

THE Rockridge News

VOL. 11 • NO. 9 • ISSUE NO. 117 • OCTOBER 12, 1996

CIRCULATION: 4500 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

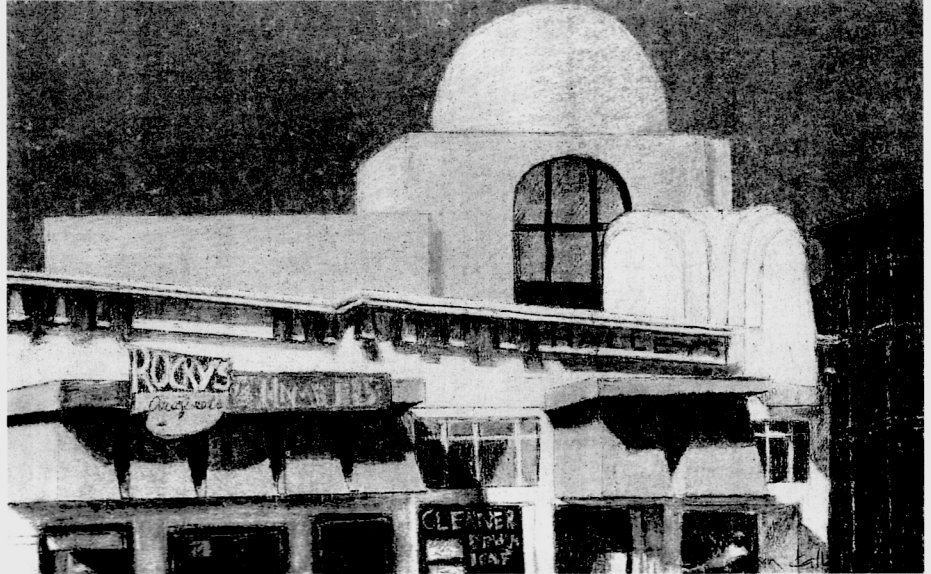
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Residential Component of Market Hall Expansion Reconsidered

WILSON ASSOCIATES PROPOSE MODIFICATIONS

by Bill Penney, RCPC
Boardmember

As of press time, Oakland's Planning Commission was scheduled to hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 9, regarding the zoning permits required for the proposed expansion of Market Hall. The RCPC Board of Directors opposes the project on the basis of the expansion's significant impact on the adjacent residential neighborhood surrounding Forest Street. Of primary concern are four homes targeted for demolition to make way for the project's parking structure and four replacement housing units. Three of the homes are

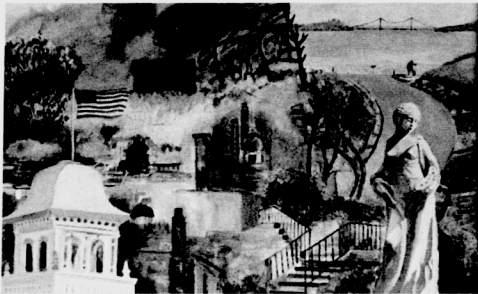


College Avenue scene sketched by Marisa Dalla Valle. Check the Rockridge Muse on page 10 for her theatrical activities and her search for local talent.

traditional Craftsman style bungalows, and neighbors on Forest, Boyd, and Shafter are concerned that the new structures would reduce the residential quality of the neighborhood.

Another concern of RCPC and some community members is the proposed use
See "Expansion" on page 3

Five Years Ago...



On view at the Rockridge Library is one of Shirley Kennon's collages, "October 20, 1991."

In remembrance of the Oakland-Berkeley Hills fire, the Rockridge Library is currently exhibiting a collection of photographic prints, poetry and art works in the community meeting room through November 9.

The exhibit will include sculptures by George Kreps and Adelie Landis, a poem by Ed Aust, photographs by Ann Gomes, Bob Maynard and Jan Kaufman, collages by Shirley Kennon, and paintings by June Felter. For further information, call Shirley Kennon at 549-0918.

REMEMBERING THE 1991 FIRE



The North Hills and Montclair Phoenix Associations invite people who live or did live in the fire zone to join fellow fire survivors and new neighbors for a "Triumph Over Disaster" celebration to remember the events of October 20, 1991. To mark the fifth anniversary of the fire, a 5 p.m. walk will be led by Oakland Fire Department Engine Co. #19 and CORE (Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) graduates. Mayor Harris and Betty Ann Bruno will speak, and the "Tree of Lights" will be illuminated, symbolizing a beacon of hope. A communal potluck dinner will follow. For more information, call 644-2692.

The Rockridge News is produced by the Rockridge Community Planning Council with an all-volunteer staff and is supported solely by advertisements and your contributions to RCPC, which may be sent to 5856 College Avenue, #130, Oakland, CA 94618.

INSIDE...

- Kiddies all dressed up, nowhere to go? The solution on page 5.
- It's baaack! The Hardy Park Dog Run. Page 7.
- If you can barely remember the clinkety-clack of Rockridge's railroad track, Jennifer Katz' article on page 8 will bring it all back.

RCPC Neighborhood Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, October 16, 1996
7:30 p.m.

College Avenue Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue Sanctuary

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' FORUM

(See Q and As on page 6.)

- District I City Council Candidates, Jane Brunner and Peter Smith
- Councilmember At-Large Candidates, Henry Chang Jr. and Rena Rickles

NEW
DATE

OLD
SITE

Book Corner

by Gay Ducey, Children's Librarian, Rockridge Branch Library

Sammy the Halloween Menace

We once lived in a neighborhood of charms and enchantments. Two of the neighborhood children were named Rapunzel and Cybele. Little spun-sugar cottages were tucked in between larger houses. The house across the street had only one resident, Mrs. Mordred, who was seldom seen and often speculated upon by the kids. The block was on a hill with a steep drop that the kids called "The Dip," and pronounced mysterious because you could hang right on the edge and still not see below. Children were given to spontaneous parades requiring costumes and ribbons and scepters. Fairy queens and kings were crowned at the top of the Dip and reigned benevolently or repressively until the next coronation.

The place next door was big and dark. There were four kids in the family, all of whom joined ours in kick-the-can each evening. But nobody ever went to their house, even though the backyard was full of trees with climbing branches, access to a stream, and many hidey holes. You see, there was something else there. A truly fearsome dog. The mailman (well, it was a man) delivered just to the curb, and the children called out before stepping onto the porch. The dog's name was Sammy the Biter Dog. He was never about, because they locked him inside and only let him out on a thick chain against which he strained until the spit flew. Sometimes, oh once a month, they would forget and then the door would be opened, and before they could grab him, he would snarl and snap his way past them to jump on anything he could see, including cats, kids, adults or tires. His owners always believed the foul beast must have been provoked. The dog had bitten many people, some badly, and the animal control folks visited from time to time but to little effect, for the masters would announce contrition and promise tighter leashing. But folk process is inevitable and unstoppable, and as the dog's infamy spread, his trespasses increased. Another generation grew into biting range, but they did not call him Sammy the Biter Dog; they referred to him as Sammy the Spider Dog. When I asked, the kids told me it was because his bite was exactly like a Black Widow spider's and you would just drop dead in about fifteen minutes. Seemed plausible to me.

Shortly before Halloween one year, a new family joined the neighborhood. Their child was named Delilah. She was quickly initiated into the important things—the Dip, the candy store, the bus stop bully, and Sammy the Spider Dog. "I am not afraid of dogs; I have a dog," she said.

As was the custom, lots of the kids trick or treated together, and the parents trailed behind. The Sammy house was the third one down, and the parents called out before letting the kids go get their treats, which were always homemade pumpkin cookies. Deep in chat, we approached the porch and were about to call out when the door slammed open and Sammy barreled out. He looked just like the cartoon Tasmanian Devil, a roiling, snapping ball of mayhem. He made straight for the pack of wailing kids, leapt into space and came down right on Delilah as the grownups waded in with sticks and feet. We never landed a blow. Delilah squatted, growled a warning, and then bit Sammy on the ear. "BAD DOG," she said, in an impressive understatement.

Afterward, Sammy the Spider Dog did not change either his venom or his venue, but there was a limited spiritual readjustment. The kids never did walk up to the porch; they waited for Delilah to do so, and when she did, they could hear Sammy whimpering and snapping behind the door, backing up all the while.

I think of Delilah each Halloween when a preschooler comes in for a scary book. There is always at least one who really means it. The list below is for her or him, and it is not for faint-hearted small ones. Proceed with caution (or with pleasure). Boo!

- The Ballad of Belle Dorcas* by William Hooks.
- The Boy and the Ghost* by Robert Sans Souci
- A Dark, Dark Tale* by Ruth Brown
- Do Not Open* by Brinton Turkel
- Ghosts!* by Alvin Schwartz
- The Goblins'll Git Yer Ef You Don't Watch Out: James Whitcomb Riley's Little Orphant Annie* by James Whitcomb Riley
- Hubknuckles* by Emily Herman
- Tailypo!* retold by Jan Wahl
- Tog the Ribber: Or Granny's Tale* by Paul Coltman
- Wiley and the Hairy Man* by Molly Bang

ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY



5366 College Avenue
597-5017



HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday:
10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 12:30-8:00 p.m.

Closed Friday and Sunday

Closed November 11 for Veterans' Day

Closed November 28 and 29 for Thanksgiving holiday

TODDLER STORYTIMES: Saturdays,
October 12, November 2 and 9, 10:30 a.m.

PRESCHOOL STORYTIMES: Tuesdays,
October 15, November 5 and 19, 10:30 and
11 a.m.

PAJAMA STORYTIMES: Wednesdays,
October 23, November 13, 7 p.m.

HALLOWEEN FAMILY PROGRAM: Boo!
Not-too-scary songs and stories, Wednesday,
October 30, 7 p.m.

THANKSGIVING FAMILY PROGRAM:
Wednesday, November 27, 7 p.m.

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, a neighborhood-based nonprofit organization. Membership includes everyone living within the organization's boundaries. The goals of the organization are to promote community involvement in neighborhood planning and area development, to address neighborhood concerns (such as educational and recreational resources and the deterrence of crime), and to serve as a liaison between the community and the City of Oakland, in particular the Oakland Planning Commission.

Rockridge News Production

- Kathy Walsh Editor-in-Chief
- Trish West Editor
- Valerie Knight Graphics; Layout
- Susan Montauk Advertising; Writing
- Maya Byrne Nissanka Billing
- Susan Carrier Writing
- Mary MacDonald Writing
- Jacqueline Frost Writing
- Jennifer Katz Writing
- Don Kinkead Distribution
- Annette Floystrup Editing

Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in *The Rockridge News*? Call 814-6060, or write to 5856 College Avenue, #130, Oakland 94618.

Publication date of the next issue is October 12. To advertise, call Susan Montauk at 547-3855. **November deadline is October 30.**



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First "Friends" Meeting Coming Up — Be Part of It

by Nancy Dutcher, *Former Chair, Neighbors for a Rockridge Library*

On Wednesday, October 30, the first meeting of the newly formed "Friends of the Rockridge Library" will be held at 7 p.m. in the Community Room of the new library. Those attending will have an opportunity to help steer the direction of the new organization, as well as serve on committees.

Over 60 people became "Friends" at the August 3 library opening. They will receive notification of the meeting; however, the meeting is open to all. Memberships will be available at the October 30 meeting, and cost \$25 for family, \$20 for individuals, \$10 for seniors or students, and \$50 for businesses.

At a meeting on September 25, members of Neighbors for a Rockridge Library, the fundraising and support group for the planning and construction phases of the library, discussed goals and objectives of the new organization. An Interim Friends' Steering Committee was formed, with the following appointments: Chair - Brooke Levin, Co-chair - Alice Sung, Treasurer - Annette Floystrup, Secretary - Ron Heckart, Membership -

Earl Hamlin, Events/Gallery - Barbara Anderson, Publicity - Sharon Miller, and Volunteers - Nancy Dutcher. This interim committee will make recommendations on the make-up and goals of the new organization at the October meeting.

Also at the September 25 meeting, Gail Wiemann, Head Librarian at the Rockridge Branch, described the "settling in" stage that the library staff is going through in the new facility. In August, the first month of operation, more than 15,000 books were checked out, a five-fold increase from the old library. At the same time, almost 100 new library cards were issued *per day*. Needless to say, the staff is greatly stretched to handle the increase in library usage. It is presently assessing the areas in which it will need help and support from the community.

Anyone visiting the library is well aware of the many empty shelves. While a new library should not have completely filled shelves (or where would next year's books go?), it's looking pretty bare!

Expansion

from page 1

of "Contract Zoning" to convert the R-35 residential zone where the four houses are located to C-31-special commercial, the same zoning as most of College Avenue in Rockridge. RCPC is opposed to the use of Contract Zoning for this project, and will argue that Forest should remain a residential zone. Also, use of Contract Zoning by the city has been relatively rare. In North Oakland, two recent projects include the parking structure for Children's Hospital and a medical office building for Kaiser Hospital near Piedmont Avenue. According to Peter Smith, former Planning Commission Chair, Contract Zoning is utilized where the City concludes that a specific project will benefit the community but would not be allowed under current zoning. RCPC believes the project does not meet this criteria.

In the past months, Wilson Associates have met with neighbors and RCPC to validate their plan and collect community feedback. In facing opposition to the replacement of the Forest homes,

the Wilsons have presented to the neighbors and RCPC a scaled-down and reconfigured version of the parking structure that would allow the four houses to remain substantially intact (the Wilsons would also renovate the existing structures for residential use) and maintain the existing character of Forest. The rear portions of three of the structures - up to approximately 12 feet - would be removed, and the parking structure would abut the rear of the homes.

The modified plan would eliminate the five-unit apartment building proposed in the initial plan, and the combination of office space, ground-level retail, and basement storage for the Market Hall building would not change. It is possible that the modified project could require a major conditional use permit for the parking rather than the rezoning required under the first proposal.

As of press time, Wilson Associates had not formally altered their application with the City, and RCPC anticipates that the public hearing will likely be continued pending the City's determination of new zoning permit requirements. ■

YOU CAN STILL MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION ON ROCKRIDGE

A few granite tiles are still available for engraving and installation in the outside walkway. (\$100 for 1/3 of a tile: 3 lines, 20 spaces per line, or \$300 for a whole tile: 4 lines, 20 spaces per line). To order a tile, send a check to Neighbors for a Rockridge Library, 5856 College Avenue #130, Oakland, CA 94618. For information, call Nancy Dutcher at 653-6018.

However, the collection will gradually increase. Many people have donated books and these are being processed. Thanks to the generous Rockridge community, a check for \$50,000 for book purchases was recently presented by Neighbors for a Rockridge Library, and a similar amount will be forthcoming after other costs, including cushions for the window seats and completion of the granite walkway, are paid for.

On a personal note, thanks to **everyone in Rockridge** for the tremendous support you have given the new library. I also greatly appreciate the generous thank-you I received in the September *Rockridge News*! But, to paraphrase that great Beatles' song, "I get by with a LOT of help from my Friends," so the thanks should also go to Kathy Walsh, Trish West, Linda Sensabaugh, Ron Heckart, Joel Gomberg, Sharon Miller, Mary MacDonald, Annette Floystrup, Don Kinkead, Andy Young, Alice Sung, Glen Jarvis, John Thomas and numerous others who have given many hundreds of hours to our effort. Thanks also to my husband, Bill, for putting up with all those late dinners uncomplainingly! I have loved *almost* every minute of the nine years I have been involved in the long, sometimes circuitous, sometimes frustrating, journey that we have travelled together in our determined effort to build a new library. I've met wonderful people, learned a great deal (including more than I want to know about computer programs), and can truly say these years have been one of the high points of my life. Now the library is built, and it's time for someone else to take the helm. I hope to work with neighbors who want to volunteer in the library, and *will* catch up on reading, and quilting, and birdwatching, and grandmothing, and cooking and hiking, and — oh, yes, cleaning the house! ■

RCPC/SCoR Claremont Workday

by Susan Montauk, RCPC Boardmember

More than 60 community volunteers, parents and students gave up a Saturday last month to paint hallways and classrooms and fix broken fixtures at Claremont Middle School on the weekend before the local public school opened its doors for the 1996 year.

Toting tool belts, electric drills, buckets and paint brushes, the volunteers speedily worked through a long list of projects compiled by teachers and staff at the middle school on College Avenue. Volunteers worked in family groups, groups of friends and singly to finish each job and reported back to the center to receive their next assignment. The crews completed 25 jobs in four hours.

"I have never received this kind of welcome from communities where I have worked before," said Dorothy Wiggins, the new principal of Claremont.

Claremont teachers came to school on their day off to welcome the volunteers. "I'm thrilled to get community support. It makes us feel appreciated," said Susan Cristanchio, a 7th-grade science teacher at Claremont. Added Claremont 7th-grader Camille Lovelace. "I didn't expect all the people. They never cleaned at my last school."

Even some elected officials dropped by to help. Newly elected school board

member Ken Rice, and Jane Brunner, candidate for District 1 council seat came to lend a hand, and Sheila Jordan, District 1 council member showed up to survey the proceedings.

Candace Brown, an enthusiastic Rockridge resident stated, "This was a wonderful opportunity for a newcomer to participate in the community."

The project was coordinated by the Rockridge Community Planning Council's subcommittee, SCoR (the Schools Committee of Rockridge), dedicated to creating a link between the community and its schools. SCoR members who stole time from work and summer vacation included Claremont PTA board member Patrick Daughton, 8th-grade science teacher Malia Dinell, librarian Mariece Batey, Norman Fowler, carpenter and husband of Mariece, and RCPC/SCoR co-chairs Susan Montauk, Meredith Kaplan and Dan Pitcock. Judy's, a College Avenue juice bar, provided smoothies to top off the workday.



Photos by Kathy Walsh; montage by Susan Montauk; developed courtesy of Ag Photo, College Avenue.

RCPC/SCoR would like to thank Rockridge resident Monette Zorich for her donation of high grade art paper to Chabot Elementary School.

RN Volunteers' Halloween Potluck

What do you bring to a Rockridge News Halloween potluck? Boo-illabaisse, ghoulish, and sand-witches, of course. Or, if you're in your scary monster costume, anything you want!

The folks invited to this event are all the hard-working, oh-so-conscientious Rockridge New deliverers and their families. The place and time: Rockridge Women's Club, 6065 Chabot Road, Friday, October 25, 6 p.m. Bring a dish to share: Last names beginning with A-H, bring appetizers or salads; I-R, main dishes; S-Z, desserts. Plates, cups, cutlery, and baked turkey will be provided, as will drinks. Costumes are encouraged—for kids AND adults. RSVP to RCPC voice mail at 814-6060. If you call and promise to take on a Rockridge News route, you too can join this fun evening. The commitment is only a hour or so once a month, and the rewards are great. Besides enjoying our potlucks, you'll see the new issue when it's only minutes old, meet your neighbors, and become an active member of the Rockridge News community.

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Letter to the Editors

Nudge the City to Prioritize

As parents and community members in Oakland, we have seen the impact of increasing funding cuts on the lives of families and children, sometimes on the very streets of Rockridge. This November election, we have the opportunity to vote for an initiative supported by parents, community members, and non-profit groups, such as Children Now and Urban Strategies Council, that responds proactively to the needs of Oakland's children and youth.

Measure "K" — Kids First! will redirect 2.5% of the City's budget for the next twelve years to children and youth programs. Similar to the initiative passed by San Franciscans several years ago, Measure K is not a parcel tax and will not raise our taxes. It, instead, will make City Hall prioritize a small portion of

our tax dollars for our community's priorities — prevention and intervention programs that serve our kids, such as school tutorial centers, arts and music camps, pre-school programs, and counseling and mentoring programs. In a world where most parents have to work, additional support in services that provide education and creative outlets for our children make a great deal of sense.

- *Margaretta Lin*
Chabot Road

Break a Leg?

A great new use for the old Rockridge library is to put a Claremont drama club in there. Many people are interested in drama and Claremont doesn't have a drama club yet, so doing it would be a great idea! The drama club could meet before school, after school, or even be an elective. They could do rehearsals and store the costumes in the old Rockridge library. They could even perform skits or plays for the whole school out on the yard. So please consider a Claremont Drama Club an option. Thank you!

- *Elizabeth Swaney*
7th grader, Claremont Middle School

A New Twist for the Halloween Parade

by **Theresa Nelson, RCPC Boardmember**

It's time to put the finishing touches on your children's Halloween costumes. The fifth annual Rockridge Tiny Tots Halloween Parade takes place along College Avenue on Sunday, October 27, at 3 p.m. The parade begins at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, and — new this year — ends at the Rockridge Branch Library. Over 30 College Avenue merchants support the parade and trick-or-treat, making this event one of the highlights of the year. This year's parade celebrates the opening of the new library, with special Halloween storytelling at our new Rockridge Library at the end of the parade.



Elementary school-age children, pre-schoolers, babies, and toddlers are invited to attend in costume, along with their parents and decorated strollers or backpacks. Parents are welcome in costume, too. **All children must be accompanied by an adult; there is no childcare provided.** Participants should gather at the church's gym, and special costumed parade leaders will lead us down both sides of College Avenue.

Participating College Avenue merchants along the parade route will distribute treats to the children. Adults and teen **volunteers are needed** as traffic monitors. Volunteers get to wear a fashionable day-glo orange vest and will help the little ones cross the street. Heavy rain will cancel the parade.

The parade is sponsored and organized by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), and PARKS (People Advocating for Rockridge KidS), a subcommittee of RCPC, with the cooperation of College Avenue merchants and the Rockridge Branch Library.

For more information, please contact Parade Co-Chair Jeff Stephens at 652-1727, or Event Co-Chair Jennifer Koney-Li at 450-0228. ■

Peralta School Walkathon

Sunday, Oct. 20th • 1-4 p.m.

DON'T MISS this fundraiser for the school library, classroom grants and playground improvements! Meets at Dana/North

College Avenue Adult Activity Center

College Avenue Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue

(all programs begin at 11 a.m.)

October 16 Abby Wasserman from the Oakland Museum

October 23 Frank Whitman, retired probation officer: crime prevention for seniors

October 30 Ruby Long: slides of Antarctica

November 6 Charles Fitch: slides of Utah

November 13 Ray Kapiloff from East Bay Insurance for Seniors

CHABOT SCHOOL HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL

Activities, fun and food for the whole family on

Sunday, October 27, 1996, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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Candidates Respond to Questions

To give the community some background information before attending Candidates' Night on October 17, *The Rockridge News* submitted two questions to the two District One and two At-Large candidates for City Council:

1. In 50 or fewer words, why are you qualified to be on the City Council?

2. In 150 or fewer words, if elected, what are the first three things you would do about the Oakland Raiders situation?

Their responses follow.

JANE BRUNNER, CANDIDATE FOR CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT ONE:

1. I have been an active community member, parent and teacher for 25 years. I have a record of consensus building and fighting for the community. My goals are simple. Improve schools and neighborhood safety and focus city resources into the community. I will listen to residents and fight for their concerns.

2. The taxpayers were promised they would not be left with a debt for the Raiders and this promise must be kept. My first action would be to conduct an outside audit and make the results public. Second, I would negotiate with the banks to restructure the bond debt. Finally, I would professionalize the Coliseum operation.

The current problems happened because the City and County never determined whether they had the capacity for this transaction. They simply didn't do their homework. This is symptomatic of a larger failure to develop an overall economic development strategy. I will implement an economic development plan that builds on Oakland's strengths and existing resources. I will set priorities. Focus on industries that take advantage of our port and airport, strengthen our neighborhood commercial district

and encourage professional services related to our growing governmental complex and expand our high technological sector in downtown.

PETER SMITH, CANDIDATE FOR CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT ONE:

1. My work as a Planning Commissioner, deputy District Attorney, volunteer teacher, advocate for small business, and leader in the fight to protect our environment and to give our City a vision for the future is a record of experience and leadership, and demonstrates the ability to govern wisely.

2. The Raiders debacle has put Oakland tax payers at risk and demonstrates the backwards thinking of City Hall. Time, energy and, we now learn, money spent on the Raiders should be spent on keeping libraries and parks open, repairing streets, and providing police and fire protection. Depending on who you believe, the City will pay millions—money that should be spent in our community.

In order to avoid an attack on the general fund, the City should (1) pass a Raiders ticket surcharge with a credit to those (apparently few) who purchased PSLs, (2) renegotiate revenues from

concessions, and (3) hire a competent marketing team.

The Raider deal was inadvisable, ill conceived, and mismanaged from the beginning. Our leaders promised us that no public monies were at risk, but we now know the opposite. We need leadership that understands our needs and sets priorities that make sense for our community.

HENRY CHANG, JR., CANDIDATE FOR AT-LARGE CITY COUNCIL SEAT:

1. In 25 years of public service to this community I have made a significant contribution in the following areas: fewer guns on the street with my Junk Gun Ban, Homework Centers for Children, more Police on the Street, the Leasing of Vacant Storefronts downtown, Better Customer service at City Hall.

2. If the Raiders did not win another game and the stadium did not sell another PSL, it would be two years before there would be a need of turning to the taxpayer to repay a portion of the \$197 million bond debt. This is not say that there are not problems that need to be addressed in the day to day operations of the Coliseum.

There are a number of refinancing

See "Candidates" on page 9

Rockridge Crime Report

The following is a summary of serious incidents phoned into the Rockridge Crime Alert Hot Line during the past month. To stay informed, be sure to call the Hot Line every week. The message is updated on Fridays by a volunteer crime reporter.

On Thursday, September 5, a car was broken into on the **5300 block of James** and a new stereo was stolen.

On Friday, September 7, a home on the **6000 block of Lawton Avenue** was broken into and electronic equipment was stolen. Forced entry was made through the front door during the late afternoon hours.

On the evening of Thursday, September 12, on the **5600 block of Ocean View Drive**, an unlocked car was entered and its contents were rummaged through.

Several reports were received of an incident on the evening of Saturday, September 14, in which the police sealed off the area in the vicinity of **Benvenue, Regent and Alcatraz** while searching for two armed robbery suspects.

On Tuesday, September 17, the police brought a suspect in custody to the **5200 block of Lawton Avenue** and contacted neighbors in an attempt to confirm the source of property found in the suspect's possession.

On Monday, September 23, a car was broken into at 1:30 in the afternoon on the **5400 block of Kales**. The owner heard the car alarm go off and discovered the car's window had been smashed and a cellular phone stolen.

**ROCKRIDGE
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Whenever I talk to a College Avenue merchant, I learn something wonderful. Did you know that all three of those efficient, friendly people running our local U.S. Postal Contract Station are potters? In fact, Irene Eng, Virginia Sellman, and Saadi Sharipo met in a pottery class at Merritt College 20 years ago. Somehow, getting a glimpse of their "real" identities makes the usual mundane transactions of buying stamps and mailing packages a lot more fun.

The trio of mailpersons/potters enjoys learning a bit about their customers' lives, too. As I well know, a writer's daily contacts with the outside world are often limited to the FedEx person and the meter reader. When scribblers do venture out to mail a manuscript, they often have some chatter stored up. They get a receptive ear at 24-Hour Mailboxes. Virginia said, "We sort of become mother confessors. We hear about the acceptance of writers' manuscripts — and the rejections, too." She continued by relating a delightful story involv-

THE NEIGHBORHOOD MERCHANT

by Trish West

24-Hour Mailboxes, Inc.

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ing local author Karen Cushman. While this acclaimed writer was away accepting a Newbery Award, her parents housed her. Karen's dad came into the contract station to buy stamps and couldn't restrain himself from proudly announcing, "My daughter is a famous author!" Other writers come in regularly, too, including Joe Kane, author of the award-winning *Savages*.

Knowing my preference for interesting stamps (why deal with dead presidents when there are carousel animals and cartoon characters available?), Irene displayed the latest issues: songwriters and musicians. But don't stick Glenn Miller and the Dorsey Brothers to a package that weighs over a pound and just toss it in a corner mailbox. The Unabomber and his ilk have brought that practice to an end. Now such packages won't be delivered unless they go through the post office.

Something else, entirely unrelated to postal regulations, that I learned from Irene was a way to have fun with money without actually spending it. She makes clever paper-and-fabric wallets that somehow move a bill from one location to another. They are based on the Jacob's Ladder principle. Nicely made and covered with attractive print fabric,

such a wallet would make a dandy gift when you know cash would be welcome but want to include a little fun as well. You can buy one very reasonably the next time you come in to 24-Hour Mail Boxes to send a birthday present to Auntie Alice or whomever.

24-Hours Mail Boxes, Inc., is open Mon-Fri, 10:30-6:30, and Sat, 10:30-2:30. Holiday hours will be somewhat extended. Mail box rentals here are \$7.50 per month (with a four-month minimum). You can access your mail box any time of the day or night. ■

Changes Around the Avenue

by Trish West

Sabuy Sabuy 5231 College

Behind an exuberant purple, yellow, and grey exterior is a rather formal dining room with white tablecloths. And on the patio are umbrellas that shield several sunny tables. Sabuy Sabuy (pronounced "sa bi' sa bi'") is a Thai restaurant that features such goodies as Yum Woonsen, vermicelli salad with lemon-grass dressing, to name just one of its 64 dinner entrees. The name of the restaurant means "take it easy."

Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily.
Phone: 653-0599

360°

5804 College

(former site of Olive's Pizza)

I'll admit it: I have a weakness for any place that sets a bowl of complimentary peppermints by the cash register. Although I've sampled the candy, I haven't yet tried the wares of this newly opened restaurant. However, the May 1996 issue of *Sunset Magazine* raved "The West's Best Burritos."

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays; 11 a.m. to 10 weekends. Phone: 597-0890.

Hardy Park Dog Run Needs YOU

by Heather Collaço,
Hardy Park Dog Owners
Association Chairperson

Just a little more prep work at the Hardy Park Dog Run and we're in! What's left to be done before the park can open? Two things: a major reactivation of the dog owners' association and a collective agreement with the City about maintenance responsibilities.

If you have already joined the Hardy Park Dog Owners Association or if you are just hearing about it for the first time and are interested in joining, please contact Heather at (510) 530-8715 as soon as possible so our dogs can socialize and exercise!

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A Railroad Ran Through It

by Jennifer Katz

"I guess the people on Shafter Avenue are having their prayers answered this morning," remarked Engineer Les Paul in 1957, as he made the last run of the Sacramento Northern Railway through Rockridge. The final run that departed from the depot at 40th and Shafter was only bound for Lafayette. However, the railroad once had 183 miles of track and several branch lines, making it the longest inter-urban electric rail line in the world. The route via Shafter from 40th Street to College Avenue continued through Chabot Canyon, past Lake Temescal and Montclair, and thence to a tunnel at Shepherd Canyon. Destinations included Pittsburg, Sacramento, Marysville, and Chico.

Construction of the rail line began in Oakland in 1911 under the auspices of the Oakland and Antioch Railroad, a predecessor company to the Sacramento Northern. Most members of the Vernon-Rockridge Improvement Club were in favor of this development. As real estate promoters pointed out, the railroad would greatly enhance property values in the foothills. However, two wealthy men whose estates fronted Chabot Road had a "hostile attitude." One of these, Charles Butters, the "millionaire mining man," was likely the most vocal and powerful critic. Rumors circulated that he would tear up the tracks if they were installed behind his elegant estate. *The San Francisco Call* observed "the hurrying of the work of the Oakland-Antioch railroad in laying their rails in Shafter Street as far as the Rock Ridge Station in Broadway. Double crews have been working overtime and Sundays." Cynics said the rail-

road was trying to beat an anticipated injunction.

Once the tunnel through the Oakland hills was completed in 1913, the inter-urban railway began its service to Sacramento. However, it did connect with the Key System to San Francisco, and connections could also be made with the local No. 6 College Avenue streetcar (which operated between 1904 and 1946, when it was replaced by bus service). At one time, there was a Sacramento Northern passenger depot at College and Shafter in a rented storefront. After the depot was abandoned, passengers were forced to wait in doorways at the intersection. Some trains had dining and observation cars. For example, in 1923, one could board the "Meteor" at College and Shafter at 5:15 p.m., enjoy dinner on-board, and arrive in Sacramento at 7:55 p.m. Sacramento Northern passenger service was discontinued in 1941. The rise of automobiles and government-sponsored highways were the biggest factors in its demise.

From its inception, the Sacramento Northern also carried freight. Freight traffic was restricted to the hours between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. because of a suit filed by the Shafter Avenue Association. Nevertheless, these hours were increased in 1918. Mayor Mott believed the more

freight and the fewer restrictions, the better for Oakland. The local improvement club didn't agree. Members complained about freight traffic, as well as the potential for accidents involving fast-moving inbound trains turning into Shafter Avenue from the trestle in Chabot Canyon. Despite neighborhood opposition, freight continued to move on the line.

During the World War II and the Korean War, the railroad was used to transport materials between the Oakland Army Base and the U.S. Naval Weapons Station at Concord and Pittsburg. (The Walnut Creek to Concord BART line was built on the previous railroad right-of-way.) At a city council hearing in 1947, a Rockridge resident claimed the railroad operations were "retarding development of that section of North Oakland." To the benefit of Shafter Avenue residents,



Sacramento Northern Inter-urban Train at the southeast corner of College and Shafter (now Miles) in 1938. Buildings in the background, which included the location of the first Rockridge Branch Library, were demolished when the Grove-Shafter freeway was constructed. (Photo by Vernon Sappers)

the Sacramento Northern tracks through Rockridge were removed soon after freight service was discontinued in February 1957.

Even as the Sacramento Northern tracks were being demolished, the community was becoming aware of plans to route the new Grove-Shafter freeway through Rockridge. It was the end of one transportation era and the beginning of another. ■



The Sacramento Northern crossing a trestle behind the 6900 block of Chabot Rd. just east of Chabot School (the Tudor-style gable to the right of the train). Some of these houses were moved to Ivanhoe Rd. when the freeway was built. (Photo by Vernon Sappers)

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Squaring Off on Proposition F

by Trish West

In this corner, Oakland Mayor Harris. In the opposite corner, Ed Schilling, former City Manager of Campbell, CA. The audience at the September RCPC monthly meeting was honored to have these two speakers share their thoughts, pro and con respectively, about Proposition F, the so-called "Strong-Mayor" measure on the November ballot. Following, some quotes from their presentations:

MAYOR HARRIS

"A strong mayor won't be a Darth Vader who comes to get your children in the middle of the night."

"Who else do you know who has nine people [councilmembers] supervising one person [mayor]?"

"How much worse could it be to have a strong mayor?"

"The present system is too bureaucratic and slow; change is needed."

ED SCHILLING


"There are some problems with the present system, but they're not with the City Manager system."

"Under a 'strong-mayor' system, everything in City Hall would be more political, and special interests would have a field day."

"Accountability for the City's activities would be lost under a 'strong-mayor' system."

"It's the neighborhoods that give Oakland both its charm and its strength."

Whichever side you favor, please be sure to express your opinion on November 5 and get to your polling place. ■



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Candidates

from page 6

alternatives that I am currently investigating to insure that the taxpayers are not liable for repayment. Ultimately, any solution, such as lowering ticket prices, or surcharging tickets, must reduce operating costs and increase revenues. All of these alternatives must be analyzed to insure that the taxpayer will not be held liable for the bond debt. Remember, Oakland is the only city in the country to fund its stadium construction without relying on taxpayer based financing.

RENA RICKLES, CANDIDATE FOR CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE :

1. As a woman, mother, and lifelong Democrat, I've experienced life as an Oakland citizen. I'm the only candidate for City Council with a child in public school and am aware of our schools' needs. As a land-planning attorney, I've demonstrated my effectiveness. I can stop the political grandstanding.

2. Unfortunately, we have been handed a lemon.

First, we must renegotiate the contract with the Raiders to better benefit Oakland. Currently, Oakland can only use revenues from PSLs to pay off the bonds. We must also be able to take profits from ticket sales, which now go to Al Davis, to pay the debt. To increase ticket sales, we should allow PSL holders to buy additional tickets at a significant discount.

Second, we must renegotiate so that the Raiders, not the city and county, pay game day expenses. The city and county are already "eating" too many expenses.

Third, we should penalize the Oakland Professional Football Marketing Association for non-performance and hire a company specializing in sports marketing. They should have exclusive responsibility for selling PSLs and luxury boxes and be paid based upon solid sales performance. ■

Share Your Thanksgiving Bounty

by Joyce Suess, RAMPA

The annual Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the College Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Rockridge Area Merchants and Professional Association is approaching. We need people who can give time, food donations, and donations of articles of hygiene and canned goods. We could also use donations of money to buy these articles. Please send donations of money to Betty Bindner, c/o First Federal Savings, 6058 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618. If you can give time or food donations, please call Ginny Palmer after November 1 at 658-0604. ■



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- 2 custom-made leather steering wheel covers (from Wheelskins)

Proceeds will enable this parent-run coop to keep tuition low and encourage diversity.

College Avenue Nursery School Coop Raffle Ticket

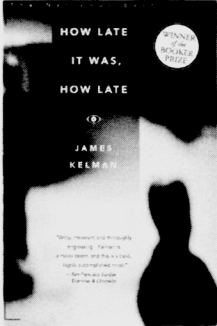
Name _____ Tel.# _____
Address _____ # of tickets _____
Total \$ _____

Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with payment.
Mail to: College Avenue Coop, 5951 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618

Fall is here, and it's time for some serious musing.

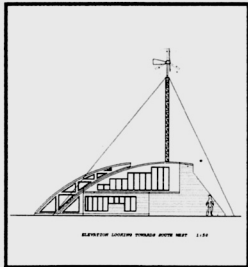
Two Extra Special Events at Diesel

Diesel will be honored with the only East Bay visit from Tobias Wolff, who is considered one of the best contemporary prose writers. He will read from his latest book, *The Night in Question*, on Friday, November 1, 7:30 p.m., 5433 College Avenue. There is no charge for this event.



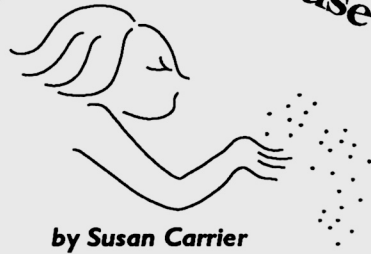
John Mulligan, director of the Scottish Cultural Arts Center in San Francisco, is presenting a distinguished group of Scottish writers on Sunday, November 3, 7:30 p.m. This is the group's only East Bay appearance during its visit from Scotland. Appearing will be James Kelman, whose novel, *How Late It Was, How Late*, received Britain's Booker Award last year; William McIlvaney, best known for the Laidlaw Mystery Series; Barry Graham; and Alan Warner. It is suggested that the \$8 tickets for this event be purchased in advance.

An Experimental House



Rockridge resident David Dobreiner, AIA, of Rockridge Design, is the only North American architect to have a design chosen for an international compe-

The Rockridge Muse



by Susan Carrier

dition in the Canary Islands. The competition, ratified by the International Union of Architects, called for a bioclimatic house using ecologically sound materials and methods. Dobreiner generated a unique aerodynamic dwelling, combining concerns for cultural, climatic and technological contexts. His design will be built next year.

See a Play in English... Or in French

Rockridge resident Marisa Dalla Valle directs two one-act comedies by Moliere: *The Jealous Husband* and *The Imaginary Cuckold*, at the Next Stage Theater, 1660 Gough Street, San Francisco. The performances, which run from September 21 through October 27, are in English on some dates and in French on others! Call 646-0488.



A Multi-Lingual Amateur Drama Troupe

The Rock Rose Theater is now holding auditions in Rockridge for a musical by Boris Vian: *Adam, Eve and the Third Sex*, or *To Each His Own Serpent*, in En-

glish and in French. Actors, singers, composers, carpenters, sewers and painters are needed. Amateurs are welcome, and the ability to speak more than one language is not required. Call Marisa Dalla Valle at 654-3236 for more information.

Both Sides of Graffiti

Recent CCAC graduate Michael Walsh will show slides and discuss his new book, *Graffiti*, a visually stunning documentation of the history, ideas and arguments surrounding graffiti, at Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Avenue, on Thursday, October 24, 7:30 p.m.



I'm sad to say that next month has to be the last for me as the Rockridge Muse. The past year has been a delight: meeting fellow muses, both interesting and gracious, and reporting the cultural goings-on in Rockridge. If you would like to pick up the museful baton, let us know at 814-6060 or send a note to The Rockridge Muse at 5856 College Avenue, #216, Oakland 94618. -Susan Carrier

Rockridge Library Kneads More Dough

by Gail Wiemann, Rockridge Library Branch Manager

Thanks to great response from willing community volunteers, Great Harvest Bread Company will again host a fundraising event for the new Rockridge Branch Library. On Sunday, October 20, owners Tim and Denise O'Keefe will turn the bakery over to supporters of the Library for a day of bread baking and selling. Volunteers will knead, design and sell an assortment of breads, and all profits from the day will be donated to the Library for the purchase of children's books and materials.

Raffle tickets are also available now at the bakery to win free bread for a year, with the drawing to be held on the day of the fundraiser.

Bakery hours for this special event will be 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please come on October 20, enjoy the bread baked by your neighbors, and support a good cause the same time.

Uleeé

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St. Theresa School Auction

by Joanne Ablan

St. Theresa School invites you to attend Winter Wonderland, the 22nd annual auction sponsored by the Parents' Club on Saturday, November 16, 6 to 11 p.m. in the Church Hall at 30 Mandalay Road. The silent auction runs from 6-8 p.m. and includes an array of gift baskets, boutique items, handmade collectibles and wines. Items up for bid in the live auction at 8:30 p.m. include get-away vacations, catered parties, festive dinners, and wonderful merchandise from Noah's Art, Bloomies, Zachary's, Rockridge Kids, Dreyer's, and many Rockridge merchants in the Market Hall. The grand prize in this year's drawing is a handmade quilted wall-

hanging (53" X 53") depicting a heart-shaped wreath. Drawing tickets are \$1.00 each. You need not be present to win. Admission to the auction is \$12.00 per person in advance and \$15 at the door. Tickets go on sale November 2 and 3, and November 9 and 10 after Masses at the Church, or call Karen Catanzarite at 339-1930. ■

MEETING NOTICE

Continuing Neighborhood Opposition to Shell Mini-Mart

The Upper Broadway Neighborhood Coalition, the group recently formed to oppose the proposed installation of a mini-mart at the Broadway/Taft Shell station, will meet on **Monday, November 6, 7:30 p.m.**, in the Rockridge Library's community meeting room. Everyone interested in this issue is invited. For information, call 658-1150.

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