

THE Rockridge News

VOL. 24 ■ NO. 6 ■ ISSUE NO. 257 ■ June 6, 2009 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: Sunday, September 20. Purchase tickets at www.rockridge.org

Rockridge Kitchen Tour Introduces the Margarido House

Only in Rockridge: Eight Kitchens Plus a Full-Home Tour of a National Showpiece

by Jennifer Edmister,
Kitchen Tour co-chair

After a difficult selection process, we are pleased to announce our choice of eight spectacular kitchens for the 2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour.

This year, we are also proud to offer a full, open-home tour of the famed Margarido House, the first new home in the United States to be both LEED-H certified and Greenpoint rated. The Margarido House



PHOTO: McDONALD CONSTRUCTION

also represents an extraordinary collaboration of builders, vendors and community members whose goal of exquisite design

◀ Experience eight spectacular Rockridge kitchens plus the nationally renowned Margarido House on September 20. Save now: buy advance tickets!

and top-to-bottom green strategy has been well accomplished.

Margarido House features solar electric power and solar thermal heating, onsite rainwater reclamation, locally sourced and recycled building materials, a rooftop garden and more.

Presale tickets for the Rockridge Kitchen Tour, which includes eight kitchens plus the

▶ **Kitchen Tour 2009, page 3**

Acclaimed FROG Park at Risk: Budget to Minimize Maintenance, Staff



RCPC Protests Park Maintenance Cuts

RCPC and FROG (Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt) have each written to City Council President and District One councilmember Jane Brunner protesting City plans to curtail maintenance of the highly popular FROG Park. The proposal is part of the draft 2009-10 fiscal year budget, which attempts to address

▶ **FROG Park Threatened, page 6**

◀ More than 100 volunteers celebrate their work at the Hardy play area, October 2001. See more FROG Park photos, new and old, on FROG's Facebook page or <http://www.frogpark.org>. PHOTO: BILL CALDWELL

RCPC Town Hall Meeting **AGENDA** June 2009

Thursday, June 18, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College Avenue at Manila,
Community Room (Upstairs)

Solar Seminar!

June's RCPC Town Hall Meeting features a look at solar systems, their installation, and their advantages (and disadvantages). Find out if solar power is for you.

Are you tired of paying PG&E for electricity? Do you wish you could do more to save the environment and prevent global warming? An increasing number of Rockridge residents have trimmed, or even eliminated, their electric bill through solar power. Additional savings are possible with the federal stimulus package and state and federal tax incentives. Learn all about it at RCPC's June 18 Town Hall Meeting.

Weaving Spiders: Get Caught in Rockridge's Web



by Colby Lavin, RCPC boardmember

Talking about Rockridge is pretty easy. Talking with Rockridge and its 10,000 residents is a lot trickier. There are lots of great voices in our community from which we can learn about the huge Safeway remodel, an event at a local school, a volunteer day at one of our parks, or how to create a beautiful garden;

▶ **Rockridge Web, page 12**

In My Opinion

Rockridge and the Economic Tsunami

How We Can Maintain the Livability of Rockridge in Bad Times

by Doug Patton

The economic crisis we now face requires us to consider what was once unimaginable: that the services we receive from government agencies are becoming scarce, and will continue to be challenged at an increasing rate. We have depended on these services to a large extent to help create Rockridge as a special place. The issue before us is: what do we need to do to maintain the livability of Rockridge?

Most of the government funding comes from the city of Oakland, which gets most of its revenue from sales tax, property tax and real estate transfer taxes. These sources are being severely diminished through lower sales, car dealerships closing, lowering property values that will result in lower property tax revenue, and other challenges to the income stream available for providing services. The shortages are so drastic that some cities are finding it necessary to file for bankruptcy.

Mayor Dellums has presented his budget, which calls for substantial reductions in all services, including police, parks and recreation. School funding is also being reduced. Added to that is the State's budget crisis. The

Governor has stated that the failure of the propositions on the recent ballot will result in the taking of an additional \$2 billion from cities' property tax revenues. Rockridge will feel the pain from the reduced funds available to provide the services we have come to depend upon.

Our national leaders want us to believe that what is happening now is just an aberration, and that we will eventually return to the way things were before the crisis hit. For a number of reasons, that result is highly improbable. We should prepare for a different result; that public agencies will no longer provide the services that we have come to depend upon as being permanent and ongoing.

We should begin to prepare now for the effect of the crisis on Rockridge. To start, I submit that we should explore the following:

1. What services do we rely upon to maintain the quality of life we now experience in Rockridge?

2. If these services are severely diminished, what will be the effect on the quality of life in Rockridge? Are we agreeable to

♦ Economic Tsunami, page 11

Doug Patton is a member of the RCPC board of directors. The opinions expressed in this article are his alone and do not necessarily represent the views of the RCPC.

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HOURS:

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: CLOSED

Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

THE Rockridge News

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

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Ortrun Niesar.....The Muse
Barry Kaufman.....Food
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Theresa Nelson.....Neighborhood Merchant
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- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in **The Rockridge News**?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Want to volunteer to be a **Rockridge News** block captain?
- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:

Editor: editor@rockridge.org

www.rockridge.org

The Rockridge News, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618

RCPC Voicemail: 510/869-4200

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

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES

Publication date of the next issue is

☛ July 6, 2009

☛ July deadline is June 18, 2009.

Advertising rates are \$26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)

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Kitchen Tour 2009

from page 1

Margarido open house on September 20, are available now for \$30 each. (Day-of-tour tickets are \$40.) To buy your advance tickets now, return the coupon below with a check by mail or visit www.rockridge.org.

Margarido Reception, September 17

This year, we are also pleased to offer something extra. For the Premium Ticket price of \$60, you will delight in the full Rockridge Kitchen Tour experience on Sunday, plus an evening cocktail reception at the Margarido House on Thursday, September 17. Spend a late summer evening taking in the gracious 4,000+ square foot home at your leisure, enjoying the San Francisco skyline from the patio or the rooftop garden, and lingering over a bite and a drink in good company. Premium tickets are limited.

Volunteers Still Needed

We are still recruiting volunteer docents to guide tour guests through our showpiece


kitchens. Two to three docents are assigned to each home, and rotate duties, greeting guests at the door, guiding them through the kitchens and helping to serve refreshments on back patios. Docents are treated to a pre-tour of three kitchens, as part of their training. If you are interested in being a docent, contact Nancy Sale at 655-4625.

To assist with other pre-tour and event day activities, please contact Jennifer Edmister at 547-2841 or toejrb@earthlink.net.

Brochure Advertising

The kitchen tour brochure provides merchants, real estate brokers, builders, architects, designers, decorators, and other residential home professionals with an opportunity to reach an interested and enthusiastic audience.

For more information about advertising space in the tour brochure, contact Jo Ellis at joellis1@hotmail.com, or at 510/653-3210, after 12 noon.



Advance Ticket Order Form

Save me a spot for the 2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour
Sunday, September 20, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Please send me the following tickets:

_____ Standard Tickets @ \$30 presale price = \$ _____

_____ Premium Tickets (Includes 9/17 cocktail reception) @ \$60 = \$ _____

TOTAL = \$ _____

Name: _____ Phone (____) _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Please mail this coupon, a self-addressed stamped envelope and your check or money order payable to: RCPC Kitchen Tour, 5245 College Avenue PMB 311, Oakland, 94618.

Thank you!

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., at the Rockridge Library. Next meeting: Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Land Use Meeting Agendas
Contact Stu Flashman at 652-5373 or chair@rockridge.org for a copy of the current Land Use Committee meeting agenda.

Land Use Update

by *Stuart Flashman*,
RCPC Land Use Committee chair

Red Oak Realty (5915 College Avenue – Dreyer’s Building)

In early May, RCPC learned that Red Oak Realty’s use permit application had been pulled off the June 3 Planning Commission agenda. We then heard that Dreyer’s, the landlord for the site, had reconsidered and decided that it would not rent to Red Oak Realty, making the use permit application moot. Dreyer’s indicated that it had not realized the neighborhood’s concerns about the use of the space.

Presumably, Dreyer’s change of heart had something to do with letters Rockridge residents wrote to the City and/or Dreyer’s expressing their objections to Red Oak’s proposal. If so, give yourselves a pat on the back.

RCPC would like to thank the more than 40 College Avenue merchants who signed the petition to the City opposing Red Oak Realty’s move. We think the City got the

message that College Avenue retail needs and deserves continued protection.

RCPC will be working with Dreyer’s and its real estate agent, Cityshapers, to identify one or more appropriate retail tenants for this large and important space.

College Avenue Safeway Rebuild (6310 College Avenue at Claremont)

Safeway has now filed its formal application with the City for a new store complex, including a second-story Safeway of just under 50,000 sq. ft., located on top of parking (173 customer spaces, with a separate surface lot for employees and delivery trucks) and 11,000 sq. feet of small shops along College Avenue. While the design for the complex is better than Safeway’s previous proposal, RCPC remains opposed to the project due to its large size and associated environmental and economic impacts on the community.

The various stakeholder groups that had participated in trying to work with Safeway on new store plans have now formed themselves into a coalition called Friends And

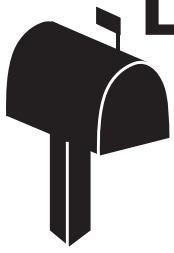
Neighbors of College Avenue (or FANs of College Avenue, for short). Over the next few months, as the City starts its environmental review of the project, FANs will be working on trying to get Safeway to rethink and revise its proposal into something more in keeping with its College Avenue location. Please check the RCPC website at <http://rockridge.org> for pictures of the Safeway plans and updates on FANs and its activities.

Rockridge Montessori Expansion Project (5616 Broadway)

Rockridge Montessori’s original use permit application for the proposed expansion to over 200 students was deemed incomplete. The City is currently reviewing the applicant’s recently submitted supplemental application materials.

RCPC has raised concerns about the project’s potential traffic impacts, especially the safety hazards that would be caused by extensive U-turns at the Broadway/Manila/Monroe intersection in front of the school.

♦ Land Use Committee, page 12



Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and city/neighborhood must be included for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity.

NEIGHBORS' RESPONSE TO COLLEGE PREP SCHOOL EXPANSION PLANS

EDITOR:

College Prep's ambitious expansion plans, presented by RCPC on May 6, include an additional 25,000 sq. ft. of new buildings including a 10,000 sq. ft. Performing Arts Center, increased student enrollment, and the removal of old growth trees protected by City ordinance in the original permit. I have been asked to bring to your attention neighbors' primary concerns about these plans and suggestions for better adapting them to neighborhood needs.

1. Parking/Traffic:

Streets surrounding the school are already packed with parked "school cars," creating parking problems for residents and visitors and hindering emergency vehicle access to homes further up the hill. Morning traffic is so congested that some neighbors have difficulty exiting their driveways.

Suggestion: Close off the Eustice Avenue drop-off and make it a one-way emergency exit. Consider a morning shuttle from Lake Temescal parking lot to the school.

2. Size and rental of Performing Arts building:

Considering the tight neighborhood setting, this 450-seat building would be an eyesore, and, when rented out as planned, would spill beyond the school's 107 parking places creating formidable parking congestion and noise at night and on weekends.

Suggestion: Reconfigure the size, location and design of this building with help from an architect and a developer from the neighborhood. Adopt a definite NO RENTAL policy.

3. Removal of Old-Growth Trees:

The trees have been the peace bridge between the school and its neighbors. In

this tight, close neighborhood, the trees are the only barrier between the neighborhood and the sights and sounds of school rallies, assemblies and dances and they keep the air cleaner for everybody.

Suggestion: Reconfigure plans to allow no removal of old-growth oaks or redwoods.

4. Future Unregulated Growth:

College Prep's 1993 amended use permit allowed an enrollment of 325 students. Enrollment is now in violation at 350. The school plans to add students forthwith with no guarantee that enrollment will not continue to increase. The City of Oakland does not have the staff to monitor adherence to permits. For instance, Bentley School in Oakland now enrolls over 50 percent more students than its legal permit allows. Given the present parking, traffic and noise problems, any increase in population is seen by most neighbors as civically irresponsible. The likelihood and effect of future runaway enrollment is mind-boggling.

Suggestion: RCPC, as an elected public agency, should regularly monitor College Prep's numbers to ensure they stay at "permitted" numbers.

The City's deadline for comments has been extended to June 30. Neighbors will be meeting with RCPC and City staff to present their suggestions. Hopefully, RCPC will come into compliance with its own potential conflict of interest on this issue by asking any members with ties to the school – trustees, former parents, current parents,

etc. – to recuse themselves from weighing in on the school's expansion plans.

Responding to a neighbor's letter, College Prep Head of School Murray Cohen said, "I understand your point about not paying enough attention to establishing and maintaining good relationships with our neighbors. Now that we are alert to that failure we will, with your understanding and help, repair that damage."

Hopefully this new, good-neighbor policy will reflect itself in some mutually respectful compromises to these super-sized expansion plans.

— **Laura Santina**

MURRAY COHEN, CPS HEAD OF SCHOOL, RESPONDS

EDITOR:

Challenges bring opportunities; problems, solutions. College Prep welcomes the surfacing of what have been largely quiet frustrations and irritations that some of our neighbors have been experiencing. The most sustainably effective answer to current (and any future) issues is a "standing committee" of neighbors and school people that meets regularly to identify promptly points of conflict and opportunities for cooperation. College Prep is eager to help bring about such a group.

Briefly, on the specific matters that Laura Santina raises:

1. College Prep will substantially enhance its active parking and traffic plans, including closing off the Eustice gate as an entrance to the school.

2. The plans for a 350-seat (not 450) performing arts center will be in keeping with the scale and style of the rest of campus, which has an intimate, rustic feel. The school's policy of not renting any of its facilities will continue to apply to future construction.

▶ **Letters, page 5**



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Letters

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3. We are at least as fond of our trees and outdoor orientation as anyone. We will remove as few trees as necessary for construction, paying particular attention to mature trees, and we will replace each tree removed with two others.

4. We are building to suit an enrollment that has averaged 335/year for the past 10 years. In the amended Conditional Use Permit (CUP), we are asking for an enrollment cap of 340. Given our current enrollment (349), it will take two to three years to get back to 340, and we would welcome the active monitoring of enrollment, perhaps by the standing neighbor/school committee mentioned above or by the RCPC. If the school, in the future, seeks an enrollment cap over 340, neighbors would be appraised and an amended CUP would be sought.

Thank you, Ms. Santana, for citing my commitment to establish and maintain good relationships with our neighbors. That's good ground for neighborliness going forward.
— **Murray Cohen, Head of School, The College Preparatory School**

RCPC CHAIR STUART FLASHMAN ALSO RESPONDS:

As RCPC Chair, I should disclose that my older daughter graduated from CPS a year ago. However, I no longer have any connections to CPS, other than knowing some of the people there, and do not feel that is a sufficient basis for recusing myself. (By the same token, one RCPC Land Use Committee member lives on a street adjoining CPS, and he did not recuse himself either.) Another Land Use Committee member, Glen Jarvis, serves on the CPS board of trustees, and he did recuse himself from voting on the issue.

I believe that I, and RCPC, can serve a constructive role in resolving the kind of neighborhood disputes involved here, and we intend to continue to do so.

Trim, Expand, Maintain: May's Town Hall Meeting Had Something for All

by Don Kinkead

Audience members at the May Town Hall meeting heard presentations on three different local issues, each broadly posing the question of how to extract the most public benefit from limited resources.

■ Jane Brunner, City Council President, speaking first, detailed the severe City budget shortfall that is likely to reduce programs and services affecting all Oakland residents.

■ Next, Oakland Library staff discussed how a TeenZone in the Rockridge Branch library could be created without encroaching on space and resources already allotted for other uses.

■ Lastly, architects Jerome Buttrick and Tim Wong evaluated Safeway's proposal to build a 50,000 sq. ft. market with parking garage to replace the existing 24,500 sq. ft. store and parking lot at College and Claremont avenues. They sought to determine whether the plan is even a proper use for that retail space, given the existing traffic congestion and the likely negative effect of such a complex on nearby small businesses.

Following are details from each presentation. Your comments and suggestions are important: contact information is included at the end of each topic.

■ Proposed Oakland Budget Targets a Broad Array of City Services

According to Councilmember Jane Brunner, the City faces an \$80 million shortfall for a budget that must be balanced before June 30. There is little room to maneuver, Brunner said.

Of a total City budget of about \$1 billion, \$550 million is federal and state grant money whose uses can't be changed. Of the remaining \$450 million, about \$320 million is for police and fire and is locked in by union contracts that can't be modified without union agreement or arbitration upon contract renewal. The City seeks to negotiate with both unions. Meanwhile, to prevent immediate cuts in police staffing, the City anticipates federal stimulus money starting in October to pay for 140 officers. If that money doesn't come through, those

position may be cut.

Another constraint is \$40 million in debt service payments that can only be changed by renegotiation. The City is pursuing this, with a hoped-for reduction of \$6 million.

That leaves about \$50 million for discretionary programs; this year's budget called for about \$130 million in spending, thus about \$80 million of the discretionary budget must be cut. This is on top of \$40 million in cuts made last October.

Some major funding cut categories include:

■ **PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS:** Loss of maintenance personnel for 212 park areas. Maintenance personnel will be retained for only 104 "priority" locations (mostly at major city parks like Mosswood and Joaquin Miller). Staff and coverage will be reduced at recreation centers. Remaining staff will be shifted to grant funding or fee-based classes and activities. There will be no tree trimming, planting, or maintenance (except for emergencies), no median strip maintenance, no speed bump installation, and reduced street cleaning and maintenance.

■ **LIBRARIES:** Branch libraries will be cut back by at least one day per week; some lower activity libraries (not Rockridge) reduced to two or three days per week with staff sharing; no bookmobiles; reduced programs for kids, teens, etc.

■ **SENIOR SERVICES:** Unless stimulus funds become available, the city's senior shuttle service, run by Bay Area Community Services (BACS), will end, as will other senior services.

■ **PAY CUTS:** City Council will take a 10 percent pay cut. (The Mayor, the City Attorney, and the City Auditor have not agreed to accept pay cuts.)

■ **SAFE?:** Some fee-funded departments, such as the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) and parking enforcement, will be unaffected. However, their funding cannot be used for other purposes.

A special election with three ballot measures in July could modify recently passed "Kids First" legislation to save \$3.9 million, and add two new minor taxes. If these measures fail, additional cuts will

► **May RCPC Meeting, page 10**

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Park Corner

FROG

A monthly update on what's happening at the best community-built and maintained park in Oakland



▲ The Redondo Park site before construction.

► Redondo Park, completed.

PHOTOS: BILL CALDWELL

The pieces of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt — Hardy Park, FROG Park, the Clifton Greenway, and Redondo Park — were each built by volunteer labor using materials purchased with public and community-raised funds. Planned budget cuts will require additional volunteer work just to maintain the park in a decent condition.

FROG Park Threatened

from page 1

an \$80 million budget shortfall.

The proposed budget calls for no maintenance at the Hardy Park play structures and swings, the Redondo Park play structure, the grassy areas of FROG Park, as well as the basketball courts and the dog park. Only the pathway from Clifton Street to Cavour Street would be maintained, because of recent capital improvements there.

RCPC's letter points out that FROG Park has benefited from over \$2 million dollars in capital improvements, as well as thousands of hours of volunteer efforts, and the loss of maintenance could put all of that at risk.

The letter notes that park deteriora-

tion could lead to a resurgence of rodent problems at the park, converting it from a community asset to a public nuisance.

Finally, the letter pleads with the City not to lay off the park's only maintenance worker, Clinton Pugh, whose outstanding efforts led to his being named "employee of the year" two years ago.

The City has held two public budget workshops, May 28 and June 1, where RCPC reiterated its concerns. An official public hearing on the proposed budget will be held June 16 at City Hall, with final adoption slated for June 30.

As always with controversial Council decisions, expressions of public concern are influential. Express your feelings about FROG Park at the June 16 public meeting.

The full RCPC letter is available on the rockridge.org website.

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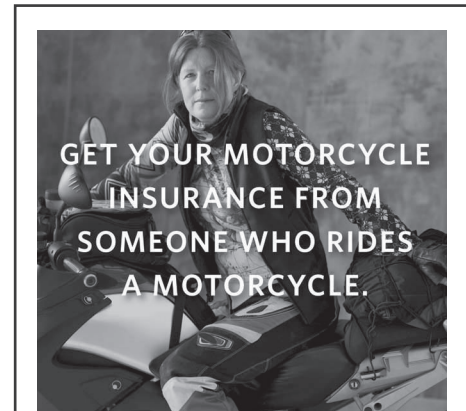
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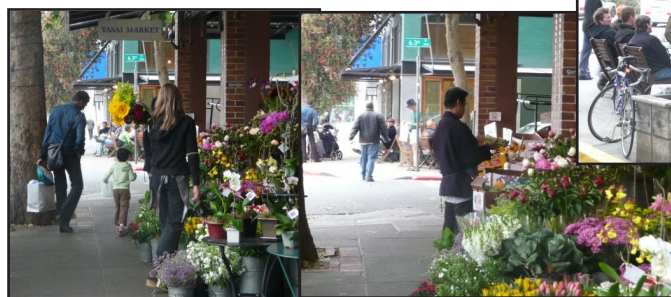
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Changes in Store? – 63rd Street and College

At right is a view looking up 63rd Street toward College Avenue, as depicted by Safeway's architect. In Safeway's current plans, 63rd Street leads directly to a street-level entrance to the parking garage. Left- and right-turn lanes are also to be provided on College at that entrance.



Safeway plans about 180 garage parking spaces for its expansion. No formal traffic studies have been done, but trip extrapolations discussed at the May Town Hall meeting indicate 1,500 additional cars per day could be searching for parking. How many shoppers will use the Alcatraz to Hillegass to 63rd Street route to get to the garage? What effect will that additional traffic have on those two-lane residential streets? How is the current pedestrian-friendly shopping area, pictured here, likely to be affected?



Rendering, top:
 Safeway Web site
 Photos: Christina Ahlstrand

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Thanks to Stephanie Forbes for her services as The Rockridge News Block Captain for the east side of Broadway. Stephanie has to give up her route so if you've got about 30 minutes

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ASK A COP

by PSO Officer Chew and PSO Officer Garrans

The "Ask a Cop" column provides a question-and-answer format for Rockridge Problem Solving Officers (PSO) to answer residents' law enforcement and crime-related questions. PSOs Chew and Garrans hope the column will improve

communications and involve residents in the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) activities. Send your questions to editor@rockridge.org. Please include your name and address. Only your name will be printed.

May's Ask-A-Cop Question

What are the responsibilities and the differences for the PSO Officer compared to the Beat Officer?

— E. Galimba

The beat Officer, also called the patrol Officer, works out of the patrol division. The beat Officer's primary responsibility is to respond to 911 calls and calls for service. These include crimes that are in progress, such as burglaries, robberies, shootings and emergency calls for service.

Responding to 911 calls and emergency calls keeps the beat Officer very busy during the course of his or her shift. The beat Officer may also respond to take reports about crimes that are not actively occurring, but have occurred and need to be documented.

The PSO Officer addresses long-term problems. These are issues and crimes that occur on a continual basis on the beat and necessitate solutions that may take long-term planning and solutions to help abate the

problem. The PSO Officer is not required to respond to 911 or emergency calls, or to calls for service sent out by our dispatch. This enables the PSO Officer to address these continuing, and often deeply embedded, crime issues that the patrol Officer does not have the same time for.

The issues addressed by the PSO are not things that can be solved by one course of action at one time only. The issues the PSO is designed to address range from drug problems at a specific house, corner or block, to traffic, blight and nuisance problems affecting whole neighborhoods.

The responsibility of the PSO Officer is to come up with plans to help abate the problem completely or prevent, as much as possible, such activity from occurring.



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Celebrating the Arts in the Month of June

There is something remarkable about the indomitable spirit of our artists as they struggle to survive the economic crunch and seemingly endless budget cuts.

Last October, they massed together at City Hall alongside other Oakland citizens as an immovable force to preserve Oakland's cultural life. Our civic leaders got the message: the arts give back much more than they take. The arts programs have been spared, for now at least.

Let's take the month of June to acknowledge their importance to our communities. Let's make the arts a part of our lives now. There are many ways to do this, from quietly contemplating a favorite artist's work or attending a play or concert, to sending the kids to a summer arts camp or taking a course yourself at Studio One in our neighborhood. So much of it is free to the public or offered at a nominal fee.

East Bay Open Studios

Traditionally, East Bay Open Studios is held the first two weekends of June. And again this year, from Alameda to El Sobrante, over 400 artists are throwing open their doors, waiting to welcome you. It's a self-guided tour. Samples of art work can be previewed at the Pro Arts Gallery on Second Street in Jack London Square, where artist receptions

THE Rockridge MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

will be held on Thursday, June 4. You can pick up the Directory of East Bay Arts at stores and cafes along College Avenue, or look for the insert in the June 3 edition of the East Bay Express. You can also log on to www.proartsgallery.org, and navigate to the Online East Bay Open Studios Gallery. Then go and enjoy, meet our artists, see art come alive, be part of the creative process for a day. Do buy something, even if it is only a postcard. At the end of the day you may just feel remarkably refreshed in heart and mind. Dealing with things beautiful has that effect.

Bay Area Currents

You thought it would never happen in our lifetimes, but the arts are indeed becoming an ever-stronger presence in the East Bay. New smaller galleries and music venues, however humble, are opening up, particularly in the Fox Theater area. Who knows, Oakland's Art Murmur First Fridays may someday rival First Thursdays in San Francisco. And, if you go, you will be able to say you were there when it all began. You

will find more information online at www.oaklandartmurmur.com. Also, on June 25, 5-8 p.m., the Oakland Art Gallery in collaboration with Pro Arts will hold an opening reception for "Bay Area Currents 2009," showcasing the cream of the crop of Bay Area artists as selected by Kevin Chen, Program Director at Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco. The gallery is located at 150 Frank Ogawa Plaza, City Center, just across from the Rotunda building. It's just a few steps from the 12th Street BART Station, so it's easily accessible. Come and discover this gallery, Oakland's gallery, if you have not been there before.

Kala Art Institute

I can't rave enough about this fine institution which has now opened a full-fledged, gorgeous exhibition space at 2990 San Pablo at Ashby Avenue in Berkeley. Go, and experience this new arts venue. Its inaugural exhibition is entitled "re:con-figure" and runs through June 27.

Kala offers a full array of artist resources for printmaking and digital media, the best to be found in California. It also offers a large collection of prints and other works on paper for sale. Check out the Kala Web site for summer classes as well as year-round courses available both for adults and school-age children: www.kala.org.

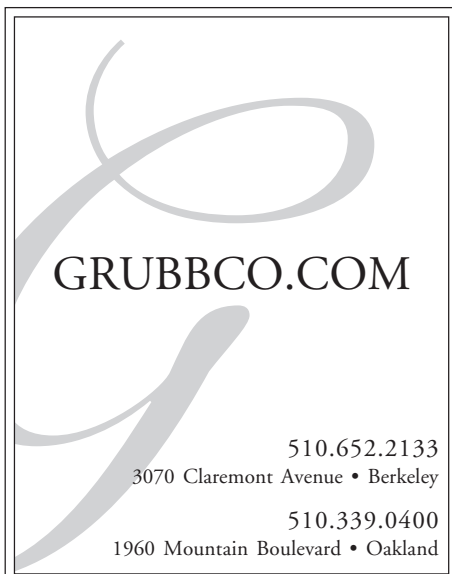
Fairs Galore

When it comes to the arts, there is something out there for everyone to enjoy. Artisans will be out in force at neighborhood street fairs this summer. On June 7, noon to 6 p.m. the Temescal Street Fair will be in full swing on Telegraph Avenue between 47th and 51st Street. And on June 13-14 there will be an especially joyful celebration of arts and crafts at Live Oak Park Fair in Berkeley. To get specifics, go to www.oakparkfair.com.

Montclair Village will have its street fair June 26-28. While you are at the computer, you might also check out the calendar for the Solano Stroll and the Rockridge street fairs coming up in September.

Be pro arts. Support our arts.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@sbcglobal.net



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May RCPC Meeting

from page 5

be needed.

If federal stimulus funds don't come through in October (Dellums, and City staff are working very hard on this, Brunner said), additional major cuts will be needed.

In addition, the state may "borrow" about \$11 million in property tax revenue, which the City would backfill with short-term commercial loans.

The foregoing is based on meeting notes taken by Stuart Flashman.

Send your thoughts and proposals to Jane Brunner: JBrunner@oaklandnet.com.

Rockridge Library TeenZone Design Begins

Built in 1996 following a community-organized fund drive, the Rockridge Branch Library is today called upon to serve a growing pool of library users. Never a collection of dusty tomes where staid librarians harshly shush the careless whisperer, the branch occasionally finds itself caught between users who view the library as a low-key refuge, and younger, often boisterous, users for whom the library is more of a social and collaborative study resource. Comes the teen center to resolve the conflict.

According to Gerry Garzon, associate director of the Oakland Public Library, teen centers are a growing specialty offering of libraries across the country. One such teen-oriented space, called the TeenZone, has been operating since January 2009 at Oakland Main library. It features a computer lab, reading bars and work areas, private group study spaces, quiet reading areas, and more, all designed to better accommodate young people within the library.



Pointing out that the space in the Rockridge Library now allotted for teen use is smaller than one of the library's restrooms, Garzon said planning has begun for a Rockridge Branch TeenZone.

Architect Chris Noll of Noll and Tam described ideas for the space that will be carved out of the present computer area and some shelving space on the east side of the main floor. The new area would be separated from the rest of the main floor and its users by a glass wall with sliding glass doors. Using design "special to the teen," he said, would ensure a space attractive to their use and enjoyment.

To compensate for the changed ground floor space, a portion of the upstairs community meeting rooms would be set aside for a new, quiet, reading and computer use area. Patrons could read, or access the Internet via built-in Wi-Fi (wireless networking system), using their own computers or laptops that would be available for checkout use in the library.

A Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) member in the audience pointed out that the group had invested a lot of money in reference materials not available online and housed near the proposed TeenZone area. He feared the plan would encroach on that material and its users. Noll said planning was in a preliminary stage, leaving time to consider such concerns.

◀ **The computer-use area in the Oakland Main Library's TeenZone, as shown on the Library's Web site.**

Give your suggestions or get more information:

- Patricia Lichter, Rockridge Branch Manager; plichter@oaklandlibrary.org
- Susy Moorhead, Rockridge Branch Teen Librarian; SMoorhead@oaklandlibrary.org
- FORL (Friends of the Rockridge Library): Carol Bieri, chair: cbieri@pacbell.net

Safeway's Big Market Plans Clash with College Avenue Environment

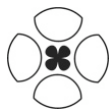
Architects Jerome Buttrick and Tim Wong examined Safeway's proposed new 50,000 sq. ft. store to be built on the site of the present store at Claremont and College avenues. Late in April, Safeway had presented the plan to the community in a public meeting at the Claremont Hotel. The corporation announced that this was the plan it intended to submit to the City to begin project review.

Buttrick, speaking in non-architectural terms and using photographs of Safeway's own graphics, pointed out jarring differences between the corporation's plans and the existing pedestrian-friendly experience that is College Avenue. For example, according to Buttrick, the plan's street frontage, apparently felt by Safeway to be typical of Rockridge's ground floor shops with one to two residential floors overhead, has instead a second-story shopping platform dedicated to a commercial use above the planned ground floor storefronts.

Although Safeway has said its plan is consistent with the neighborhood, many at the meeting felt that the building's size and design dominate the location, corrupting the existing streetscape.

▶ **May RCPC Meeting, page 11**

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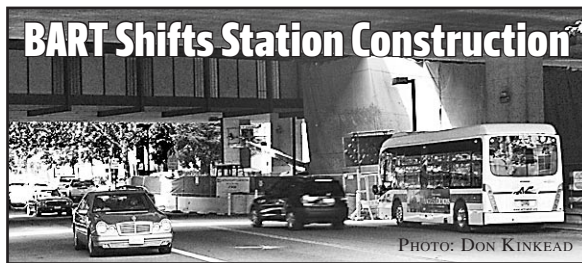


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BART has moved its earthquake construction project area to the east side of College, rerouting traffic temporarily.

Also, BART will begin limited nighttime work from: 1 a.m. - 4 a.m. Friday, May 29, and 9 p.m. Friday, June 12, to 5:30 a.m. Saturday, June 13.

Major noise or lighting impacts are not expected, BART said, and lighting will be directed away from residences.



For nighttime assistance, call BART police, at 510/464-7000. You may also contact the Earthquake

program's information line: 510/874-7425. Visit BART's Web site at www.bart.gov/earthquakesafety.

May RCPC Meeting

from page 10

A group of local architects known as the Local Architects and Planners Guidelines Group has met with Safeway representatives and their architect to discuss local concerns about the project. The group has prepared an alternative, smaller store design that would retain and repair the existing building, add an adjoining structure for storage and a new truck loading area, as well as reconfiguring the present parking lot to provide more parking spaces and a soften-

ing "orchard-style" appearance.

Additional design elements more in keeping with College Avenue's present appearance would be included, Buttrick said.

Contact the following with your thoughts on the Safeway proposal:

- Friends and Neighbors (FANS) of College Avenue: collegeavefandn@gmail.com
- Councilmember District 1: Jane Brunner jbrunner@oaklandnet.com ph. 238-7001
- Oakland Planning Dept.: Peterson Vollmann pvollman@oaklandnet.com ph. 238-6167
- Safewayoncollege.com
- Write to City representatives c/o City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland 94612

Economic Tsunami

from page 2

doing without these services?

3. If we cannot get an outside source to provide these necessary services, can we provide them ourselves, and if so, how? How much, if any, are we willing to pay to support them?

4. Are there other things that we can do that are not provided by outside agencies that would improve the quality of life in Rockridge? If so, do we want to pursue a way to obtain these things?

In Rockridge, we have a substantial amount of experience to be able to meet the coming challenges, such as our history of getting a local parcel tax for a library, and organizing to create the FROG Park.

We have skilled individuals — credentialed teachers, sport coaches, CORE-trained disaster responders — who can provide volunteer services where other traditional sources fail. There are others and we may have to tap into them to meet our needs. Will we need to hire a security service?

I submit that we should start to consider what we want and how we will provide it if the economy continues to suffer the effects of this economic crisis, which appears not only possible but also probable.

To that end, I have proposed to the RCPC board that RCPC set up a committee to investigate how Rockridge might cope with diminished government services. If you would be interested in serving on such a committee, if it is approved, please contact the board via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org.

Note from the RCPC chair: The RCPC board is considering boardmember Patton's proposal and welcomes comments from Rockridge residents. Send your e-mail to chair@rockridge.org, or leave a message on the RCPC voicemail at 510/869-4200.

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Rockridge Sales Jumping Off This June?!

Clsd Date	BR/Bth	Address	Original Price	DOM	LP	SP
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5/15/2009	4/2.5	6154 Buena Vista	\$1,170,000	108	\$1,049,000	\$1,049,000
5/22/2009	3/2.5	344 62nd Street	\$1,075,000	13	\$1,075,000	\$1,120,000
5/15/2009	5/3.5	6168 Contra Costa Rd	\$1,595,000	1	\$1,595,000	\$1,595,000

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Rockridge Web

from page 1

an important part of Rockridge is sharing ideas, experiences and stories.

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has created a Communications Committee to improve how these voices are heard. The committee hopes to find new and creative ways to use The Rockridge News, the Rockridge.org Web site, and RCPC e-mail notifications to keep Rockridge residents informed, entertained, and involved in keeping Rockridge a great place to live.

You can help build community

The committee has so many ways to talk with Rockridge that it needs some help. Do you like writing interesting articles about Rockridge? Are you interested in using your computer science skills to help improve the Web site? Are you familiar with common practices for reaching out to communities? Are you knowledgeable about graphic design? Would you just like to help out? There are many important things to accomplish; you are sure to find a way to help.

Find out more about working with the RCPC Communications Committee. E-mail communication@rockridge.org. Have fun, give back to Rockridge, and create something to share with friends.

Land Use Committee

from page 3

The City's case planner is Ulla Britt-Jonsson (238-3322, ujonsson@oaklandnet.com).

■ Winebar/Restaurant (6000 College Avenue at Harwood)

The RCPC board voted unanimously not to oppose this small winebar/restaurant application. The board is concerned about long-term parking problems for this section of College Avenue and their impact on nearby residents, but felt the burden should not be placed on an individual small shop application. There will be more discussion of parking in the citywide zoning update process (see: Citywide Zoning Update).

■ College Preparatory School (CPS) Facilities Master Plan (6100 Broadway)

The RCPC board reviewed this application at its May meeting and voted not to oppose it, so long as certain conditions are met (in particular, a prohibition on the simultaneous use of the auditorium and performing arts center for public events).

Since then, RCPC has learned of additional concerns from the project's immediate neighbors, and that the comment period on the application has been extended until June

30. The Land Use Committee and board are now taking another look at the project in hopes of getting agreement between CPS and its neighbors on appropriate modifications and conditions to make the project mutually acceptable before it is brought to the Planning Commission.

■ Citywide Zoning Update

The Commercial Corridor Technical Advisory Group, which includes RCPC, held its second discussion meeting on May 14. Staff has come up with an overall framework for revised zoning for the commercial corridors, which include College Avenue, Broadway and Telegraph Avenue. The framework envisions no change in the zoning for College Avenue or the Rockridge section of Broadway. Proposed zoning for Telegraph Avenue is still in flux.

Staff is suggesting a relatively small number of commercial zoning categories that would apply citywide, to be followed up with more locally focused overlay districts specific to the various commercial areas. There would also be an independent set of height limits that would act as an overlay on the commercial zoning. Staff is proposing that parking regulations be revised in a future phase of the rezoning, as there is insufficient staffing and funding to do so now. The staff reports and proposals can be viewed on the City's website at: <http://oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate/>



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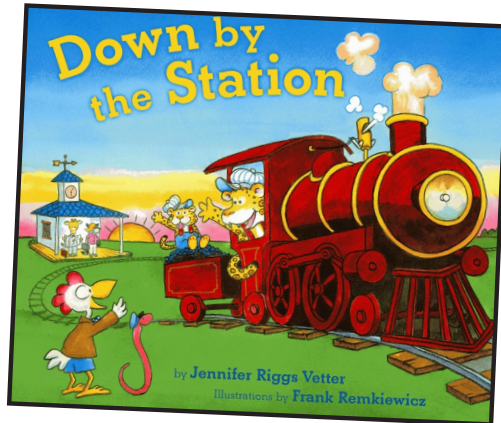
Off We Go! A Book Review

“Down by the Station,” by Rockridge resident Jennifer Vetter

by Gay Ducey, Rockridge Branch Library Children’s Librarian

Transportation picture books work hard. They circulate very briskly, take a lot of punishment, and give a lot of pleasure. While anything with a wheel or rudder will move well, we are always looking for more really good ones Jennifer Riggs Vetter, Rockridge author, can help us with that, because her new book, “Down by the Station,” is as good as it gets.

Using the well-known song of the title, Jennifer has made the trip much more exciting by adding big, snazzy conveyances to the modest little puffer-bellies children



know. The book offers a sailboat, a race car, an excavator and a rocket, among other transport stars.

Pages race along, accompanied by amusing verses, and really satisfying sound effects. (My favorite: “weoooo, weoooo” for the fire engine). At the end, having raised a ruckus, the locomotive pulls into the station,

just in time for bed, with: “SHHHHHHH. Here we stay.”

The illustrations, from Frank Remkiewicz (of the popular Froggy books) successfully complement the text. Cheerful animal characters drive, sail, pilot and work among a palette of bright, true colors that begins with a red locomotive.

In an answer to a child’s dream, a child-animal helps to run each vehicle. Young readers will notice a rooster and snake in each episode, and then see them ascending in the rocket on an extravagant vertical two-page spread. End papers show the cast framed in gold cameos. Nice touch, and just the kind of detail little ones like to pore over.

There is so much to like here. A book-song to be spoken or sung, or both, pages filled with exuberance and good humor, likeable characters, big, glamorous transport, and chug-along verses with a sophisticated rhyme scheme.

The Rockridge Library will be ordering several copies and I intend to read it often to our preschoolers. They are always ready for a great ride.

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Penelope's Aesthetics, a serene garden setting in Rockridge 12 years, specializes in professional beauty needs. Facials, waxing, lash/brow tints, skin tag/capillary removal, permanent make-up, reflexology and more! 30% off w/ad. www.penelopecalef.com 510/594-1552.

Unexpected Guest?

Short-term rental, lovely room 2 blocks from Rockridge BART in owner's flat. A steal. Photos available. Wi-fi, cable, TV. Suitable for one person. Photos available. Barbird@aol.com 510/652-7044.

Electrical Repairs & Remodels

From doorbell repair to whole-house rewiring, we've been doing electrical work in Oakland and Berkeley for over 30 years. Sutorik & Company, lic#397149. 510/655-3677.

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Comfortable, cheery 3BR+2BA family home available for short-term rental. Fully furnished from piano to ping pong, sunny patio. Quiet, peaceful—pines, oaks, birds. Only two hours away. Reasonable weekly rates. E-mail: lowstress-getaway@yahoo.com.

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Official Public Hearing on Proposed Oakland Budget

June 16, City Council Chambers at City Hall, 7pm, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza. Express your concerns and opinions before the final adoption of the budget slated for June 30. For more information: call 238-7001 or JBrunner@oaklandnet.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

NOTE: If you are ages 11 to 16 and are interested in being a summer volunteer at the library, see Erica or Gay or call 597-5057.

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time:** Every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am.
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am, upstairs Community Room (same days and times as Pre-School Story Time).
- **Pajama Story Time:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm, (see events below).

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR CHILDREN:

- **Summer Reading: starts Sat., 6/13** through 8/8. Sign up, read for 8 hrs. over the summer and get prizes. All ages welcome to read or be read aloud to. **Summer Reading Kick-off Party, 6/13,** 2 to 4pm, with painting, Kamishibai stories, games and treats.
- **Magic Andrew:** Tues., 6/16, 7pm.
- **Buki the Clown:** Wed., 6/24, 10:30am.
- **Craft Workshop Making Books:** Thurs., 6/25, 3pm.
- **Puppet Art Theater:** Tale of the Dragon's Tail. Tues., 6/30, 7pm.
- **Making Jewelry with Chelsea Robinson:** Tues., 7/7, 7pm.

FOR TEENS:

- **Rockridge Ninjas (Anime Club): Teens 13 and up,** watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. Second Tuesday each month (6/9 and 7/14), 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting rm.
- **Get Out! Teen Summer Passport Program: Runs June 17 through Aug. 5.** Pick up your Teen Summer Passport at the Library and get your passport stamped as you explore recommended Bay Area Hot Spots. You can also earn stamps by volunteering, doing book reviews, attending library programs, or personalizing your passport with a photo or drawing. **Teens can win prizes such as an iPod Nano, a laptop computer, and a Flip camera.**
- **Call for Book Buddy Volunteers!** Teens will read aloud to younger kids, or listen while new readers practice reading aloud themselves. Every Wednesday, starting June 17th until Aug. 5th, from 2 to 4pm. Contact Susy at 597-5017 to volunteer.

FOR ADULTS – Library sponsored events:

- **Writers' Support/Critique Group:** ALL writers welcome. Bring 12 copies of up to 5 double-spaced

pages of prose for on-site reading/discussion. Meets 3rd Saturday each month, 1 to 5pm. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeleywritersclub.org) Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.

- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice.** First Tuesday each month from 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm. More info: 597-5017.

OTHER ADULT EVENTS:

- **Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC):** Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas are invited to voice their concerns about crime and public safety, 4th Thursday each month, 7 to 8:30pm, upstairs meeting room. Info@rockridgecpc.com or infofordense@yahoo.com.
- **East Bay "Democracy for America" Meetup:** Discussion will cover pending state and federal healthcare legislation. Wed., 6/10, 6:30pm. Info at <http://dfa.meetup.com/78/calendar/10002254/>.
- **Peace Corps Information Night:** Learn about volunteering overseas in education, health, business, environment and more. No upper age limit. Mon., 6/22, 6:30 to 7:30pm. Info: Heather Driscoll, 452-8444, sfevents@peacecorps.gov or www.peacecorps.gov.

ART EXHIBITS

Gallery: June: **Alicia Wallace and class:** Paintings and drawings.

July: **Darrill Tighe:** Abstract watercolors.

Lobby Display Case:

June: LGBT Gay Pride Month display.

July: **David Peniston:** assemblage of old books.

LIBRARY HOURS:

Mon. and Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.

Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.

Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. **Closed Sundays. Also closed:**

Fridays, 6/5 and 6/19 and Sat. July 4th.

Diesel Readings & Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Sun., 6/7, 3pm. **Poetry Flash – Lyric Postmodernisms.** Readings by C.S. Giscombe, Gillian Conoley, Martha Ronk, Aaron Shurin and Carol Snow.
- Mon., 6/8, 6pm. **Seth Grahame-Smith: *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies!***
- Mon., 6/8, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting:** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Thurs., 6/11, 7pm. **Cheryl Wagner: *Plenty Enough Suck to Go Around: A Memoir of Floods, Fires, Parades and Plywood.***
- Sun., 6/14, 3pm. **Students from Renee Swindle's novel writing workshop at UCB,** will read from their novels-in-progress.
- Tues., 6/16, 7pm. **David Carr: *The Night of the Gun: A Reporter Investigates the Darkest Story of His Life. His Own.***
- Wed., 6/24, 7pm. **Monica Ali: *In the Kitchen.***
- Sun., 6/28, 3pm. Local contributors, **Pamela Bass, Laurie King, Diana Cohen, Y.J. Yu, Ken Matusow and Millicent Susens: *The Best Women's Travel Writing 2009 and The Best Travel Writing 2009.***
- Wed., 7/1, 7pm. An evening with the **UC Berkeley Extension Writers** reading from their work.
- Thurs., 7/2, 7pm. **Kate Christensen: *Trouble.***
- Sun., 7/5, 3pm. **Poetry Flash with Charles Entrekin**

and **Mary Mackey.**

- Thurs., 7/9, 6pm. **The Bay Area Writing Project's Young Writers' Camp** will read their work.
- Sun., 7/12, 3pm. **Dorianne Laux, Joseph Millar and Michelle Bitting** read their poetry.

DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. Info about other events, book discussion groups and El Grupito, the Spanish discussion group: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Wisteria Ways Concert Series

Elameno Quintet: Jazz and Arabic to Flamenco, Brazilian and Irish. Eclectic influences from jazz and classical and world travel. Saturday, 5/30, 3pm (house opens at 2:30pm). Outdoor concert: be sure to bring something to sit on (blanket or lawn chair), hat, a picnic. \$15-20 suggested donation for musicians (cash please at the door). 383 61st Street. Wheelchair accessible. Info at <http://elamenoquintet.com/> and <http://www.myspace.com/elamenoquintet>. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Christensen Heller Gallery

"Soft Sculpture" by Calif. artist **Emily Peters.** Now through July 5. Gallery hrs: Wed.-Sat., 11am to 6pm; Sun., noon to 5pm. 5829 College Ave., 655-5952; www.christensenheller.com.

Free Hands-On Bicycle Classes

Learn to maintain your bike in excellent working condition. Sundays, 6/14 and 6/28. The 6/14 class: flat repair. The 6/28 class: safety inspection; how to check wheels, derailleurs, gears, et al for wear and tear. Bring your bike and tools; the REI bike technician will provide expert guidance. **No membership or registration required.** REI, 1338 San Pablo Ave. (near Gilman), Berkeley, in the bike parking area. Info: REI bike shop, 527-4140.

Nutrition for Pain-Free Living

Learn the top 10 dos and don'ts of nutrition to reduce inflammation and improve overall health. **Free class with Dr. Carolyn Finnegan.** Mon., 6/15, 7:30 to 8:30pm. Align Chiropractic Center, 6239 College Ave., Suite 201. Reserve a space at 654-2207; www.alignchiro.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Program Highlights: Computer classes; health insurance counseling and advocacy program; exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Groups.

- **Lavender Lunch Bunch: free lunch,** entertainment, socializing for LGBT elders 55+ and friends. 6/26 at noon.

Hours: Mon. – Fri., 8:45am to 4:45pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times," for a full schedule of classes/events and monthly lunch menu (\$2.25 to \$4). Details about events, membership, and opportunities to become a volunteer: 597-5085.

Red Cross Blood Drives

World Blood Donor Week Blood Drives – Open to the Public: June 8 through 14 at mobile blood drives and blood centers throughout the Bay Area. Find a center near you: Call The American Red Cross at 800-GIVE-LIFE (800/448-3543) or go to HelpSaveALife.org to schedule an appt. **For all presenting blood donors: Weekly drawings in June for a Garmin nuvi 265WT GPS, and in July for a \$100 gas card. (Note: promotions not available at high school or college drives.)** More info: 594-5204 or schultzmanjj@usa.redcross.org.



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