



A fire that may have been purposely set destroyed the cafeteria and kitchen at Claremont Middle School. An arson investigation continues.



RCPC's Rockridge Kitchen Tour offers new features and activities for attendees. Page 1.



A decision about the fate of the six redwood trees at College and Claremont avenues has been put on hold. See "Redwood Trees," page 3.

Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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The 2015 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: New Events; New Opportunity

More to See and Learn: Tour Events to Help Your Planning

by RCPC Kitchen Tour committee

This year, the RCPC Kitchen Tour adds two new events — the Kitchen Expo and the Berkeley Mills Kitchen Seminar — which will be held in advance of the Tour and will expand the time tour participants can speak with architects, contractors and other specialists about their own plans.

Go to <http://rockridgekitchentour.org> for registration and additional information.

■ **Kitchen Expo: Thursday, September 17, 7-9 p.m. at TBD location.**

Come meet the architects, contractors, cabinetmakers and other providers that deal with lighting, tile work, flooring, windows and more. Spend time learning about them, their products and services and what they can do for you. They represent

this year's as well as past years' participants in RCPC kitchen tours and can provide references for their local work and contact with local clients. The event is free to ticket holders but **you must register**. Go to <http://rockridgekitchentour.org> for registration and additional information.

■ **Berkeley Mills Kitchen Seminar: Saturday, September 19, 2-5 p.m. at Berkeley Mills, 2830 7th St, Berkeley.**

Learn about the process of kitchen remodeling from concept to completion, from a noted local firm. Scheduling, budgets, and cost drivers and the tiniest details of cabinet hardware, wood choices and wood finishes will be discussed. A tour of the facility will show design and build steps, and you'll be able to discuss your topics of interest with

kitchen designers. Three complete example kitchens on display will bring life to ideas. Ticket cost is an additional \$25 per person; registration is limited. Reserve your seat now.

Save with early registration for the Rockridge Kitchen Tour: Sunday, September 20, 12:30-5:30 p.m.

We have some wonderful examples of interesting kitchens for you to see this year, ranging from whimsical "fun in the kitchen" examples to the "spare no expense" approach, as well as a finale we think you will remember for some time.

Early registration can save you money, so act now. Go to <http://rockridgekitchentour.org> for registration and additional information.

New Year Brings Changes to OUSD

by Jody London, District 1 director

With the New Year, there has been a lot going on in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). As the District 1 Board Director serving North Oakland, I want to share recent developments.

■ **Three New Board Directors:** We have new directors for District 2 (Aimee Eng), District 4 (Nina Senn) and District 6 (Shanthi Gonzales), and the same commitment to building a full-service community school district. I'm excited to work with these new leaders, and impressed with their ability to get to work on our pressing issues.

■ **Big Investment in Early Childhood Education:** We are grateful for the big investment in early education by the Rainin and Packard Foundations. Oakland is at the forefront of this work. You may have seen the Talk, Read, Sing billboards around town, or heard about Hillary Clinton's visit to Fairyland last **Jody London, page 12**

Chabot School Sets Online Auction

Bidding: March 18-25

by Natalie Mehta, Chabot PTA Treasurer and parent

Chabot Elementary invites the community to bid on amazing donations by our parents, neighbors, and local businesses. This year's "Gold Fever" auction has a goal of raising \$150,000 or more to support enrichment programs and vital services for nearly 600 Kindergarten through 5th grade students who thrive

in a local public school where creativity, curiosity, academic excellence, and social-emotional learning are nurtured.

We invite you to join us in bidding on hundreds of fabulous auction items. Visit www.chabotelementary.org, click on the auction website link, create a bidding profile, and start bidding. Winnings are tax-free and delivered to you.

Chabot Auction, page 12

Rockridge Community Planning Council

2014 Financial Statement
Fiscal Year January 1 – December 31, 2014

PROFIT AND LOSS

Income/Expense	
Income	
Contributions	20,793.89
Scenic Streets	11,845.20
Rockridge News/Rockridge.org	43,008.00
Town Hall Pizza Contributions	276.85
Merchandise Sales	287.91
Interest and Dividends	34.02
Total Income	76,245.87
Expense	
Bank Fees	30.00
Office	3,870.29
Contractors	6,942.50
Events	1,962.72
Grants/Scholarships	5,200.00
Merchandise	1,214.68
Misc.	379.30
FROG	10,994.60
Rockridge News/Rockridge.org	31,811.18
Taxes, Licenses & Fees	125.00
Total Expense	62,530.27
Net Income	13,715.60

BALANCE SHEET

Assets	
Checking/Savings/CDs	
RCPC (incl. Scenic Streets)	109,636.63
FROG	63,148.10
Total Checking/Savings	172,784.73
Total Assets	172,784.73
Liabilities & Equity	
Total Liabilities	0.00
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	188,980.65
Unrestricted (retained earnings)	-29,911.52
Net Income	13,715.60
Total Equity	172,784.73
Total Liabilities & Equity	172,784.73

RCPC tax records are on file at the Rockridge Branch Library for public review.

RCPC Land Use Committee

The March Land Use Committee meeting is Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch library, 5366 College Avenue. Check at rockridge.org to confirm. (Front door will be unlocked; pull doors apart to enter.) Meetings are open to the public.

In February, the Land Use Committee discussed updates on a number of projects proposed or currently moving forward in the neighborhood as well as neighborhood concerns about the proposed removal of six redwood trees at the former Shell station site at the corner of College and Claremont.

■ **College Avenue Safeway:** The Safeway store is now open and operating, but retail building construction and street and sidewalk changes are still in progress and being monitored. City staff and neighborhood groups including RCPC are assembling lists of outstanding issues to be addressed by Safeway for a meeting anticipated in early March.

■ **Merrill Gardens:** The senior housing

project on the north side of 51st at Broadway is moving forward and began demolition during the last week of February.

■ **Rockridge Shopping Center** (The Shops at the Ridge): Safeway continues to say that demolition will begin soon, but no formal word on start date has been provided and no work has begun.

■ **Temescal Apartments:** The multifamily residential project on the south side of 51st at Broadway is scheduled for hearing by the Planning Commission on March 18. Neighbors have outstanding concerns about the height variance proposed by the developer, SRM. The proposed project height is 60' at the corner of 51st and Broadway and 45' at the corner of 49th, **Land Use, page 15**

Redwood Tree Removal Now on Hold

Recently, the six redwood trees on the former Shell station property at College and Claremont were individually red-tagged for assessment as to whether each tree should be removed. Many neighbors and College Avenue shoppers have expressed concern and dismay that Rockridge may be losing a valued community asset, especially in a location that is otherwise, for pedestrians, a bleak sea of asphalt and concrete.

Oakland city tree removal ordinances are strict, and redwoods are one of four native species that have extra protection in the

ordinances. Removal permits are generally granted only when trees pose a hazard to people and/or structures. Redwood roots grow close to the ground surface in a thick web 20 or more feet in diameter from the trunk. Roots can be quite large.

When the Shell station redwoods were planted, no thought was given to how close they would be to the adjacent building, and over about 30 years, roots have spread under the structure and could compromise its wall and foundation. Because of the extensive pavement required by the Shell station, these redwoods had very little open ground around them and are starved for moisture. The tree closest to College Avenue is especially impacted. Redwoods need room to be redwoods. These six are good trees in a bad location – too big to move, and with structure and growth habits that could jeopardize the building next door.

The community comment period for this permit ended the week of February 16. Meanwhile, the property owner has put the tree permit on hold for a year.

Although the permit is on hold, the owner is proceeding with soil testing – a necessary step toward developing the property. For the present, the redwoods will stay.

— From information provided by Oakland Public Works Tree Services department and the department spokesperson.



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COLLEGE AVENUE: THE BEAT GOES ON AND ON

College Avenue Commerce: Decades of Service Merchants' Years of Service: Part 7

Following is the seventh in our series on businesses in business on College Avenue at least 25 years. If you have been "on the Avenue" and haven't seen your business' name yet, drop us an email at editor@rockridge.org. We want readers of The Rockridge News to know about you and to stop in to see what you offer.

by *Kevin Faughnan, RCPC boardmember*

■ **Yasai Market**, at 6301 College Avenue, was opened in 1980 by John Amano. John's sister-in-law is the owner of Berkeley Bowl; John was raised in the vegetable business and worked at Berkeley Bowl before opening Yasai (which means vegetables in Japanese). John sold to current owners Michael and Bu Pak in 1992; they kept the name. When I spoke with Bu about the impact of the Safeway construction, the conversation topic drifted to competition. She reminded me that small stores aren't automatically noncompetitive. She recommended I do a price check, which I did on eight items, that could be put in a regular salad. **Yasai** was lower in price than Safeway on five of the eight items by about 15 percent. I like having a new Safeway store in our neighborhood, but shopping small and local means more money stays in the community, and can leave more money in your pocket, too. Rapid produce turnover, competitive pricing, good variety and small lines at the counter sound like a winning strategy, but go see for yourself.

■ **Great Wall Chinese Restaurant**, located at 6247 College Avenue, has been a Chinese restaurant since 1989 and now is owned by Kerry Yip, the second restaurant he has owned. Their extensive menu is all-vegetarian, and traditional chicken and pork dishes are actually made from soybeans. I had the spicy garlic "pork" with brown rice, and it was very good. The inside is bright and clean, with an extensive seating area that can handle large groups. Kerry said he is glad the new Safeway store has finally opened, so business and foot traffic can return to normal. Stores along this section of College Avenue have all been financially impacted these past 6 months, and can use your support. Stop in and try lunch, any day of the week.

■ **Murasaki**, the Japanese word for the color purple, opened at 6050 College Avenue in 1984 and is now managed by Sherry Yen. The business specializes in futons, the cotton mattress that rolls up. The futon has been in use for thousands of years, particularly

in Japan where small living spaces are the norm. An American furniture maker in the 1970s created a folding bedframe to support the mattress, giving us the futon as we know it today. That design quickly began to replace our hide-aways, those bulky heavy items no one wants to move up a flight of stairs. **Murasaki** also offers sliding doors, custom made in Japan; movable shoji screens; material for clothing, tablecloths and napkins; and many other personal items. Business has been impacted by the Safeway construction at that corner, and Sherry is hoping for a return to normal. Stop in and take a look at the many distinctive items she has for sale.

■ **The Pasta Shop** began life in 1980 in the space now occupied by Barclay's Pub. Five years later, Sara Wilson purchased the shop when the owners decided to retire; she moved it into a new space at Market Hall. She saw the opportunity that the Pasta Shop could become the cornerstone for a variety of small food stores patronized by the abundant foot traffic that BART would provide. Fast forward 30 years to the present, and you would have to agree that was a successful vision. Add in the Bakery, Produce Shop and Hapuku Fish Market ▶ **Merchants, page 7**

Art on the (Other) Avenue: Deco Art

by *Carl Schmitz*

Among a short string of businesses on the northwest side of Claremont Avenue just before it passes under the Grove-Shafter Freeway toward Temescal, Deco Art's stylized green sign stands out. In a location where the Bay Printmakers Society originally made its home in the mid-'50s, a neighborhood artmaking tradition carries on. Caroline Stern, owner of Deco Art, is a graduate of CCAC (California College of Arts and Crafts, now California College of the Arts, or CCA) and has used the business for the last 20 years as a base for work in fine art, murals, faux finish, furniture finishing, stenciling, color consultation, and interior and exterior painting.

With such an enterprising range of interests and services, it is fitting that Deco Art is also used as a space in multiple dimensions. As a gallery, Deco Art hosts 2-4 solo or group exhibitions a year for emerging community artists. The next show, "Modern Iconoclasm," will feature stained glass artwork by Dani Robinson paired with paintings and drawings from CCA MFA student Nate Petterson. An opening is scheduled for April 17 (6-9pm). In addition to exhibition space, Stern teaches classes for

▶ **Deco Art, page 4**



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Chabot Safety Patrol Makes for Safe School Crossings

by Miranda Carrow, fourth grade teacher, Chabot School

We all know that school can be difficult to get to in the morning: not only getting ourselves out of bed, then our children, getting dressed, eating breakfast, but all the countless other things that have to get done before leaving the house on time. Then, walking to school, you have to watch carefully for traffic, especially at busy corner intersections.

Well, for the students at Anthony Chabot Elementary School, there is one less stressful thing that helps them on their way to school: the Anthony Chabot Elementary School's award-winning safety patrol.



A group of about 25 fourth and fifth graders, along with a parent or teacher, controls traffic at the busy intersection of Patton and Chabot Road every morning from 8:10 a.m. until school begins at 8:30 a.m., for safer passage onto the school grounds.

We are fortunate to live in a community where many of our families live close enough to school to walk there. We are also a school that is located close to several freeway entrances and the Rockridge BART station, which means

we have lots of vehicle traffic each morning. The safety patrol is an amazing production to watch, as over 200 people cross our crosswalk every morning.

I am fortunate to be the teacher in charge of this amazing group of student leaders, and have been thoroughly impressed each year at the dedication and hard work these leaders demonstrate each day. Not only do most of them arrive 30 minutes before school starts two to five days a week, they also participate in monthly meetings during their recess time. For each of these meetings, the captains, sergeants, lieutenants, and other leaders are required to write up and give a report. This is in front of their peers, the parent liaison, myself, and an officer from the Oakland Police Department; no small feat for nine- and ten-year-olds.

Safety Patrols are guided by the Oakland Police Department and AAA. They work with over 500 students at 25 elementary schools in Oakland. Every spring there is an annual review, with a trophy awarded to the top school's Safety Patrol. The competition is fierce.

While researching safety patrols for this article, I learned that many of our society's



The Chabot Safety Patrol ends a shift. Mr. Agajan and parent coordinator Karen Sternstein look on. Teacher in charge Miranda Carrow, left photo, lends extra authority when patrol members control traffic. PHOTOS/D. KINKEAD

leaders participated in safety patrols at their schools. These include former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton; Nobel Prize winner Dr. Gary S. Becker; U.S. Senator John Warner; baseball broadcasting Hall of Famer Joe Garagiola; and many more, including 21 astronauts.

As a teacher, I feel participating in safety patrol is important for students. They learn to become leaders and role models in their community, and they learn dedication and hard work.

If you have never seen a safety patrol in action, come watch on the corner of Patton and Chabot Road any weekday morning at about 8:20 a.m. I know you will be impressed, as I am every time.





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Eyes on Rockridge

Skilled Home Baker Teaches Bagel Appreciation 101

by Judith Doner Berne

When we moved to Rockridge from the suburbs of Detroit almost four years ago, we realized we had landed in a walkable food heaven.

But one notable exception flew in our faces every Sunday morning – bagels, though available, weren't what we were used to. They weren't rolled by hand, boiled with honey, baked on the spot, and of moderate size.

As a child growing up in Detroit, I remember accompanying my dad to the Detroit Bagel Factory every Sunday morning, where the tantalizing smells of baking bagels wafted over us as we waited our turn in the long, snake-like line.

Detroit Bagel moved to the suburbs, as did my husband and I. And our Sunday bagel runs and the smells and the lines remained constant as we raised our family and as empty-nesters.

So when Beauty's Bagels opened on Telegraph and 38th in the fall of 2012, producing crusty, right-sized bagels from a wood-fired oven within walking distance of our house, our move to Rockridge seemed complete.

Still, we were intrigued when we learned about, then attended Laurie Lieber's "Bake Your Own (Amazing) Bagels" class, right here in Rockridge.

Lieber has an engaging manner, a way with words and a mission – although very part-time – to teach people how to make their own authentic bagels. Her real job, since retiring from public health advocacy, is teaching Pilates in her backyard studio.

"I've been a life-long baker," she told my husband and me as we awaited Flora Feldman, from Crocker Highlands, and Susan Paul, who

lives near Lake Merritt. They had also signed up for the class, maybe smaller than usual since it was Super Bowl Sunday.

Lieber, who grew up in Danville, remembers her grandmother visiting from Pittsburgh each winter. "My grandmother was quite a baker. She'd stay six weeks and bake the whole time." Plus, "I defended myself from four brothers by baking," she said.

Her specialty became artisanal breads. "I'd always have a loaf just out in the kitchen." Many of the recipes came from the "Breads from the La Brea Bakery" cookbook by Nancy Silverton. "Then I got turned on to her recipe for bagels."

Once Lieber had adapted it successfully, she had no thought of selling them – or even giving a class. But a couple of years ago, she invited the hospitality committee she heads at Temple Sinai to her house. "I thought we should have some fun. We work hard, we should celebrate. We should make bagels together."

They enjoyed it so much that someone suggested she give regular classes. And, "I found out that I really liked to teach. I realized I wanted to have everyone be able to make bagels themselves."

Lieber is talented enough, in my mind, to be on one of the cooking networks. Here's a



Although she is now a 'bagel maven,' Laurie Lieber continues to make her signature breads, routinely found on her kitchen counter. She is also working on a new recipe for sourdough crackers. /JUDY BERNE

taste of her easy, gracious schtick as she sought to pass her skills on to us:


"One of the main reasons these taste so good is because the process is slow. They (bagels) happen over a three-day period.

"I don't describe my bagels as sourdough

▶ **Bagel Appreciation, page 7**

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Bagel Appreciation

from page 6

[although she creates them from a sourdough starter] because people expect them to taste like San Francisco sourdough.

"I always have access to extra starter. You have lifelong access to starter because you took this class.

"I'll get up in the morning and while I'm having my breakfast, I'll make a batch of bagels.

"I tend to approach baking like a chemist because I am a control freak.

"These are my bagels and once you take them home, you can make them yours.

"Bagels are like preschoolers; they need to rest.

"Wash your hands [as we were about to knead the dough]. We're about to get up close and personal.

"You should knead until you no longer

have any frustrations.

"There's something about a hand-shaped bagel.

"Not all of my students graduate. It's a labor intensive thing."

"For many people my class is really a bagel appreciation class," Lieber said. "A lot won't make their own." And, in fact, Feldman told us: "I've been here before. I'm remedial." And Paul said: "I'm here for the experience."

We, too, have yet to use the starter and recipe Lieber sent home with us. But we headed home in time for Super Bowl half-time armed with a few bagels we helped make in class as well as four raw circles of dough that we had learned how to roll and hand-shape (around our actual hands).

We ate the fresh bagels immediately. And, the next day, my husband boiled the others in honey water, as Lieber had taught us, then topped them before baking with her favorite combo of poppy seed, fennel, sesame seed and kosher salt. A decided yum on both accounts.

Lieber, who has anthropology and public health degrees from Cal Berkeley, and her

husband, Phillip Rubin, met on the first floor of the building where both worked in downtown Oakland. They have lived in Rockridge almost 30 years. Rubin walks to his office on College Avenue, from which he sells computer software to law firms. "He's a peddler; I'm a meddler," Lieber said with a smile. They have two adult children, Sarah and Jacob, both of whom live in Oakland.

Sylvie Mwila Jonath, who lives in Rockridge, signed up for the class after receiving Lieber's announcement on her neighborhood listserv. The two didn't know one another. "It was wonderful," Jonath told me. "You could see she's got the passion for it and was very thorough."

No, Jonath hasn't yet made bagels at home, but plans to take the workshop again "for the fun of it. I'm originally from the Congo. I could probably introduce bagels there."

More information is available at www.bakeyourownamazingbagels.com or by calling 510/435-3995. Your comments on this column and ideas for future stories are welcome: Email judyberne@att.net.

Merchants

from page 4

(see website for name history) and you have the current Market Hall food empire. The kitchen that supports both the Bakery and the Pasta Shop is located upstairs. Wilson is a landlord, tenant, and business owner; she owns the building with her two brothers and works in the business every day. Additionally, as a Rockridge resident of many years, she can see the various viewpoints that groups

have and the challenge of trying to maintain a healthy balance while changes inevitably keep coming. In the meantime, she'll keep looking for those unusual salads that are a **Pasta Shop** signature.

■ **Hank and Frank Bicycles** took over Red's Bike Shop at 6030 College Avenue in 1986. Does anyone remember when Red's first opened on College? Hank and Frank have been in Oakland since 1925. Their first bike shop was opened on East 14th Street in 1925, with subsequent stores on Grand Avenue and in Lafayette. Ian Lautze now manages the

store, and, naturally, bikes to work as often as he can. It's a large shop with plenty of inventory and choices. Sales include high-end mountain bikes and road bikes, but the bread and butter of the shop is the "hybrid," a cross between the two at a considerably lower price. The shop gets lots of locals coming in, but Ian believes the real draw is their lifetime free service which covers just about everything except flats and broken or worn-out parts. Spring appears to be here, so get on that bike, with a helmet please, and ride on down and check them out.

DANIEL'S RECENT ROCKRIDGE LISTINGS

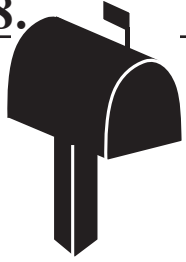


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 SOLD: \$950,000 Listed: \$695,000 5347 James • 7 Offers	 SOLD: \$925,000 Listed: \$795,000 5272 Lawton • 5 Offers	 SOLD: \$925,000 Listed: \$849,000 5330 Manila • 7 Offers	 SOLD: \$925,000 Listed: \$699,000 5344 Shafter • 19 Offers
 SOLD: \$920,000 Listed: \$749,000 5486 Kales • 12 Offers	 SOLD: \$905,000 Listed: \$795,000 391 Alcatraz • 5 Offers	 SOLD: \$850,000 Listed: \$725,000 5231 Coronado • 3 Offers	 SOLD: \$830,000 Listed: \$749,000 5371 Broadway • 2 Offers
 SOLD: \$811,000 Listed: \$695,000 74 Ross Circle • 5 Offers	 SOLD: \$775,000 Listed: \$725,000 5370 Bryant • 4 Offers	 SOLD: \$775,000 Listed: \$649,000 5276 Redondo • 3 Offers	 SOLD: \$735,000 Listed: \$625,000 359 Cavour • 3 Offers



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Letters to the Editor

ON DETERMINING BICYCLE SAFETY DISTANCES

EDITOR:

Your recent advice [The Rockridge News, January 2015] on keeping a safe distance when passing a bicycle has struck a familiar chord.

As motorists drive down the street with their car doors open, holding out their guitars to measure a three-foot buffer zone (a Fender guitar works well for this), they should heed the warning of Mr. Arlo Guthrie in his Motorcycle Song;

“Now, when you’re going down a mountain road at 150 miles an hour you gotta be very careful, especially if you’re playin’ a guitar. Especially if that guitar is an acoustic guitar. Because if it’s an acoustic guitar, the wind pressure is greater on the box side than on the neck side, because there’s more guitar on the box side.”

He knew it wasn’t the best song he ever wrote, but he didn’t have time to change it.

Yours with that kind of enthusiasm,
— **Chuck Afflerbach**

Ed. note: The writer refers to an article describing the newly mandated 3-foot distance between automobiles and bicyclists as “roughly equivalent to... the length of an acoustic guitar.” Find Arlo Guthrie’s song here: <http://goodsparkgarage.com/arlo-guthrie-and-the-motorcycle-song/>

The Rockridge News welcomes posted letters and e-mails to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and city/neighborhood must be included in either for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter.

Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity at the editor’s discretion. Views expressed in any letter are the writer’s own, and may not necessarily be shared by the editor, or by RCPC.

ROCKRIDGE NEWS GLOSSES OVER SAFEWAY IMPACT ON LOCAL SHOPS

EDITOR:

While I appreciate that the retail community can benefit from upbeat articles on the “new life” on College Avenue, such reporting seems a bit biased.

Judy Berne’s breezy observation [The Rockridge News, February 2015] that local merchants appear busy, traffic looks OK, and random non-resident pedestrians sound happy is extraordinarily shallow. Yasai is being hurt and four coffee shops within one block will surely drive someone out of business... most likely the least-capitalized (i.e., most local). Safeway’s business plan depends on killing off Ver Brugge and La Farine. Chimes Pharmacy was a canary in the mineshaft for that strategy months ago.

Only our dedicated neighborhood can continue loyal patronage to local merchants and protect our beloved shops.

Berne is apparently new to the area and found the old Safeway, understandably, below par. But her mostly promotional stance is both naive and misguided, with little sensitivity to the real impact of this suburban mall-sized Safeway “lifestyle center.”

Perhaps believing she is “fair and balanced,” she highlights all the ways Safeway is trying to buy community favor, as though this compensates for the promise of chain store retail renting high priced spaces

along College.

In dramatic contrast, Cole Hardware is a terrific addition to College; a truly welcome one that fits the needs and sensibilities of the Rockridge area.

Quoting RDA marketing man Chris Jackson’s approving comments further promotes hype over sound journalism. But maybe that is not what The Rockridge News is designed to provide.

— **Sara Hartley**

WORST FEARS REALIZED

EDITOR:

The Safeway on College and Claremont is now open, and the worst fears about the loading bay abutting Claremont Avenue are realized. What do we now have?

Tractor-trailer trucks idling on Claremont Avenue (in some cases, over one-half hour) waiting to go into the loading bay. Result? Traffic on Claremont is obstructed. When finally backing into the loading bay, Claremont Avenue and the side streets are “blessed” with an extended red light, several minutes long. Mystic and Auburn are blocked so no traffic can go

▶ **Letters, page 9**

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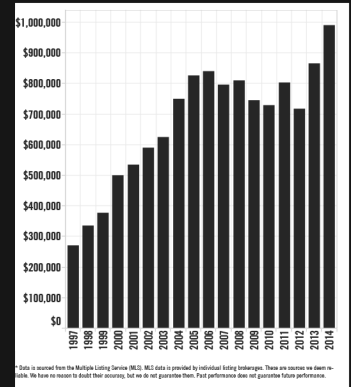
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Letters

from page 8

in or out. Heaven help us if an ambulance needs to exit Mystic or Auburn to travel to Alta Bates emergency.

What a nightmare! What a dangerous and unacceptable situation! Sadly, Oakland officials allowed a remote, publicly traded company, whose loyalty lies with its shareholders, to build a store too big for the neighborhood (and they are going to build a larger one at a more appropriate location not one mile away). They allowed Safeway to put the loading bay abutting the street (an appalling precedent). They allowed Safeway to use our streets as delivery lanes and cause massive inconvenience and dangerous circumstances around that entire area. Oakland decision makers are responsible for this appalling situation and they are responsible for demanding that it be remedied.

— **Camille Reed**

SUPPORT LOCAL, NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES

EDITOR:

After enduring months of construction of the new Safeway on College, beloved neighborhood businesses have suffered reduced patronage due to the loss of parking, traffic congestion, and, most recently, blocked access to storefronts.

These businesses now face the challenge

of competing with the shiny new behemoth. I urge my neighbors to give extra consideration to shopping across the street from Safeway in the coming months to help get our local businesses through until the newness of the Safeway wears off, our prior shopping patterns are reestablished, and we realize again that it's just a Safeway and appreciate how fortunate we are for what's across the street.

— **James Austin**

SERVICE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

EDITOR:

With all the commentary about the remodeled Safeway and entreaties by many to keep patronizing the independent shops across the street, I'm reminded what makes this neighborhood, my home since birth, a good place for me to live and shop. It's those wonderful people behind the counters!

At La Farine, Vino, Yasai Market and Cole Coffee are bright, smart, engaging people with a true customer service ethic. And not at just these fine shops. On down the avenue to Noodle Theory, Spasso's, the shops in Market Hall and the others. They recognize us when they take our orders. They chat a bit if they have time. They are not anonymous to us nor we to them.

These are the people who help a lot to make these small businesses what they



are, that keep us coming back. They are a significant part of the fabric of this neighborhood, and we owe it to them and to the business owners to keep Rockridge a place in which they will survive and prosper.

— **Claire Lomax**

SAFWAY AND COLLEGE AVE PAVING

EDITOR:


1. I notice that Philz Coffee is going into one of the retail spaces at Safeway on College. I didn't think that the zoning allowed chain stores. Philz has 20 stores, counting the one on College.

2. How come the paving work on College under the BART station only did half of the very rough street? There is still a very rough patch.

— **Bill Dutcher**

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Riders raise their cycles in celebration upon arriving at the State Capitol in 2014. /Ride for a Reason

Ride for a Reason: Oakland Schools

by Michael Napolitano

Somehow it happened. We became accustomed to teacher wish lists, peeling paint, extra fees for sports and music, too few (if any) counselors, and the highest student-to-teacher ratios in the nation. Budget surpluses have made things better. Proposition 30, Governor Brown's Local Control Funding Formula directs greater resources to the neediest students.

However, California still funds its schools much below the national average, and continues to have the largest class sizes in the nation.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, Proposition 30 would need to provide three times as much revenue as projected, just to boost California's per student funding up to the 2011 national average: and California arguably needs more funding per student because it has the highest number of English language learners and students living in poverty.

Nothing is more important to our future

than ensuring that all our children receive a good education. As Scoop Nisker likes to say: "If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own." That's just what we plan to do!

Join us for the 7th annual Ride for a Reason on Saturday, May 16, a bike ride from Oakland to Sacramento to draw attention to the ongoing K-12 education funding crisis, and also to raise funds for school enrichment programs. Last year, 260 riders pedaled to Sacramento and raised \$106,000 which was shared by six local public schools.

This year, we have two rides to choose from: 45 and 109 miles. **We provide all the support you will need to go the distance on May 16.** We encourage all riders to raise \$250 or more in pledges, but the only real requirement is to ride.

Get more detailed information and register now to volunteer or donate at <http://rideforareason.dojiggy.com>.



Frog Park Amenity Update & Earth Day Party Preview

Many people have been asking when the Frog Park enhancements will be ready.

While we received strong support for the enhancements, we are adjusting the design to address concerns raised by neighbors close to the park.

A goal of the enhancements is to provide additional play opportunities for toddlers and disabled children, especially via use of a swing and the spinner. Parents with mobility challenges will find the enhancements make the park more accessible.

In other news, we thank you — individuals, businesses and foundations — for your contributions. We are close to our \$50K fundraising goal for the enhancements, and hope to reach it soon. Watch for information via www.frogpark.org and in The Rockridge News.

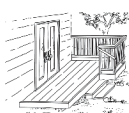
Thank you park users and residents for your patience during this lengthy outreach and design process. If you have comments or questions, write me at chair@frogpark.org — Carol Behr, FROG Chair, and Theresa Nelson, Park Co-Founder

Frog Jump-Notes & Activities:

Mark your calendar for Earth Day Cleanup and FROG Family Fest — Saturday, April 18, Frog Park, Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt.


More Jump-Notes:

Welcome to our new committee members. We are still seeking volunteers with the following skills: • Marketing and communication; • Community event planning and coordination; • Gardening/botanical expertise (e.g., butterfly garden); • Park maintenance (city coordination, help during events). Contact info@frogpark.org with questions or to volunteer.



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Esther McFeely, Rockridge Resident and Centenarian, Passes Away



Esther McFeely

January 19, 1911

February 13, 2015

Esther Ann Hunt McFeely, believed to be the longest surviving Oakland Tech High alumna, left us quietly at age 104 on February 13, 2015, in the presence of her children gathered in the Rockridge home in which she had lived since 1920.

Esther was born in San Francisco January 19, 1911, to Howard and Cecelia Hunt and spent her early years in Nevada City where her grandfather had been a “grubstaker” during the California Gold Rush of the 1850s.

Esther married high school

sweetheart Fred McFeely on June 7, 1941, a union from which daughter Suzy Ruhe, of Coarsegold, and son James McFeely, of Alameda, were born.

Esther’s siblings Teddy Hunt and Mary Steeves predeceased her.

Esther supported her children through Camp Fire Girls and Cub Scouts and received a PTA Life Membership from Rockridge Grammar School, which she attended as a child. She also volunteered at Children’s Fairyland and the Oakland Baby

Zoo as Mother Goose. Later, she raised several baby chimps too young for the zoo under the direction of Suzy, a zookeeper. She was also the floral planner for her senior center. (Most of the flowers were “donated” from neighbors’ gardens.)

When her children were young, Esther opened her home as a neighborhood ballet studio and invited the mothers of the children’s classmates to enroll them.

Her front porch was usually

▶ **Esther, page 12**

About Esther: Liz Adams Rebensdorf/Early Family Friend

Our Mom, Martha Adams, and Esther were best friends; the McFeely family lived at one end of Lawton and we were at the other end. We four sisters (the Adams girls) were always grumpy when we would be out with Mom and we’d run into Esther, since that meant we had to stand around and wait for a long time while they chatted.

I (Liz) fondly remember that several times, we’d pull Esther’s pump organ out onto her front porch, Mom would play Christmas carols, and neighbors would gather around to sing.

It was always exciting when Mom had to go to the hospital to deliver another baby sister; I’d get to go to Esther’s. Whereas Mom would put our school lunch – sandwich and milk – into a metal lunchpail, Esther would produce a lunch with everything (carrot sticks, potato chips, cookies,

pickle, unknown goodies) all wrapped up individually in wax paper. Sister Motsy remembers when we were home alone and our dog Toots went into labor. One of us ran to get Esther, and she came scurrying down the block, sat on the kitchen floor and helped deliver the puppies, exclaiming each time, “Oh, this one is a beauty!” Another time, Mom called Esther down to look at the spots on Motsy’s leg, fearing it might be chicken pox; Esther diagnosed it as felt marker spots, Motsy’s poor attempt to stay home from school that day. Sister Katsy remembers Esther as being the neighborhood organizer – if something fun was happening, Esther had made it happen. Our Mom didn’t sew, a handicap with four “ballerina” daughters, so Esther was the force behind many a ruffled tutu. Sister Ginny remembers Esther walking to

Barbara Anderson/Neighbor

Esther and I were neighbors on Lawton Avenue; we lived less than a block apart. Most often, we’d rendezvous on the sidewalk: I would be in the front yard forever weeding, she would be pushing a wirebasket cart up to the College Avenue Presbyterian Church with her garden blossoms for the Senior Center tables. Conversation was wide-ranging, starting with gardens, often our pets, neighborhood happenings, and certainly RCPC hot buttons. Esther could be depended upon to speak her mind.

Lots of us shared her dining room table monthly for the counting and sorting of RCPC newsletters for distribution. I remember the huge pile of random rubber bands of all sizes

which she collected, and the drama around opening up the round table to add extra leaves. I remember how sweetly she welcomed our kids who often came along after school.

Brooke Levin and I fondly remember a special decoration in her living room at Christmastime. On a small table sat a two-foot tall artificial tree heavily encrusted with pins, bracelets, brooches, earrings all dazzling with rhinestones, pearls, cloisonné enamel and more. She was casual about it, something she and other family members had made a long time ago; it always came out for the holidays. Today, each of those costume jewels would be treasured finds in the local vintage shops.

and from the corner store (Otto Raible’s grocery store on James at Clifton). We all loved Esther: she

was like a second mother to us and a big happy part of our Rockridge childhood.

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Jody London

from page 1

fall to promote early childhood education. We are also excited about the addition of Ray Mondragon as our school district's first Chief of Early Learning.

■ **Solar Power Investment at 16 Schools:** Thanks to voters for their approval in 2012 of Measure J which allowed financing 3.6 megawatt panels at 16 schools, including Oakland Tech, Oakland International, and Sankofa. With full operation, we expect savings of \$1.5 million per year.

■ **AAMA Leader Receives National Recognition:** Chris Chatmon, Director of our African American Male Achievement office (the first of its kind in the country), was recognized by a national education journal as one of 15 Leaders to Learn From. Chatmon will be honored at the White House on March 18.

■ **Strategic Regional Analysis:** This is a new way of looking at every part of Oakland for where we do and do not have quality schools, and how we serve our 48,000 students in district and charter schools. A preliminary analysis is being presented to community groups around the district.

■ **Reaching a Multi-Year Contract with our Teachers' Union:** Negotiations have been ongoing. The District has offered to increase compensation and reduce class sizes in early and special education. We are mindful that 80 percent of our general fund revenue comes from the State (and California is 46th in the country in per-pupil funding).

■ **Providing Support to Schools:** Oakland is engaged in the Intensive Support School Initiative at five schools (Brookfield Elementary, Castlemont, Fremont and McClymonds High Schools, Frick Elementary). The initiative provides specific resources that will assist school communities with finding long-term solutions to raising the quality of education for their students.

Any one of these topics would take up a full column. You can learn more under the Hot Topics and Initiatives tabs at www.ousd.k12.ca.us and reach me via email at jody.london@ousd.k12.ca.us.

If your group or organization is interested in learning more about our work to create a school district that holds itself accountable for superior outcomes for all students, please email me to schedule a small group discussion.

Chabot Auction

from page 1

A sampling of the generous offerings:
Local Businesses: Cole Hardware, CREAM, Lesley Evers, Oaklandish, Pave, Pegasus, and Smitten.

Restaurants: Arizmendi, Chez Panisse, Filippo's, Jules Thin Crust, Rockridge Café, and Zachary's Pizza.

Get-aways: Tahoe Donner, St. Helena, and a family retreat at the Cosumnes River.

Local Fun: Fairyland, Lawrence Hall of Science, Taro's Origami Studio, East Bay Symphony, and a Private Challah Baking lesson.

Sporting Events: Oakland A's, SF Giants, and Warriors.

We thank this year's sponsors whose generous underwriting supports our financial success.

Title Sponsors for the 2015 event are Rosie Papazian of Berkeley Hills Realty and RPM Mortgage. Additional sponsors include Jeff Roberts and The Grubb Company,

Tom Nitsan at MPR Financial, Ron Kriss of Lawton Associates, Adventure Time, Maxi Lilley of Red Oak Realty, Faramarz Moeen-Ziai and Stephanie Walton at Bank of Commerce Mortgage, Rebecca Amato of Amato Architecture, Hope Broderick of The Grubb Company, Jill Martenson at Piedmont Dental by Design, Patrick Pernice of 4by6.com, Bakesale Betty, Stephanie Walton, Zoe Cohen, L.Ac., and Elizabeth Norris of Vintage European Posters.

As you look for local businesses to patronize, please keep these generous people in mind.

Chabot appreciates the support of our entire community and we look forward to seeing you virtually at our online auction. A link to the bidding will be available on our home page at www.chabotelementary.org.

Esther

from page 12

decorated for the holidays and was the center for caroling, accompanied by the playing of the family antique pump organ. Her kitchen was the center for many family celebrations.

Fred passed away in 1967. Esther's grandson Patrick resides in San Diego with Danielle, Alyssa and Mr. Kitty. Nieces Donna Sage lives in Hidden Valley, Dori Steeves in Redding, Dawn Mazarakis in London, and Nelly McFeely in Oakland. Nephew Donald Steeves lives in Walnut Creek. For those who made Esther comfortable — Carmen, Christy and "the Italian Lady" — we thank you.

A memorial is planned for the near future.

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Deco Art

from page 4

adults and children at Deco Art, with a new series of classes planned for the spring.

Looking toward a “renaissance for art” in Rockridge, Stern has a vision for more public murals and decorative adornment for everything from utility boxes to business interiors. In 2013, her collaborative mural work was featured in the Oakland Tribune by columnist Tammerlin Drummond. And while she sees the potential in Rockridge’s future, she is also connected to the neighborhood’s past and present: “Rockridge has been my gateway to Oakland and the Bay. I have found a community of artists in the neighborhood. I enjoy the diversity and have known a lot of the original Italian residents and I continue to try and engage my neighbors in city politics

by hosting gatherings and art shows for people to meet their community.”

Deco Art, 5495-C Claremont Avenue, is open for art exhibitions and classes. Proprietor Caroline Stern has a portfolio of work online at <http://www.decoart.gallery>, and can be contacted at carolinestern@sbcglobal.net or 510/593-4574.

Carl Schmitz is Art Research Librarian at the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation. He was in the last UC Santa Cruz class taught by Magic Humanist muralist Eduardo Carrillo, and can be reached at cschmitz@diebenkorn.org.



Deco Art is on the northwest side of Claremont Avenue, just before it passes under the Grove-Shafter Freeway. /Deco Art

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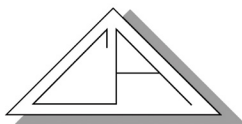
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Land Use

from page 3

with the transition from 60' to 45' occurring about two-thirds of the way from 51st to 49th. The proposed height is consistent with the zoning at the corners, but the transition should occur closer to 51st, per the current height limit. SRM representatives say the height variance is necessary to meet proposed densities in a way that minimizes impact to neighbors, and the increased height occurs along Broadway where increased height is appropriate, so should be allowed.

Neighbors feel that extensive effort went into establishing those height limits during the update to the General Plan and Zoning in recent years, and they should be respected in the design. They regard the proposed project as very massive to neighboring single family residential homes behind it and adjacent on 49th, and the step-down in heights as insufficient and additionally causes more significant shadowing than it might otherwise, so additional height exacerbates the concern.

SRM's position is that they have pushed project density toward Broadway to address this concern, and are building less than the zoning would allow on the portions of the project that abut neighboring properties, so must make up the loss elsewhere. Neighbors are not convinced, and are seeking further meetings with SRM. RCPC is encouraging the parties to further this conversation prior to the planning commission hearing.

■ **Redwoods:** A number of neighbors contacted RCPC regarding posted redwood tree removal permits filed for the vacant former Shell station site at College and Claremont. RCPC encouraged members and neighbors to seek additional information from the city arborist and report back to the community via the Rockridge News. See "Redwood Trees," page 3, for details.

E-mail Rockridge News Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: Rockridge News Community Calendar, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Discuss crime and public safety with representatives of OPD. 2nd Thurs(3/12) each month, 7:30pm. **Featured speaker: Dan Kalb, District 1 City Councilman.** Rockridge Library, College and Manila. Confirm mtg. at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

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For All Ages: Ready, Set, Connect Program. Computer tutors help with basic skills, portable devices, e-books & audiobooks, and social media. Tues, 4:30-6:30 pm and Sat, 2-4 pm. Drop-ins OK. Info: Vicky Chen, 597-5017.

FOR CHILDREN

NOTE: no story times Apr 1 thru 12.

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

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

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **New Sibling Class: Parents & children invited together.** Expecting a new baby? Show your toddler or preschooler what's going to happen. All types of families welcomed to this hands-on, new-baby-preparation workshop. Sat, 3/21, 11:30am-12:30pm. Space is limited; call Erica to register: 597-5017.
- **Kamishibai Making Workshop Series with Erica:** For all fledgling (or experienced) artists & writers (ages 7 to 13). **Sign up now to register for 4 consecutive sessions on Tuesdays in April, 4:30 - 6pm.** Watch a Kamishibai presentation; brainstorm story ideas; story-board the action & illustrations; and create artwork on Kamishibai panels. The goal is for each participant to complete their own Kamishibai story by the end of the fourth session, and present it to a live audience in May. More information & to register: call Erica: 597-5017.

FOR TEENS

- **Wearable Technology - Power LED Cuffs:** We will sew a simple circuit with LEDs to create a power cuff that lights up on command. Fri, 3/13, 3:30 - 4:30pm.
- **Teen Advisory Board (ages 14-18):** Advise the library how to better serve teens. Get community service credit for school. Snacks provided. 1st Sat. each month, 1 to 2pm.
- **Rockridge Ninjas:** Watch Anime, 5 - 6:30pm; 2nd Tues. each month.
- **Teen 'Scape:** Play video & board games, make crafts, enjoy light snacks. Every Wed, 2 to 3:30pm.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group: All writers welcome.** Bring 15 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month; 1 to 5pm. Sponsored by the Calif. Writers Club, Berkeley branch. Info: 420-8775 or Writefoxf@aol.com.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice and referrals. First Tues. each month, 5 to 7pm. (Advance sign-up starts 4:45pm at adult reference desk). **Note:** Volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present. Call to confirm.

NOTE: No art exhibits scheduled until further notice.

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Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs, 3/12, 6:30pm. **Marie-Rose Phan-Le:** *Talking Story: One Woman's Quest to Preserve Ancient Spiritual and Healing Traditions.*
- Fri, 3/13, 7:30pm. **"Friday Nights" conversation/podcast series: Mallory Ortberg and Suzanne Fischer** discuss *Nightingale Wood* by **Stella Gibbons.** (Info about this series at www.dieselbookstore.com/event/oakland-friday-nights-conversation-podcast-series).
- Sat, 3/21, 7:30pm. **Literary Karaoke Night:** Bring something from home or grab a book off one of our shelves (**not something you wrote**), read one or two pages from it, and perhaps just as important, listen to everybody else do the same. (There just might be a bottle of something strong and distilled, should you need some liquid courage.)
- Sun, 3/22, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Willa Schneberg** and **Rob Lipton.**
- Thurs, 3/26, 6:30pm. Local author/photographer **Camille Seaman:** *Melting Away: A Ten-Year Journey Through Our Endangered Polar Regions;* joined by **Richard Whittaker.**
- Fri, 3/27, 9pm (doors open 8:30). **Music Performance** with bluegrass banjo and guitar impresario **Avram Siegel,** joined by **Mike Witcher,** and **Sharon Gilchrist.** **Note:** \$10 cover charge for this event; all proceeds go to the musicians.
- Tues, 3/31, 6:30pm. **Peter Heller:** *The Painter.*
- Thurs, 4/2, 6:30pm. **Kimber Simpkins:** *Full: How I Learned to Satisfy My Insatiable Hunger and Feed My Soul.*

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

Jazz at the Chimes

Duo Gadjo Quartet: Parisian Hot Club Era Swing. Sunday, 3/15, 2 pm. Tickets at the door (cash only) beginning 12:30pm (doors open 1:30): \$15 general; \$10 srs. (60+) and students. Refreshments and reception follows to meet the performers. More at www.duogadjo.com. The series features Bay Area jazz musicians in a landmarked Julia Morgan venue: Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. **Wheelchair accessible. Free parking.** Info: www.jazzatthechimes.com, chimesjazz@gmail.com or 654-0123.

Square Dance in North Oakland

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

Free AARP Sponsored Tax Assist

For middle and low-income seniors. Thursdays through April 9. Bring all relevant documents for yourself and all dependents. Make appt. at reception desk. No. Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. More info: 597-5085.

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