mothers and tots in arms or strollers. In fact, only 22% of Rockridge households include children under 18, compared to 40% of California households, and Rockridge has fewer children under 19—about 17% of our population and 30% of the state’s population.

It turns out that about 34% of Rockridge households are occupied by a single person (at least until the Census legitimizes cats and dogs), compared to only 23% of California households. If you think that’s all students from Berkeley, consider that Rockridge has about the same percentage of people in the 19 to 34 range as the rest of California. We also have about the same percentage of people over 65 years old.

Which brings us back to my neighbor’s playful assertion at the dinner table. It appears that the Rockridge population bubble—at least in comparison to the rest of California—is indeed in middle age. Nearly 25 percent of the population is between 45 and 60, and slightly more than half the people in Rockridge are women. That means 12.5 percent of Rockridge residents are “women of a certain age.” In California as a whole, the same math would give us about 8.5 percent middle-aged women.

If we stretch his age range a bit, nearly two-thirds of Rockridge’s population is between 35 and 60, compared to less than half of the state’s population. Why, we could rename the place Boomerland. Or not.

At this point I’m pretty impressed with my neighbor. Either he’s taken time off from being a geologist to poke around the Census Bureau’s website, or he’s so attuned to his social environment he should be employed at some think tank. So I look further. My neighbors and I live in Census Tract 4002, which has slightly fewer families with children but about the same balance of men and women and people 45 to 60 years old as the rest of Rockridge, and about the same percentage of people living alone.

It turns out that my street—Ross Street and Ross Circle—is Census Block 1006. There’s very little data available at this smallest level of analysis, but it does say that of 13 households on the street, 9 are inhabited by people 45 and older.

So, demographically speaking, it looks like my neighbor may not be entirely wrong in asserting that women between 45 and 60 are taking over the neighborhood. As for whether we’re taking over in other respects, I think that’s obvious.

Like my friend’s dinner table assumption, a lot of our ideas about the neighborhood may depend on where we go and who we see.

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SEE COMMUNITY CALENDAR, PAGE 15,
FOR LIBRARY PROGRAM DETAILS.

THE RockridgeNews

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

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

Contact us at one of the following addresses or telephone numbers:

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www.rockridge.org

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NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES

Publication date of the next issue is

February 8, 2003;

February deadline is January 23.

Advertising rates are \$22/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. To advertise, call Lauri Scharber at 655-2196. (RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate.)

Surprise! Rockridge Is a Great Place to Live

For those readers who need to see it in print before they believe it, the word is now official: Rockridge is a great place to live.

So says *Money* magazine, whose editors started by identifying the 10 cities people love to live *near*. To do this, they measured population growth since 1990 and something they called the “housing premium ratio”—in other words, how much of their income people were willing to fork over to live someplace. San Francisco (not Oakland) made this list.

Then reporters scoured each area for “attractive streetscapes, good schools, community spirit, and plentiful recreation.” Given those criteria, you can see how Rockridge came to mind. The magazine describes it as a “bucolic, tree-shaded area, but pricier [than Montclair] because it straddles the border with Berkeley.”

Although Oakland was ignored in all this, Mayor Jerry Brown issued a press release calling Oakland “the best-kept secret in the Bay Area” and “a fabulous place to live.” Obviously, the second part is true, but if it’s such a big secret, how did some East Coast magazine figure it out?

So what does it all mean? Very little to a real estate market that’s already hot. A quick and extremely unscientific survey of a few local Realtors suggests that while the magazine may have some impact on folks in other parts of the country planning long-distance moves, the Bay Area is already well-informed about Rockridge’s attractiveness. There’s no room for an influx of new residents because just about all of the seats are taken.

And we’ve got ‘em.



Thanks, Claire! Best Wishes

New future awaits retiring *Rockridge News* editor

by Glen Tripp, Chair, RCPC

If you’ve read *The Rockridge News* over the past year, you’ve been a beneficiary of the rare talents of Editor Claire Isaacs. Claire stepped down as Editor of *The Rockridge News* last month and will spend her time pursuing interests in the arts and traveling with her husband, Bill.

Claire joined the *News* and the RCPC board in Fall 2001 shortly after moving to Rockridge. It was immediately clear to all involved that her skills extended well beyond journalism. As long-time board member Theresa Nelson said, Claire’s “talent as an editor and writer was clear from the start, but it was her experience in the nonprofit world and in working with public agencies that really brought a special depth to her work. It was a great pleasure to work with her!”

Production Editor Don Kinkead echoed Nelson’s praise, saying that, “Claire was a warm, dynamic, intense editor with a multitude of interests. Her social conscience was always evident in her discussion of the newsletter and its mission in the neighborhood.”

The RCPC Board thanks Claire for her service on behalf of Rockridge and *The Rockridge News*. Her decision to dive so deeply into the community so soon after arriving serves as an inspirational model for all. We look forward to the impact of her energy unfolding in other ways.

Caldecott

from page 1

the Committee’s task is to identify, assess and work to improve traffic flow, system capacity, levels of service and parking issues that impact our community. New attention will also be focused on escalating pedestrian safety issues.

For example, the RCPC Traffic Report of June 22, 2001 identified the pedestrian crosswalks located at Broadway/Lawton and Claremont/Chabot as high risk. Due to high traffic speeds and the width of both of these arterial roadways, using these crosswalks poses potential dangers, especially for children and older residents. Both crosswalks need

to be upgraded to enhance safety.

Of regional concern is the current Caldecott Improvement Project plan, which lacks any traffic volume, noise or safety remediation plans for Rockridge. Once the current scoping phase of this project is completed, area residents will no longer have an opportunity to speak out about the community’s needs. Given a very short window of opportunity to respond to the CalTrans scoping study, RCPC plans to use this time to gather community feedback and submit recommendations to CalTrans prior to the January 30, 2003, deadline.

Participating in this process will ensure that your viewpoint and feedback is heard. RCPC is coordinating its efforts with the North Hills Phoenix Association, the cities of Oakland and Berkeley and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency.

If you have any T&PS concerns or issues you wish raised, email Michael at michaeljwhitfield@hotmail.com.

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Oakland Parks Coalition Seeks Stewards to Monitor Parks

by Susan Montauk

Oakland's parks and median strips are in sorry condition, the community-based Oakland Parks Coalition found in a survey last year. Now the group is looking for resident volunteers to monitor those green spaces and report problems.

Last February and again in July, 2002, volunteers surveyed the condition of hundreds of Oakland parks, recreational areas, public ways and median strips. Their directions came from the Oakland Parks Coalition, formed in 2001 by Gillian Garro and Audrey Jones-Taylor to implement "new standards of excellence for the maintenance and programming of our parks."

The survey revealed that parks and play areas in Oakland are in dire need of maintenance and upgrading. The Coalition's park status report convinced City Council members of the urgent need to provide extra resources for park maintenance. Given budget constraints, the Council could only shuffle money within the Department of Parks and Recreation for extra personnel to clear garbage. The Department itself remains understaffed, and existing

employees would benefit from motivational support, improved communication, regular training opportunities and a system of greater accountability to upgrade the quality and efficiency of work.

The Coalition is seeking volunteers to steward each park and, eventually, each median strip in Oakland. They would survey their assigned park three times

a year beginning in February 2003 and monitor its condition between surveys. Training for stewards will be offered the first Saturday in February.

Parks and Recreation Manager Jim Ryugo is working with the Coalition to develop a system for stewards to report problems directly to city staff.

Citizens who are interested in becoming a steward of a favorite North Oakland public area may consult the following list of unclaimed parks and median strips.

Call or email the North Oakland, District One Coalition Captain Susan Montauk to volunteer: 547-3855 or smontauk@juno.com

Support an Unclaimed Park or Median Strip:

51st Street Median
51st Street Public Way
63rd Street Median
Aileen Street Median
BART Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Bayo Vista/Harrison Median
Bayo Vista/Oakland Median
Brandon Street Median
Driver Plaza Park (Stanford & Adeline St)
MacGregor Park (West Street & 52nd St)
Ostrander Park
Ostrander Road Median
Piedmont Plaza Park
Pleasant Valley Median
Ridgeway/Gilbert Median Island
Rockridge / Broadway Median
Rockridge Park
Santa Clara Ave / MacArthur Blvd Median
Stanford Street Median
Temescal Creek Park

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Newly Constructed Fire Station 8 Opens Ahead of Schedule

by Jacqueline Hoepfner-Freitas,
Chair, DMV Neighbors Association

Rockridge and the rest of North Oakland got an early Christmas present: The new Fire Station 8 opened almost a month ahead of schedule. On December 21, eight firefighters, Fire Engine No. 8 and Ladder Truck No. 5 were on call again at 463-51st Street above Telegraph Avenue—less than a year after the old station at that site was demolished.

"This is probably the fastest you'll ever see a fire station go up," said Rob Lim, Project Management Division Manager and Project Director of the Station 8 job for the City of Oakland Public Works Agency. This was also the first time in the City's history that the City utilized the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) approach to construction, a method well known to the private sector, he said. Swinerton Builders, the CM/GC, had guaranteed a completion date of January 18, 2003.

Four firefighters per shift who were deployed elsewhere during 2002 have returned to North Oakland with fire engine No. 8. In addition, four firefighters per shift returned to Station 8 with Ladder Truck No. 5 from temporary quarters at Station 19 on Miles Avenue near the Rockridge BART Station.

The reopening of Station 8 provides a happy ending to a rocky episode in the history of relations between North Oakland residents and city government. The dispute began when the City Council voted in June 2001 to remove all Station 8 firefighters from North Oakland and place 8's Ladder Truck and Engine in storage for as long as it took to rebuild the station. Area residents protested strenuously. In a compromise reached in December 2001, the City Council reversed itself and temporarily retained four of the eight firefighters and Ladder Truck No. 5 at Station 19.

Councilmember Jane Brunner began monitoring response times once Station 8 shut down and forwarded that information to activists in North Oakland. As a result of the firefighter deployment, response times in 2002 were not as good as they would normally be. Steve Splendorio, President, International Association of Firefighters, Local 55, noted: "Response times have



The new Fire Station 8 evokes memories of firehouses of the past while incorporating state of the art equipment. Above: Ladder Truck 5 leaves for a call. Right: Firefighters show their pleasure at being back in their own station.

PHOTOS: ABOVE: DON KINKEAD; RIGHT: LYDIA GANS



been generally 1- to 1-1/2 minutes more. We've been fortunate that no fires have gotten out of hand because of the increased response times. It appears to have worked out for this time frame." Oakland Fire Chief Gerald Simon said he was "pleased with response times... and looking forward to getting back to even better response times."

City Councilmember Jane Brunner recently expressed gratitude for the community's efforts. "I wish to thank the activists who were dedicated to making the firefighters stay in the area during construction and pushing the administration to get the station open as quickly as possible," she said.

And quick it was. Construction took less than 10 months, whereas many skeptics, including this writer, predicted that it would take one to two years to complete the job. How was the job done so quickly?

The City placed the rebuilding of Station 8 on a fast track. In place of the usual competitive bidding process, the City Council passed Resolution No. 76780 in October 2001, authorizing the awarding of a professional services agreement to Swinerton for CM/GC services. The rationale was the need to expedite construction to minimize the disruption of fire services to this area. Swinerton was thus authorized to handle the bidding process and most other aspects of the job. The old building was demolished in March 2002, and building got under way in April.

Marlene Moncada, Swinerton Builders Project Manager, explained that the process involves bringing the General Contractor on early, before the architect — in this case, Shah Kawasaki Architects — begins the process of finalizing the designs. This leads to early CM/GC input and a nonlinear approach to construction. For example, under the CM/GC approach, Station 8's foundation was under construction before the rest of the building was fully designed. Such a method allowed costs and availability of builders and materials to be evaluated early before the design was set, saving time and money.

Besides being finished ahead of schedule, the project also came in under budget, said the City of Oakland's Rob Lim, and it was built with attractive quality features which the community will appreciate: The building is energy efficient, has other green elements, is architecturally interesting and modern, provides double the square footage for the firefighters, and contains local artwork and a community room for the use of North Oakland citizens. Some of the special features were influenced by community input early on from Temescal artist-historian Jeff Norman, among others.

A formal dedication of Station 8 will take place January 24, according to Deputy Fire Chief Ron Carter. At that time, North Oakland can celebrate the welcome return of all our firefighters and thank the construction team for their efforts.

Crime Meet

from page 1

recent increase in violent crimes and the spike in holiday season criminal activity “North Oakland is quite safe,” Lieutenant Green assured the audience. “We have the tools to deal with the problems.” Less reassuring are recent data regarding robberies along College Avenue. OPD listed six armed and strong-armed robberies in the area in the second week of December.

“Unfortunately, Temescal, Rockridge, Piedmont and Montclair are robbery destinations for criminals,” Lieutenant Green acknowledged. “Robbers often come into these nice areas because of their perception that this is where the rich people are. We’ve had a number of robbers tell us this.”

To deter such activity, Rockridge received some extra coverage during the holiday period from both the police department and Rockridge merchants. OPD Officer Michael Weisenberg was assigned to fill in for Walking Beat Officer A. J. Frye, who has been out with an injury for several months. The Rockridge District Association hired two holiday security guards to patrol College Avenue from the Berkeley border to Broadway.

In the best of worlds, Chief Word would like to see at least 50 new officers hired and assigned to the highly effective Crime Reduction Team units, but he also recognizes the need to invest in crime prevention programs, a need that was hammered home to him by some city officials and citizens while the Chief was promoting Measure FF before the election.

Measure FF, which would have added 100 officers to the department, was

Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Begins Safety Patrol

In December volunteers began patrolling College Avenue during evening hours, helping to make the streets safer for residents returning from work. Persons interested in joining these patrols should call OPD Neighborhood Service Coordinator Angela Davis-Lincoln at 510/777-8720.



supported by 53% of the voters in the November election. However, it could not be implemented without the accompanying ballot tax measures GG, HH and II, which were defeated perhaps because voters found them confusing. Although OPD is almost fully staffed at 777 officers, the department is considerably smaller than those in many cities of comparable size (e.g., Miami, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, St. Louis).

Chief Word also supports strengthening pre-release programs that offer convicts counseling in anger management and substance abuse and provide job training and job search assistance. One study indicates a recidivism rate of only 20% for those who participate in such programs; about 70% of those who have no counseling return to prison. The Chief also cited San Francisco’s Delancey Street as a model

post-release program. Chief Word has the strong backing of the mayor on these priorities, and they are working together to develop new funding for measure FF for the next ballot.

Meantime, the OPD’s crime-fighting resources will remain limited for the foreseeable future. Without the additional officers, the department has taken a three-pronged approach to the current crime problem according to Chief Word:

- The partnership of OPD with neighborhood lawyers from the City Attorney’s office and code enforcement officers from CEDA to crack down on code enforcement (“Where there’s grime there’s crime.”);

- The deployment of special Crime Reduction Teams in a citywide violence suppression project;

- Restoration of the Beat Health Unit to gather information on drug activity.

ROCKRIDGE CRIME ALERT HOTLINE
Dial 814-2255 (814-CALL) to report suspicious activity to the RCPC Crime Alert Hotline and to hear weekly updates on crime in Rockridge.

Email your reports to:

rcpc_crime_hotline@yahoo.com.

Subscribe to weekly emailed Hotline updates at: <http://seg.support.net:81/guest/RemoteListSummary/Rockridge>.

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- Save credit card receipts and match them to your monthly statements;
- Shred unused applications, receipts, bills and financial statements;
- Never give personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call;
- Make a copy of the documents in your wallet and keep in a safe place.

If you discover any unauthorized transactions on your accounts, immediately advise your financial institutions of your suspicions. In addition:

- Contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to see if another license was issued in your name.
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ROCKRIDGE RESIDENT

ROCKRIDGE CRIME REPORT

Rockridge Area Crimes Reported to OPD

Report Period: 11/18/02 - 12/15/02

by Neil Getz

11/20/02....	Petty Theft.....	Florio & Auburn
	Theft: Personal Property.....	B'way & Napa
11/21/02....	Burglary: Residential.....	James (Clifton - Cavour)
11/22/02....	Burglary: Commercial	College (Lawton - Ocean View)
	Theft: Personal Property.....	66 St. & Telegraph
11/22/02....	Burglary: Auto.....	Desmond & 51 St.
11/24/02....	Robbery	College (Ocean View - Lawton)
	Burglary: Commercial	College & Harwood
	Vehicle Theft.....	James & Clifton
	Vehicle Theft.....	Taft (College - B'way)
11/26/02....	Burglary: Auto.....	Whitmore (Gilbert - B'way)
	Burglary: Auto.....	65 St. & Dana
11/27/02....	Vehicle Theft.....	Claremont (College - Auburn)
	Theft: Personal Property.....	College (Birch - Miles)
	Grand Theft	Coronado (49 St. - 51 St.)
11/29/02....	Robbery	Lawton (College - McMillan)
	Burglary: Auto.....	Ross (Miles - Chabot)
12/1/02....	Petty Theft: Shoplift	Telegraph (50 St. - 51 St.)
	Burglary: Residential.....	Boyd (Clifton - Hudson)
	Burglary: Auto.....	66 St. & Telegraph
	Burglary: Auto.....	Claremont (Clarke - Telegraph)
12/2/02....	Burglary: Commercial	College & Lawton
12/4/02....	Petty Theft: Auto Accessory.....	Harwood (Auburn - College)
	Theft: Personal Property [Over \$400]	Miles (Clifton - Cavour)
12/5/02....	Petty Theft: Shoplift	Telegraph (Alcatraz - North)
	Burglary: Commercial	College (Birch - Miles)
12/6/02....	Vehicle Theft.....	Ocean View (College - McMillan)
	Vehicle Theft.....	B'way & Lawton
	Vehicle Theft.....	B'way & Lawton
12/7/02....	Burglary: Auto.....	Alcatraz & Colby
12/8/02....	Burglary: Residential.....	49 St. (Manila - Lawton)
	Burglary: Residential.....	Lawton (51 St. - Cavour)
12/9/02....	Burglary: Commercial	College (Lawton - Ocean View)
	Burglary: Residential.....	Alcatraz (Colby - Dana)
12/10/02....	Robbery	College & Keith
	Attempted Robbery.....	Oak Grove & College
12/11/02....	Vehicle Theft.....	Dana & Alcatraz
12/12/02....	Robbery	College & 63 St.
	Petty Theft: Shoplift	B'way (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Petty Theft w/Prior for	
	Theft/Burglary/Robbery.....	B'way (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Robbery	College & Claremont
	Burglary: Residential.....	Alcatraz (Telegraph - Dana)
	Vehicle Theft.....	College (Lawton - Taft)
12/14/02....	Attempted Burglary: Auto	Claremont & Hillegass
	Burglary: Auto.....	Claremont (Forest - Martin)
12/15/02....	Burglary: Residential.....	Shafter (Clifton - Cavour)

Dial 911 to report crimes and suspicious activity in progress.

(Cell phone users in Oakland, call 777-3211 for 911 service.)

REMEMBER: If you don't report it, it didn't happen.

Rockridge Library Friends Assemble Music Collection

by Marilyn Citron, Chair,
Friends of the Rockridge Library

In the coming year, Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) will be building a comprehensive music collection for the library representing the last 500 years—and perhaps even earlier periods—thanks to a generous donation. Making the selections will be the task of a music subcommittee, consisting of Kevin Flynn, Treasurer, and Marilyn Citron, Chair of FORL, with an array of local experts.

"I am an all-day listener of KDRC," said Mr. Flynn. After he learned that radio host Dianne Niccolini is an Oakland resident (although not Rockridge), he contacted her and she agreed to help out. David Abel and Julie Steinberg "are neighbors in Rockridge and well-known performers in their field," he says, being musicians in residence at Mills College and two thirds of the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio. A college friend of Flynn, Diane Nolting is a harpsichordist and librarian who has degrees in music and library science.

Ms. Nolting has provided lists from



Dianne Niccolini, standing, David Abel, and Julie Steinberg met recently to discuss a new classical music collection for the Rockridge Library.

PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

other library collections. The committee plans to begin from a consolidated "short" list and expand from there. Flynn recently did a quick inventory of the library's available titles and "was pleased to find out that the library already has an excellent collection of opera" donated by another FORL member.

The next FORL meeting will be in January, and the music subcommittee will meet again in February or March.

Face the Music

If you would like to donate to the Rockridge Library's classical music collection, send your contributions to: Friends of the Rockridge Library, 5245 College Avenue #311, Oakland CA 94618.

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2002 Sales in Rockridge Up 9% Over 2001

Address	List Price	Selling Price	Close Date
511 Forest	\$499,000	\$505,000	11/05/02
5509 Taft	\$539,000	\$640,000	11/19/02
6732 Manor Crest	\$575,000	\$625,000	11/22/02
5270 Locksley	\$539,000	\$532,000	11/26/02
5236 James	\$525,000	\$598,000	11/27/02
5663 Miles	\$650,000	\$675,000	12/03/02
4975 Desmond	\$429,000	\$435,000	12/05/02
5733 Ross	\$789,000	\$737,000	12/06/02
5799 Country Club	\$965,000	\$930,000	12/06/02
6016 Chaboly	\$949,000	\$975,000	12/12/02
5645 Broadway	\$533,000	\$560,000	12/20/02

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Rockridge Sales volume is down 23% (97 homes sold in 2002 vs. 119 in 2001)
Median price of a home in Rockridge is up 9% (\$625,000 in 2002 vs. \$575,000 in 2001)

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A Prevention Oriented Practice

Long-Time Rockridge Resident Has an Ideal Job

All recycling, all the time

by Lydia Gans

There comes a time in life when we get tired of acquiring stuff and start getting rid of it. That started happening to Julie Clark, artist, decorator, collector, 39-year Rockridge resident. She had her own business designing displays and special effects for trade shows. She recalls her first jobs were window displays at what was then the John A. Brown Kitchenware on the corner of Harwood and College and at Star Grocery on Claremont Avenue. Though she's not in business any more, she has a house and garden full of all sorts of intriguing, beautiful, strange, and rather useless objects — everything from baskets of trinkets to a larger than life sized statue of an Indian — left over from her days as a decorator.

About five years ago, she says, she decided she had to find a way to dispose of things. She contacted the *East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse*, a marvelous place that provides a way to recycle — creatively reuse — all sorts of materials that would otherwise end up in landfills. *East Bay Depot* not only accepted her donations but recruited her to help. She started as a driver, cleaner, organizer and is now on staff as the general manager.

The *East Bay Depot* at 6713 San Pablo, just south of Ashby, is a place to visit, to donate to, to shop at, to volunteer to work for. It is filled with decorative objects,

Rockridge resident Julie Clark wound up as general manager of the *East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse* when her original intent had been merely to donate some intriguing trinkets she had around the house.

PHOTO: LYDIA GANS



art supplies, paper, boxes, jars, candles, scraps of wood, leather, fabrics, yarns, the list goes on and on and on. Julie's daughter, Nikola, who is assistant general manager and works at soliciting donations from businesses, gives an example of palettes of beautiful candles that were recently donated. Julie talks about what a great place it is to shop. "Bring your children in: instead of going into the chain drug store to buy \$10 worth of stuff, they can come to *East Bay Depot* — kids love it." And that \$10 can buy an amazing lot of fascinating stuff!

East Bay Depot, which is a nonprofit, runs several interesting off-site programs. Julie describes some: "Project Create goes into schools and works with teachers, Art in the Heart goes into some schools for afterschool kids' programs. Madame

Ovary started doing festivals, fairs, special events; Yearly Trash to Treasures, an art competition and exhibit; a new project called Street Chic (pronounced Sheik), taking old pieces and redoing them, which recently showed in Walnut Creek and was a huge success."

For the many school and community activities as well as all the aspects of running the store, *East Bay Depot* has a tremendous need for volunteers. Julie talks about the rewards of volunteering there, the interesting people, teachers, artists, and community folks who come into the store as well as the wonderful people who work there, the great variety of jobs that need to be done and intriguing objects to deal with, "And after awhile," Julie declares, "you'll never want to take anything home again."

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Valentines Day Party Will Honor Rockridge News Delivery Team!



In rain or shine *The Rockridge News* has been delivered to over 5,000 residences and College Avenue merchants since 1986. One hundred fifty volunteers make up the stalwart delivery network and the Rockridge Community Planning Council, publishers of *The Rockridge News*, wishes to thank them and their families with an invitation to our February 15 *Rockridge News* Valentine Party (look for an invitation in the mail in late January and remember to RSVP).

Volunteers responded in record numbers to the December call for block captains to deliver the newsletter to vacated routes. Many thanks to those who volunteered! The list at right has some new routes and some old ones. If you have an extra half-hour a month to devote to your community, please give us a call or an email and mention the route along with your name, address, phone (and email if you have one). Call Susan at 547-3855 or smontauk@juno.com

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FAIRVIEW PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

(generally located north of Alcatraz Avenue, south of Woolsey Street, east of Telegraph Avenue, and west of Hillegass Avenue)

Proposal: To rezone approximately 196 parcels, comprising approximately 26-1/2 acres of land, from the R-40 Garden Apartment Residential Zone/S-18 Mediated Residential Design Review Combining Zone to the R-35 Special One-Family Residential Zone/S-18 Mediated Residential Design Review Combining Zone.

Applicant: City of Oakland
Owner: Various

DISTRICT CAPTAIN NEEDED for 14A,B,C:
Deliver three bundles to Desmond, Coronado and Hemphill Streets.

BLOCK CAPTAINS NEEDED

(Parenthesis refer to number of drops.)

- #14B: (34) Both sides of Desmond between Coronado and 51st, and 51st from Broadway to Coronado;
- #14C: (27) Both sides of Coronado from 51st to Desmond;
- #03C: (23) Eucalyptus both sides from 32-100;
- #06A: (44) From Ocean View at Margarido to top of Ocean View;
- #06E: (?) Margarido (6000 block);
- #06H: (60) Alpine Terrace, Manchester.

Planning Permits Required: RezoneHistoric Status: Area contains a large number of Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHP). No development proposed with this application.

Case Planner: Andrew M. Smith at 238-6414.

5823 ROSS STREET

Proposal: To construct an upper-story addition to an existing single-family dwelling.

Applicant/Owner: Laura Zuckerman & Kirk McInnis

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review for a residential addition resulting in a total floor area of greater than 3,500 square feet.

Case Planner: Anne Clevenger at 238-6980.

5405 THOMAS AVENUE

Proposal: To construct a second story addition and infill an existing deck and entry of an existing single-family dwelling.

Applicant/Owner:

Planning Permits Required: Minor Variance to build within the required sideyard (5'-0" required; 0'-6" proposed); and Special Residential Design Review for a residential addition.

Case Planner: Chris Candell at 238-6986.

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Rockridge Neighborhood Watch Network Seeks Volunteers to Help Connect Neighbors

You can be part of the solution to combating crime in your neighborhood. Volunteer as a block captain for the Rockridge Neighborhood Watch Network. The project aims to connect all of Rockridge in an email network. Thirty-six blocks are already connected in the eight geographical sectors and the network is being used to broadcast crime incidents and suspicious behavior reports. Here's how to connect to the Network:

Log on to www.rockridge.org and click on Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council on the left side of the opening screen. Then click on Watch Network from the menu bar. Scroll down to the Block Captain list and follow directions below:

To Volunteer as a Block Captain.

Anyone wishing to volunteer as Block Captain should first check the posted list to see if your block is listed. Then email the Network Coordinator (smontauk@juno.com) with your full name, block (state the block boundaries, please) and address. Instructions on how to proceed will follow.

To Contact your Block Captain

If your Block Captain is listed and you wish to join the network you can do it with an email to the Network Coordinator. Name your block/Block Captain in your email and your reason for contacting him or her. Your email will be forwarded.

To Obtain Updated Block Captain Sector Lists

If you are already on the Block Captain list and need an updated email list for your sector, contact the Network Coordinator via smontauk@juno.com

Rockridge Kitchen Renovation in Progress



PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

Fall Tour Wants Renovated Rockridge Kitchens



by Natalie Mehta, Tour Volunteer

The Rockridge Kitchen Tour committee is gathering a list of renovated kitchens to consider for the 2003 tour. Past tours have featured a variety of styles including bungalow, traditional, and contemporary. If you or someone you know is putting the "final" touches on a kitchen remodel or is already enjoying a completed renovation, please let us know! Submissions may be directed to Susan Montauk at 547-3855 or smontauk@juno.com.

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Olive Oil: Selection Abounds on College Avenue

Is a bottle of EVOO really worth \$25 to \$35? It depends on whether you're planning to cook, dress, or simply drizzle.

EVOO, you see, is extra virgin olive oil: the highest quality oil, with less than 1% acidity. It's free from defects (rancid or musty elements) and scores positively for other flavor characteristics (grassy, fruity, buttery, bitter). You can also buy virgin, pure virgin or lampante olive oil, but I wouldn't recommend it.

Are all EVOOs equal? Not on your life. It's about taste, quality, and freshness.

Taste

The taste of olive oil (like wine) is defined by the varietal of the olives (or grapes) as well as the climate and soil condition. Oil from Mission olives tastes different than oil from Picholine olives, and Picholine olive oil will vary in taste depending on whether the olives are grown in southern France or California.

Harvest time (usually November through February) also makes a difference. Early harvested green olives give the oil a grassy, herbaceous and sometimes peppery taste and a greener color. Fully ripened olives give a beautiful golden hue and a more buttery and nutty flavor to the oil. Olives harvested in between produce oils with a milder, fruity note. Some suggestions for using each kind appear with this article.

Quality

The International Olive Oil Council sets the standards for olive oils, but not in the United States. However, more than 95% of America's 300 or so olive growers, producers and companies are in California.

In 1992, the California Olive Oil Council was established to raise U.S. standards and provide consumers with better and more consistently graded oil.

Freshness Counts

Olives oxidize and ferment faster than grapes so time is of the essence when it comes to harvesting and crushing. The freshest oil is processed from olives that are picked and crushed within two days or less. In Italy, EVOOs are labeled and sold with a harvest date. In the United States, this is not common practice. Some boutique olive oil makers are starting to date their EVOOs, following the Italians, just as California vineyards looked to Europe when they sought international respect.

It's no wonder then that California's olive industry is starting to resemble our wine industry in the late 1960s/early 1970s. Many new varietals of olive trees have been planted, and the quality of California EVOOs is starting to be quite competitive with oils from Italy, Greece and Spain.

Advice

Buy at least two bottles of olive oil, one for cooking and one for drizzling and dressing. You should use oil only in the year that it was harvested and bottled—and within two or three months of opening the bottle.

You can find reasonably priced extra virgin olive oils in chain grocery stores, and these less expensive EVOOs are fine to use for cooking. Heat destroys the taste of olive oil so it's best to use the expensive oils for "drizzling and dressing" dishes at the end of the cooking process.

For the dress and drizzle EVOOs, your

best bet is to buy from a reputable vendor. For example, the Pasta Shop in Rockridge carries over 50 EVOOs from Europe and the United States and is a strong supporter of local growers and producers. Many of the oils are available for tasting. Or visit Oliveto to taste the magic they're doing with the 2002 Early Harvest McEvoy Ranch Extra Virgin Olive Oil on fabulous dishes.

Why not have a tasting in your own kitchen? Try the oils with different recipes and enjoy!

Lulu Yang

Executive Chef — Lulu's Kitchen

Contact Lulu at 510/520.6397 or visit her website at www.LulusKitchen.com.

Try These Olive Oil Treasures

Early Harvest (green, grassy, peppery, herbaceous) oil is best drizzled over soups, pastas, grilled or steamed vegetables or risotto. Or grill a slice of sour batard bread, rub on some garlic, sprinkle with sea salt, drizzle the bread generously with this oil and serve immediately. If you want to "take it up a notch," top the bread with fresh tomatoes, grilled onions, grilled mushrooms, pesto sauce, artichoke puree and anything else you like.

Fruity olive oils are best for salads and marinades, complementing the ingredients in a dish without dominating them. Coat lamb chops in a fruity olive oil and a squeeze of Meyer lemon juice, then rub with a mix of minced fresh rosemary, ground pepper and sea salt. Let sit for at least an hour and either broil or grill.

Late Harvest (Buttery, nutty) oils are best to use for the kinds of things you would use butter on, such as dipping steamed crab or lobster, or mashed or baked potatoes.

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Jan Carlisle
Administrative Assistant

Serrahna: Like Opening A Jewel Box

On a cold and rainy day, walking into Serrahna is like stepping into the film "Monsoon Wedding." The store is filled with jewel-bright colors, luxurious fabrics, enticing smells and traditional music, opening a window into the vibrant Indian culture.

Open since last summer, Serrahna is the dream of Andrea Serrahn, owner and designer of most of the clothes in the store. After years of globetrotting and work in costume design, she fell in love with Indian fabrics and colors and was awarded one of the very rare individual artist Fulbright scholarships to study traditional textiles in Gujarat. The scholarship allowed her to stay in India and work with masters of Indian tie-and-dye and block printing and to refine her own design work. For years, she's been selling her work in specialty galleries in New York, Santa Fe, Vienna and London. Now she's able to bring it all together in her own store.

The store's name comes from Andrea's own surname, but it also means "to be a queen" in Hindi. Any woman dressed in clothing from Serrahna will certainly feel like a queen, surrounded by luscious fabrics in gorgeous colors that brighten both everyday and specialty occasion wardrobes. Most of the clothing in the store is of Andrea's own design, and she also carries handmade items from some local and Indian designers as well.

One special item is her own line of deconstructed/reconstructed sweaters and hats, made in the rear of the store. Andrea cuts apart old sweaters and Indian fabrics and puts them together in clever color combinations. For someone who likes

THE NEIGHBORHOOD MERCHANT

BY THERESA NELSON

Serrahna Custom Designs in Clothing

unique and one-of-a-kind clothing, this is a treasure trove. As Andrea noted, "What makes these items so special and exotic is that they are made by hand in traditional methods, but with a contemporary fashion feel. I personally appreciate anyone who does things with their hands as an artist, and these are the kinds of clothing and accessories I offer at Serrahna."

One favorite item is the Angelica coat, with small angel-wings on the sleeves and covered with small Indian mirror work in star patterns. An iridescent dress in gold, green and teal would be perfect for a special evening, covered with its matching shrug. The shawl-collared coats and Moghul-style jackets are lined with old saris, making each one as exciting inside as it is outside. Her popular skirts are bias cut in back to shape perfectly to a real woman's figure. The silk pants feature hand-stitching on the lower legs and go perfectly with the silk side-cinched dresses. Teens and young women especially like the semi-translucent wrap tops in soft cotton trimmed in metallic fabric, perfect over a tank top. Andrea also offers shirts for men in hand-loomed cotton and silk in a variety of beautiful colors.

The accessories are equally creative: hand-beaded bags in silver, blue and black, key chains featuring oversize beads in amber and coral, and pillows with incredible mirror work, beadwork and stitching. And, of course, jewelry: from inexpensive slender bangles by the half-dozen to stunning semi-precious stones in a variety of earrings, necklaces, rings and bracelets.

This is the place to come if you love scarves, one my very favorite accessories. You can find literally every color of the rainbow and almost any fabric here, from silk organza stripes to crushed viscose. The tie-and-dye is not your basic 1960s tie-dye but rather an intensive process where each tiny pinpoint is hand-tied before multiple layers of dye are applied, yielding a stunning pointillist look. A



PHOTO: DON KINKADEE



Andrea Serrahn and some of her designs.

PHOTO: LYDIA GANS

shaded silk chiffon scarf features *mukesh*, a metal thread which is hand-stitched, tied, and then pounded with a hammer to make an undulating pattern of tiny gold dots.

Andrea decided to open Serrahna as a way to create an environment that honors the creative process and brings shoppers the feel of faraway lands. One wall features a large mural of interlocking pinwheels and stars in a Moorish tile pattern, and the walls are done in jewel tones and a soft curry color. Even the dressing rooms are topped with Taj Mahal-like finials, and green and brass obelisks frame the granite counter.

Located near Broadway, Serrahna is well worth the walk, and you'll be rewarded by feeling as though you've entered the luxurious and exotic world of the *maharani*, right on College Avenue.

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Psychotherapy can help you discover priorities, remove roadblocks, find new solutions, and yes, feel happier. Explore work issues, relationships, creative goals, self-esteem—you decide what's important. Jan Graham, MFT. 510/207-5402. MFC #35757.

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R N N E W S

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- Call the Breema Health & Wellness Center to schedule, 428-1234 Mon.-Sat. (Rockridge)
- Come to an Open House, Sunday January 12; call 428-0937 to reserve your place
- Drop in at the U.C. Berkeley Recreational Sports Facility on Jan. 15 or 23 between 11:00 and 6:00, 2301 Bancroft, 643-5151

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photo: Bruce Barrett

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Check Your...

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

E-mail Rockridge News Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210, or mail to: Rockridge News Community Calendar, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Public Meeting On Caldecott Tunnel/route 24

Thursday, Jan. 9, 7-9pm. Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd St. Information on proposed tunnel project: opportunity for public input on the scope of the environmental analysis. More information, Brigetta Smith, CalTrans Public Information Officer, at 510/231-7182

Under-BART Project Development Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 9, 7:30pm, Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph Ave., downstairs meeting room. Meet with City planners and BART project developers: share your vision for the future of the passageway under the Rockridge BART station. More info, Teresa at spn690@aol.com

District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner's Monthly Community Advisory Meeting

First Saturday each month, 10am to noon. Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., just east of Telegraph). NOTE: No January meeting. Meeting Topic for Sat., Feb. 1st: SENIOR NEEDS AND RESOURCES IN NORTH OAKLAND. Providers will present available programs and discuss how to make north Oakland more senior-friendly. More information: 238-7001 or www.oaklandnet.com.

Oakland City Council Meeting

Every Tuesday, 7pm, City Hall

Oakland Planning Commission

1st and 3rd Wednesday each month, 6:30pm, City Hall. Get agendas and details at www.oaklandnet.com.

Greater Rockridge Crime Prevention Council

Monthly steering committee meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 21,

7pm, Claremont Middle School, 5750 College Ave. Meet with Community Policing Officers to discuss issues of neighborhood crime and plan crime-fighting projects. More information, markspellman@yahoo.com

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Ave. NOTE: Library Closed: Wednesday, Jan. 1; Monday, Jan. 20 (MLK Birthday); Wednesday, Feb. 12 (Lincoln's Birthday); Monday, Feb. 17 (Presidents' Day)

FOR CHILDREN:

- Toddler Story Time on Saturday: 1/4, 1/11, 2/1, 2/8 at 10:30am
- Pre-School Story Hours on Tues.: 1/4, 1/21, 2/4, 2/18 at 10:30 and 11am
- Pajama Story Time on Wed.: 1/8, 1/22 at 7pm

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- "Tall Tales" Warrior team members read aloud at the library!: Thursday, Jan. 16th, 7pm
- "Dayo's Circle" will perform African music and dance: Wednesday, Feb. 5th, 7pm
- Make a Valentine's Day Pop-up Card: Thursday, Feb. 6th, 3:30 to 5:30pm

FOR YOUNG ADULTS:

- Teen Advisory Council meets 2nd Thursday each month, 3:30- 5:30pm, January 9th and February 13th

FOR ADULTS:

- Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice. First Thursday of each month from 6 to 8pm. Sign-up begins 5pm.

Library Hours: Mon. Tues. Sat. 10am to 5:30pm
Wed. Thurs. 12:30 to 8pm. Closed Fri. & Sun.
For more information call 597-5017

Diesel Books: Poetry Readings and Events

5433 College Ave. Events are free and open to the public.

- Diesel Book Group #2 Meeting

This month's selection: "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay" by Michael Chabon. Tuesday, Jan. 7, 7:30pm

- John Oliver Simon: "Caminante." This poetry reading will be filmed for use in an upcoming documentary. Wednesday, Jan. 8, 7:30pm

- Ascend School Students Reading. The students from Ascend School, after thorough research of the book publishing business, have created a book of their own. Please come and support them as they read from the fruit of their labors. Sunday, Jan. 12, 2pm

- Amnesty International Monthly Meeting; Monday, Jan. 13th, 7:30pm

- Diesel Book Group #1 Meeting

This month's selection: "In the Skin of a Lion" by Michael Ondaatje, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7:30pm

- El Grupito - Spanish Language Discussion Group. Meets every two weeks. Casual, friendly opportunity to improve your Spanish. Wednesdays, Jan., 15 and Jan. 29 at 7:30pm. For more information: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com

Poets and Writers Meetings

Spasso Coffeehouse, 6021 College Ave., Oakland, First and third Saturday each month, 3:30 to 5:30pm. Read and critique each other's work; occasional writing exercises.

AD ASTRA READING SERIES; Each Monday evening, 7pm; sign-up at 6:30pm. Featured reader, followed by Open-Mic. For more info, e-mail holly@hitx.com. For info on occasional free music events, call Spasso at 528-1818.

Free Comedy Showcase & Open Mic

Start your career in comedy at A'Cuppa Tea, 3200 College Ave, (corner of Alcatraz). Every Tuesday, 7:30 to 9pm. Be there by 7pm to sign up. Also: Every Sunday, free acoustic music performance 4 to 6pm. For more information call 420-0196.

College Ave. Adult Center

College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave. Every Wednesday, open from 9:30am to 1:30pm

Light exercise, socializing, travel programs and music.

- Special programs 11am to noon

1/8 Fitch Slides of Alaska.

1/15 Celebration of Life - ours and our family.

1/22 VCR: Famous Lodges - Awahnee and Old Faithful.

1/29 Kathy's slides of Sierras and Bodie.

2/5 Fitch Slides of Alaska.

- Field Trips

1/24 Stanford: Exhibit of China in the 20th Century.

2/8 Planetarium Anniversary Show at Golden Gate Park.

Hot lunch available at noon for \$1.75

For details call Kathy at 531-6724

Elder Care Support Group

Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley, 3rd floor, room 3369B (take elevator B).

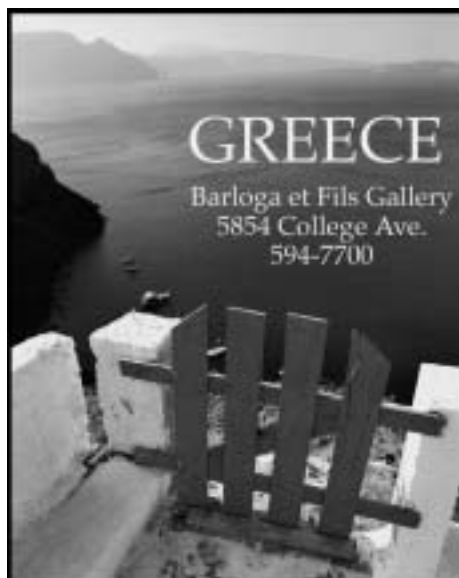
Free for family/friends caring for older adults. 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-5:30pm

For information on all support/education groups offered by Alta Bates/Sutter Health: call Monica at 802-1725 or e-mail Monicalcsw@alum.calberkeley.org

Volunteers Needed

- ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK. Assist in the warehouse or office; staff the Hunger Hotline, the Food Bank's toll-free food referral service. Hotline shifts Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm and 1-4pm. Volunteer Mgr. Mary Schoen: 510/834-FOOD(3663) or www.accfb.org.

- OAKLAND ELIZABETH HOUSE. A Transitional Residence for Women and Children in Rockridge, 6423 Colby St., Oakland. Residential and support services to homeless and low-income women and children. Orientation and training for new volunteers. Help with childcare, homework, mentoring, field trips and house chores.





Don Coelho



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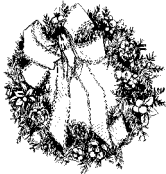
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Happy Holidays



Happy New Year

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