

THE Rockridge News

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College Ave Project: Safeway, 1 ; Neighborhood, Zip

Planning Commission Approves College Avenue Safeway Project; RCPC Joins Berkeley Residents in Appeal

by Stuart Flashman, Land Use Committee chair

At the end of a four-hour long hearing dominated by neighborhood residents opposed to the project, the Oakland Planning Commission unanimously approved

Safeway's College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project at a public meeting July 26. RCPC's attorney, Michael Graf, joined by Rockridge and neighboring Berkeley residents, objected to the project's traffic, parking, air quality, toxics, and visual impacts, and cited its inconsistency with the zoning and general plan designations for the site.

Several College Avenue merchants related their concerns about how the project will damage Oakland's most successful

neighborhood shopping district.

The Planning Commissioners brushed all concerns aside, saying it was more important that the new project would provide construction jobs and benefit Safeway's employee union.

Only five of the seven commissioners participated in the decision. Commissioner Huntsman (who also supports the project) was absent, and newly-appointed commissioner Jim Moore recused himself because he

▶ **Safeway Decision Appealed to City, page 4**

20 AGENDA

September 2012 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

FORUMS: City Council Candidates
Co-Sponsor: League of Women Voters

District 1 and At-Large Forums Preview November Candidates

- The Rockridge Community Planning Council is sponsoring two City Council candidate forums on Thursday, September 20 at the Rockridge Library. The District 1 City Council candidates forum is slated for 7-8 p.m. and the At-Large

▶ **Town Hall Agenda, page 12**

Thursday, September 20 | 7-9 p.m. *Note time change*
Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College at Manila

On the Nature and Likelihood of Soundwalls Coming to Rockridge

Soundwalls in Rockridge? City Hosts Public Meeting on Caldecott Settlement Studies

by Victoria Eisen, meeting coordinator

The next chapter in the process of determining the future of soundwalls at three State Route (SR) 24 locations in Rockridge and Temescal will unfold starting

at 7 p.m. Thursday, September 27, at the Rockridge Branch Library.

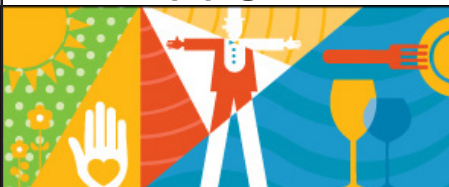
At this informational meeting, sponsored by the city of Oakland, city and Caltrans

▶ **Soundwall Meeting, page 5**

The Rockridge summer vibe shifted on Monday, August 27, as students headed back to school. At Claremont Middle School, one of the new co-principals, Mr. Richardson, greets students. Which Mr. Richardson? Story, page 8.

Mario Rollan, BART construction engineer, and Landscape Designer Greer Alley, the Rockridge resident who designed and worked to make the new Rockridge BART station plaza a reality, look to an October opening.

October 7 – Noon to 6: Join Your Friends and Neighbors in celebration during **Out & About** on College Avenue. **Story, page 3.**



rockridge
OUT & ABOUT
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2012 12-6 PM



PHOTOS, CAPTIONS/JUDY BERNE

RCPC and Rockridge: Projects of the Past 40 Years

by *Bernie Baltaxe, RCPC boardmember*

In April of this year, I joined the RCPC board. As a new board member, I am learning a lot about what RCPC has done for the community over the past 40 years. I thought it would be useful to highlight some of these activities and to consider what Rockridge might otherwise look like if RCPC had not existed.

Lately, RCPC has been involved in stopping Safeway's effort to build a mega-store on College Avenue and assisting the Rockridge BART station beautification project. These efforts are part of a long history of causes RCPC has embraced.

How Did Rockridge Happen?

In the coming months, I will write of some of the history of the Rockridge neighborhood and how RCPC has helped to shape Rockridge over the last 40 years. This work was not done by one or two people, but as a group effort including volunteers who gave what time they could afford from their own schedules and who often contributed financial support that helped keep the organization functioning.

RCPC has a board that helps steer its efforts but others, who volunteer on committees or help pitch in on projects, have also helped make Rockridge a success story.

RCPC is a direct descendent of the concerned Rockridge citizens who banded together shortly after construction of two massive projects in the 1960s: Highway 24 (the Grove-Shafter Freeway) and BART.



The photo caption reads: "Freeway's Swath In Oakland. Wide swath of cleared ground through clustered buildings shows route of Grove-Shafter Freeway with piers already crossing College Avenue and upper Broadway. Bay Area Transit tracks will share the right of way." Date: August 15, 1967. FROM OMCA (OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA) COLLECTIONS. [HTTP://COLLECTIONS.MUSEUMCA.ORG/](http://collections.museumca.org/)

The size of these two projects and the effect they had on the existing neighborhood were catastrophic.

From about 1910 to the late 1940s, Rockridge had grown to become one of the early commuter neighborhoods in the West. Key System trolleys, trains and ferries provided direct access to San Francisco, and many residents commuted there to work. Shops sprang up on College Avenue, but much of the street had houses too. Rockridge

➤ **RCPC Projects, page 12**

Picture It: RCPC Is Looking for a Few Good Words

by *Bernie Baltaxe, RCPC boardmember*

What is RCPC's mission? What is it that RCPC does for the community? And how can the organization communicate all that it does in a concise three to five words?

RCPC has been serving this community for 40 years. In the next few issues of *The Rockridge News*, we will highlight things RCPC has done to support the vitality of Rockridge. Whether confronting zoning issues in order to keep the neighborhood vibrant or working with neighborhood volunteers on projects like Frog Park and the Rockridge Library, RCPC has often been on the forefront of community activism.

Now the organization seeks to boil all that down to a banner-sized message of community service and support, and is

turning to the community for help.

Out and About is coming to College Avenue in early October. Rockridge merchants and the community will take over the street with games, food and information booths. RCPC will be there too.

In addition to highlighting contributions RCPC has made to the Rockridge community over the years, we will be asking those who come to see us to offer ideas for an RCPC slogan.

Stop by the RCPC booth at Out and About, read what we have been up to lately and in the past 40 years and give us your idea for a slogan. If yours is selected, you will have created a legacy for the Rockridge community. A prize, yet to be determined, will be awarded.

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Wed, Thu, Sat: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.

CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays.

Also Tues, 9/4; Sat, 9/8; and Tues, 10/9.

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

Contact us at one of the following:

Editor: editor@rockridge.org

www.rockridge.org

The Rockridge News, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611

RCPC Voice-mail: 510/869-4200

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

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES

Publication date of the next issue is:

☛ **October 6, 2012**

☛ **October deadline is September 20, 2012.** Advertising rates are \$26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. This month's meeting: Wednesday, September 26. Contact Stu Flashman (652-5373 or stufash@aol.com) to confirm meeting location and to get a copy of the agenda. Land use committee meetings are generally open to the public.

COMMITTEE NOTES: Agenda topics at the September 26 meeting will include: • the appeal of the College Avenue Safeway project approval (see front page); • an update on the Rockridge Shopping Center Project. Please contact Stu Flashman (652-5373 or stufash@aol.com) to get a copy of the agenda. Land use committee meetings are generally open to the public.

Land Use Committee Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

Rockridge Montessori Project 5610 Broadway

The city's Planning Department approved the proposed expansion of this school to an adjoining building on Broadway, which will include raising the existing structure and placing a new first floor underneath to make it a two-story building. The building would house the school's toddlers' (1st floor) and infants' (2nd floor) programs. The school's existing buildings – at the corner of Broadway and Manila and further up on Manila – will continue with their existing uses; the Manila building has already been approved for an additional expansion, for a total of almost 200 children.

Neighbors, unhappy about the growing encroachment of non-residential use into the residential area as well as the increased safety, building shadows, traffic impacts, and noise have appealed the decision to the Planning Commission. The appeal will probably be heard in October. The RCPC Land Use Committee voted to recommend that RCPC support the appeal. The board

will take up the subject at its September meeting.

Rockridge Shopping Center Rebuilding Project Broadway and Pleasant Valley

Safeway has submitted revised drawings for the project, including a new building with outdoor seating fronting on the quarry pond (something RCPC had suggested) and a revised rooftop parking configuration for the Safeway building. According to Darin Ranelletti (dranelletti@oaklandnet.com, 238-3663), the Oakland planner handling the project, the city's consultant is still preparing the draft environmental impact report (EIR). North Oakland community groups, including RCPC, continue to encourage Safeway to make this an urban and transit-friendly project.

Beverages & More Project Piedmont and Yosemite Aves

While this project is not within Rockridge, it raises some of the same issues of zoning consistency as the College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project. The project is much smaller, only 5,500 sq. ft., but still requires major use permits and

Land Use Committee, page 11



The Out & About Street Festival and 'Picnic in the Street'

Sunday, October 7, 12-6 p.m.

Early in October, Rockridge will play host to thousands of fair-goers and fun-seekers who will be attending the annual Rockridge Out and About festival sponsored by the Rockridge District Association (RDA). Festivities begin at noon and last until 6 p.m.

In conjunction with Out and About, Market Hall (College and Shafter) presents its annual "Picnic in the Street" offering succulent foods and wines, comparative tastings, cooking demonstrations, and the ever-popular Cookbook Exchange.

The Chef Stage, from noon to 5 p.m., includes samples from the food experts of Market Hall along with the district's top chefs, mixologists, and special guests.

Also participating in the festival are Rockridge bars and restaurants such as Ben 'n Nick's and À Côté, Tara's Organic Ice Cream and Oakland food trucks and pop-ups such as Tina Tamale, Tante's, Boffo Cart, Ohgane Korean BBQ, Zella's Soul Kitchen, Doc's of the Bay and Fist of Flour. Beer and wine will be sold and folks can eat comfortably at tables and chairs.

The event features three mostly jazz stages, including 57th Street Gallery jazz stage, Cosmos Jazz and wine stage and Musically Minded Academy stage.

Out and About, page 11



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Safeway Decision Appealed to City

from page 1

had already spoken and written a letter in favor of the Safeway proposal before being appointed to the commission. Commissioner Chris Pattillo stated she thought the project would benefit this part of College and Claremont (even though the project places an employee parking lot and loading docks on its Claremont Avenue frontage, contrary to the C-31 zoning standards).

Oakland planner Peterson Vollman dismissed the many impacts identified by speakers as inconsequential, saying all were properly addressed in the project's environmental impact report (EIR). He also said he expected the city of Berkeley

to accept the proposed intersection "improvements" intended to mitigate the project's impacts on Berkeley streets. This despite the Berkeley City Council having, a week earlier, unanimously voted to reject the improvements and to restate its strong opposition to the project.

Vollman also asserted that the project was fully consistent with the site's general plan designation and zoning because it would be a better fit than the existing Safeway store.

Commissioner Pattillo did express concern about the project's parking insufficiency, particularly during construction, and its impact on the already-congested College-Claremont intersection. She suggested placing diagonal parking on Claremont, a proposal staff vetoed as infeasible, and asked that staff continue to investigate how to address the intersection's problems.

Berkeley Residents and RCPC File Formal Appeal

RCPC and an ad-hoc group of 54 Berkeley residents – joined by Berkeley City Councilmembers Wozniak and Worthington – have appealed the planning commission's decision to the Oakland City Council. According to planner Vollman, the appeals will likely not be heard by the council until late October.

A summary of the Planning Commission hearing and copies of the appeal letters can be found on the Rockridge.org website.

Community Donations Sought for Appeal and Legal Costs

RCPC is collecting donations in support of the appeal through its Rockridge Legal Defense Fund. Mail checks to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Make online donations at www.rockridge.org. (Tax ID no. 94-3011284).

RCPC Establishes a Legal Defense Fund for a Fitting Building

Do you believe the proposed Safeway project is just too big for beleaguered, two-lane College Avenue? Do you think it will overwhelm the neighborhood, threaten nearby small businesses, and/or worsen already congested traffic flows?

The RCPC board shares your concerns, and suspects the issue may ultimately play out in the courts. This could be expensive.

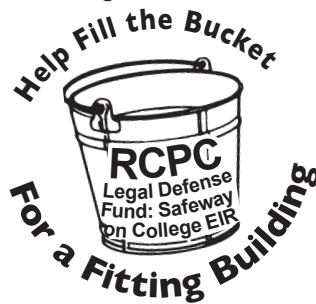
In the past, RCPC has used legal means to push for a better design of the Dreyer's building, and to help win funds for the community and public schools to mitigate Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore project impacts. Similar steps may be necessary to encourage Safeway to listen to community concerns;

your support will be critical.

RCPC has established the Rockridge Legal Defense Fund to prepare for legal costs. If Safeway's plans and power concern you, please send a check, or use the donate button on the RCPC website. Donations are tax deductible; all donations are welcome.

Mail checks to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Make online donations at www.rockridge.org. (Tax ID no. 94-3011284).

Funds not used for legal fees connected with this project will be retained for future cases when RCPC may need legal help to uphold meaningful zoning regulations for the neighborhood.



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Soundwall Meeting

from page 1

staff and their consultants will:

1. Provide a history of the Caldecott Tunnel Settlement Agreement funding and why soundwall studies are eligible
2. Explain the dynamics of freeway noise and how soundwalls work
3. Go over the visual aspect of soundwalls
4. Present the findings of a 2009 study of potential soundwall locations in the area, and
5. Discuss next steps in the process of gauging community sentiment for soundwalls at particular locations.

Fourth Bore Settlement Agreement

As readers of The Rockridge News may recall, in 2008 the city received an \$8 million settlement from Caltrans over the environmental assessment of the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel. According to the terms of the settlement, this funding was to be used for projects that “have as their primary purpose the improvement of pedestrian, bicycle, transit and local street improvements, noise barriers, including projects that support the use of transit (and the reduction of single-occupant motorized vehicles, such as transit signal coordination and amenities), to the greater community in the Highway 24 corridor between I-580 and the Caldecott Tunnel.”

In 2010, the city initiated a community process to determine how to spend the settlement. Walking tours were held in the neighborhoods covered by the agreement: North Hills nearest the tunnel, Rockridge and Temescal. Based on a preliminary project list that was part of the settlement agreement and conversations on the walking tours, a new draft list was developed, and was presented and discussed at a public meeting last year. The city received over

250 comments on the projects on this list. This input informed the final project list, which includes “noise barrier” or soundwall studies at the following three locations:

- Eastbound between Vicente Way and Broadway
- Westbound between Ross Street and Telegraph Avenue
- Westbound between Patton Street and Ross Street.

Although the settlement fund is not nearly sufficient to cover the cost of constructing even one of these soundwalls, the city would need to study further one or more of these projects in order to apply for state construction funding.

Soundwall Studies

In 2009, Caltrans commissioned a noise study of SR 24 between SR 13 and I-580 to determine the feasibility of soundwalls along the corridor. The study – known as a “pre-NBSSR” (Noise Barrier Scope Summary Report) – looked at nine potential locations along the Rockridge/Temescal corridor (five eastbound and four westbound). It measured current noise levels near the freeway, predicted the effectiveness of soundwalls at each location, and compared this data with Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) soundwall construction funding criteria. The study concluded that four of the nine locations would meet the criteria Alameda CTC uses to assess applications for state soundwall construction funding. These four segments include the first two in the bulleted list above (Eastbound between Vicente Way and Broadway, and Westbound between Ross Street and Telegraph Avenue), but not the third (Westbound between Patton Street and Ross Street), which the study concludes is “estimated to provide no benefit to affected residences.”

Alameda CTC’s criteria for funding the construction of soundwalls at a particular

location are:

- The existing or future predicted exterior noise level is 65 decibels (dB)
- A reduction of at least 5 dB resulting from the installation of a soundwall can be achieved
- The projected cost will not exceed \$45,000 per dwelling unit affected by the soundwall (based on year 2002 costs)
- The residences were developed prior to opening the freeway to traffic.

Now that the city knows which soundwall segments on the funding list satisfy Alameda CTC’s criteria, if it chooses to pursue one or both of these projects, it will need to conduct a full NBSSR.

NBSSRs differ from pre-NBSSRs in their depth and breadth. An NBSSR is a full Project Study Report, an engineering report that documents agreement on the scope, schedule, and estimated cost of a project so it can be considered for future state construction funding. Given the expense of an NBSSR, jurisdictions undertake them only when they have the intent to build the studied project(s).

More: September 27 Meeting

Beyond discussing in more detail the historic and technical issues raised in this article, Oakland staff will present a process for determining whether settlement funds should be spent for further study of the potential for soundwalls at various locations in Rockridge and Temescal and how that process compares to existing similar city procedures and those used by other public agencies.

Meeting participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of any of the presenters, and to comment on staff’s proposed decision-making process.

For more information about the September 27 meeting or the Settlement Agreement process and projects, please contact the city of Oakland’s Caldecott project consultant, Victoria Eisen, at 510/525-0220, or e-mail victoria@eisenletunic.com.





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FROG Park Shuttered for Fall Maintenance Day

FROG Park play areas will be closed all day Saturday, September 22, for the park's annual maintenance day. Park volunteers will be cleaning and sealing the wooden play structures, replacing plants, sifting sand, clearing the creek, removing graffiti and taking care of general cleaning. The College Preparatory School freshman class and their advisors and teachers are helping again this year. The play structures will not be open until Sunday as the sealer will be wet.

Adult volunteers are welcome and invited to help out. The wood sealer is messy, so children are not asked to help in this work.

The cleaning begins at 8 a.m., and ends at 4:30 p.m. Volunteers should bring

gloves, smoothing rakes, turning forks and pruners if available. E-mail Howard Ferrier, volunteer coordinator, for details at hwferrier@sbcglobal.net or leave a phone message at 510/220-4249. See you there.



DMV Neighbors Set Temescal Creek and 2012 Creek to Bay Day Clean Up, Invite Community Help

by *Leonora Sea, DMV Neighbors chair*

It's been a busy summer along Temescal Creek. Warmer conditions than last year have encouraged lots of healthy new growth of the greenbelt's trees, native bushes and grasses, and yes, unfortunately, weeds, blackberries and ivy. The greenbelt has hosted nesting pairs of many different birds, including a pair of ravens in one of the DMV parking lot redwood trees.

The creek has been much loved and splashed in by neighborhood kids both on Farmer's Market day and throughout the week. Dedicated neighbors and student volunteers have spent many hours walking the creek: cleaning grates, picking up litter, firming up the banks, and of course, simply enjoying our wonderful park. The DMV Neighbors Association hosted an interim volunteer work day in June with a great turnout and lots of excellent work accomplished.

As the year moves into autumn, it's time to get Temescal Creek ready for winter. The DMV Neighbors Association is

coordinating Creek to Bay Day, Saturday, September 15, at the creek from 9 a.m. to noon. Come to the corner of Redondo and Cavour at 9 a.m. to sign in.

Creek to Bay Day is Oakland's annual stewardship event and celebration of our urban waterways. We'll prune overgrowth, pull up ivy, remove blackberries and weeds, pick up litter, and remove roots, silt, and debris from the creek channel.

Volunteers will be treated to pastries from Bakesale Betty, coffee from Alem's Café, and tote bags and Chinook Books from the city of Oakland for everyone. Come join us, and plan to stay after we're done for snacks, drinks, and conversation on the lawn under the trees.

For more info, contact Leonora Sea, DMV Neighbors Association, leonorasea@yahoo.com, or look up Temescal creek on the city of Oakland's Creek to Bay Day web site: www.oaklandcreektobay.org. Also, the Oakland Museum has a fantastic Web site about all of Oakland's watersheds at <http://museumca.org/creeks/MapOak.html>.

You're Invited: Help Keep the Broadway Off-Ramp Beautiful

Six years ago, the Oakland Landscape Committee adopted the Broadway off-ramp at Keith Avenue and Broadway. We've installed irrigation, trees, shrubs, bulbs and perennials. The Oakland Landscape Committee is refocusing its efforts on local school gardens and seeks a new steward to adopt the site, part of the Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway program.

We are now seeking a Rockridge resident or local company or organization that would be willing to help keep the site maintained and beautiful. Caltrans provides free water, signage, and recognition and will help haul away green waste.

The committee will ease the transition by providing sources for volunteers and irrigation system details.

Please contact Gordon Piper, chair of the Oakland Landscape Committee at rgpiper@sbcglobal.net or 510/843-3828.

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Community Pillar Seeks Community Support Declining Funds Bite Friday Night Meals at College Avenue Presbyterian Church

by Monte McClain, CAPC pastor

The rush and clatter of College Avenue's successful restaurant scene has long overshadowed a little-known weekly meal program offered by the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (CAPC).

For more than 20 years, the CAPC congregation has presented a free weekly dinner on Friday nights for the hungry of Rockridge and Oakland. The meal effort seeks to respond to the hungers of both the homed and homeless for food, community and also a place to serve others. The meal is limited to 85 people and follows a strict schedule to minimize problems.

However, the troubling economy of the past year has contributed to a drying up of funds. The meal offering is encouraged by repeated donations of food from local merchants and occasional donations from neighbors. We manage to serve a meal each week for about \$2 per person, often feeding 100 people with \$200 or less.

The church partners with other associations to accomplish this social action, working with Aurora School, North Oakland Community Charter School and the Montclair Rotary Club. Many families and Rockridge residents volunteer each week to prepare and serve the meal.

Now, the church is in need of more help and partners – both in volunteers



Volunteers staff the serving line during Friday Night Meals at College Avenue Presbyterian Church. /MONTE McCLAIN

and in donations – to fund the meals. We had to shut the meal down in late summer for a month to concentrate on raising more funds. One hundred percent of all donations to the Friday Night Meal goes to purchasing food; there are absolutely no staff or administration costs. All donations are tax-deductible.

Where else can you make as big an impact on our shared city with such little effort?

If you would like to help respond to the hungers of Oakland and Rockridge, contact the church at 510/658-3665 or e-mail: CAPCFridaynightmeal@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Offering its services in an historic building designed by Julia Morgan, the church is located at 5951 College Avenue. For more information, visit the church web site: <http://capcchurch.org/>

Church On-Site Program Feeds Young Minds, Too



Babies and caregivers learn reading through play at the Baby Book Club. /MONTE McCLAIN

New Baby Book Club Grows in Rockridge on Friday Mornings

A group just for babies, ages 0-12 mos, and their parents or caregivers

From the moment they are born, babies begin to gain skills that they will need to become successful readers.

Now, brand-new parents and caregivers can bring brand-new babies to the Baby Book Club to learn what those skills are and how simple, everyday activities done with the baby can help develop those skills.

This free 30-minute program will include fun lap bounces, tickle rhymes, books, songs and nuggets of information about early literacy and the six early literacy skills.

Book Club meetings are held Friday mornings, 10:30 a.m, at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (CAPC). The fall season begins September 14 and ends December 14; meetings are led by Margaret Smith, a CAPC member and children's librarian for over 20 years. She currently works for the Contra Costa County Library, Walnut Creek Branch.

College Avenue Presbyterian Church is at 5951 College Avenue. Visit our web site at: www.capc-church.org. For more information, contact the church at 510/658-3666. Get updates by liking us on Facebook, following @CAPCOakland on Twitter, or via our blog at capcoakland.wordpress.com.

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Eyes on Rockridge

Twin Principals Spell Out Identical Goals for Claremont Middle School

by Judy Berne

In my mind Ronald and Reginald Richardson, the new co-principals who will usher Claremont Middle School into its Centennial, are destined to lead by example.

The 36-year-old identical twins, who grew up in some of the grittier parts of West Oakland, have long had the shared dream of becoming teachers and eventually co-principals. Now they want to pass on to the Rockridge school's nearly 500 students that they, too, can achieve their dreams.

"We want to teach the kids they can do anything they want to do," Ronnie told me in an interview the week before school started. "No matter where they come from in Oakland, Claremont is going to model what a quality education should look like in any community."

"It's a very diverse school. We live in a diverse world," Reggie added. "To be able to work together you have to collaborate. The goal is not only to know the academic subjects but how to be a better person and how to be a leader. It's our job to guide them."

They credit their mom, Jacquelyn Richardson, a single parent who coincidentally was once a Claremont student, with giving them unwavering support. She raised us to understand "West Oakland is where you live. It doesn't define you," Ronnie said.

As they close in on their doctorates in educational leadership from California State University, East Bay, they represent the third generation of Oakland public school educators in their family. Both their mother and their late grandmother, Irma Elizabeth Rice, were Oakland teachers.

Reggie and Ronnie attended San Francisco State University on track scholarships, then earned master's degrees from UC Berkeley.

I had expected to meet with the "Mr. Richardsons" together (yes, students will call each Mr. Richardson), but it turned out I talked to each separately. Nonetheless, their goals and the means of achieving them are as identical as they are.

Both are well aware that only 50 percent of students coming from nearby feeder schools – Chabot, Emerson and Peralta – go on to attend Claremont since many parents opt for private or parochial middle schools. "We will be really showing our faces at those elementaries," Ronnie promised.

Since they assumed their posts July 1, they've been working to "put systems in place to support teachers and students," Ronnie told me. "If we're all part of that band that plays together, we are going to become a distinguished school."

"Just like a family, a school has to have stability at the top," Reggie said, acknowledging the recent turnover of

principals at Claremont. "These kids are going to know that their principal is going to be here."

Although they haven't talked directly to any other co-principals, "I've read a lot about how that dynamic works," Reggie said. Bottom line: "You have to be on the same page."

That, he says, comes naturally to the brothers. "We've been collaborating our whole lives."

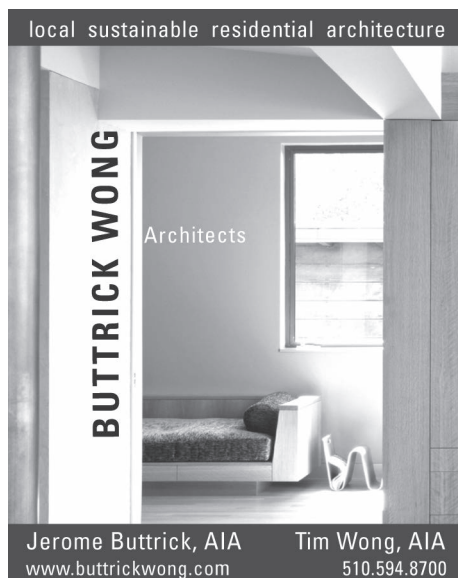
Indeed, they have worked together as both teachers and administrators at many of the same schools and most recently were principals of neighboring elementary schools in Richmond.

"Ronald and Reginald Richardson are collaborative, model high expectations for students and staff, and believe strongly in shared leadership," said Mia Settles, Oakland schools' Region 1 Executive Officer. "They have a proven track record of transforming the culture of a community as well as a school. We are delighted to have them back in OUSD during Claremont's centennial year." The school was founded in 1913.

The new principals' excitement at being at Claremont is palpable. "Our goal was to come in and to listen to our phenomenal staff," Ronnie says. "One thing we want to do is to support teachers in every capacity."

▶ **Twin Principals, page 9**

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Twin Principals

from page 8

“We’ve been received well by the staff, the community, the parents,” Reggie said. “Parents here are so involved and willing to help.”

That certainly includes Shona Armstrong who is active at Claremont although she and husband Zack Unger’s three children are still at Chabot.

“I’ve been working for two years to get an extra-period Spanish class at Claremont,” Armstrong said. “All it took was one meeting with Reggie. He’s really excited and super capable and charismatic.”

“I’ve spent quite a lot of time with them (both Richardsons),” said Morris Dye, who created the school’s new website. Dye and his wife Lyn Hikida have a sixth grader and another son, who will enter Claremont three years from now.

“I feel these guys bring a tremendous amount of energy, passion and enthusiasm to the school as well as philosophies and



Co-Principals Ronald and Reginald Richardson stand together in their goals to meet the needs of Claremont Middle School students. /JUDY BERNE

techniques that will be good for students,” Dye said.

The two co-principals generally carpool

together from their homes in Pittsburg. Ronnie and his wife Zora, a counselor in the Berkeley Unified School District, have a new baby, Eli Ethan. Reggie and his wife Tanita, in financial services for Chevron Credit Union, are parents of Kevin, 2, and Kiera, 6 months.

“Meeting the needs of students – that’s what I want for my own children,” Reggie said. “I want that for my Claremont children too. A big piece is about character building coupled with academic excellence. That’s not just to prepare for high school, but for college and life.”

“We’re not K-6 or K-12, but K-life,” Ronnie seconded. “We’re not out to teach them just to be respectful on the streets of Rockridge. They have to know how to exist in any community, state or country that they walk in.”

Judy Berne is a journalist who moved last year from the metro Detroit area to Rockridge. You can reach her at judyberne@att.net.

The Rockridge News Needs Block Captains

Many thanks to Norma Fox and Jim Haughian who have stepped down as long-time Rockridge News Block Captains. They hope volunteers will come forward to take their places so, if you have 15-25 minutes to spare each month and would like to dedicate this time to your community, here are the two delivery routes they are vacating:

Route	Area
19F	Block Captain: 5400 Shafter between Hudson and Clifton
4D	Block Captain: 6200 block of Harwood and 5900/6000/6200 blocks of Ross.

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Thank you,
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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Southern Charm

In my June column, we were off to the Outer Banks of the Carolinas. I mentioned I was looking forward to some North Carolina BBQ and low country seafood. We had some outstanding BBQ in North Carolina, but the real treat was the out-of-this-world seafood along the Carolina coast and in Charleston and Savannah. This is true Prince of Tides country.

We were fortunate to arrive at the height of soft-shell crab season, which we ordered regularly. We devoured fresh, not previously frozen, shrimp almost daily – so sweet and succulent. And, of course, the ever-present grits and traditional side dishes such as collard greens, fried green tomatoes, okra, corn bread and yams.

But our go-to dish, which we sampled at least six times, was She Crab soup. We had She Crab soup whenever it was on the menu; just about every low country restaurant in South Carolina offers its variation. It is the signature dish of Charleston.

She Crab soup is similar to bisque or chowder made with milk or heavy cream. The soup is named for the female crab that supplies the flavorful orange roe, the chief ingredient. Varying amounts of Atlantic blue crab meat are added. Whatever the recipe, the final ingredient is a small amount of dry sherry drizzled into the soup. It is amazing to me that She Crab has not found its way to California.

As in other regional cooking, such as in New Orleans, there is a surge of young chefs bringing a modern touch to traditional Southern cuisine. New restaurants in Charleston and Savannah are featuring artisanal corn grown from kernels that are genetically the same as the first corn grown in the colonies. Snout-to-tail pig and hog dishes are featured in the new Southern cuisine found in Charleston and Savannah restaurants. Although remaining faithful to gifts of Southern cooking, these young chefs are taking these dishes to a new level.

Oakland is fortunate to have several wonderful Southern/soul food restaurants:

■ **Hibiscus**, on San Pablo Avenue in Oakland's Uptown neighborhood, describes itself as "Southern inspired with an Oakland attitude."

■ Chef Tonya Holland is getting rave reviews for **Brown Sugar Kitchen** on Mandela Parkway in West Oakland where "Southern charm meets Oakland hip."

■ **Nellie's Soul Food** on 3rd Street near the Port of Oakland is the place you'll find Raiders and Warriors team members regularly eating up a storm.

■ And for that special occasion, nothing beats **PICÁN, A Taste of the South** on Broadway in Downtown Oakland. Bourbon connoisseurs will marvel at the comprehensive collection of barrel-aged and blended brands.

The Flexibility of Grits

For breakfast, lunch or dinner, rich or poor, Southerners love their grits. Grits can be white or yellow, depending on the color of the corn they're from. Like rice or polenta, grits go with anything. At a classic coastal downhome café, we had grits with melted pimento cheese and diced bacon for a hearty breakfast. Grits love gravies so they form a fantastic savory base for fish or meat dishes. Trader Joe's carries packaged high quality grits.

Simple Grits With Cheddar and Bacon

Follow package directions for cooking (use Trader Joe's brand)

While still hot, stir in ½ cup of grated sharp cheddar cheese

Top with crumbled crispy bacon

Great with a fried or poached egg on top.

Shout-out: Old Brooklyn Bagel at the corner of Harwood and College avenues. Not New York Brooklyn; Oakland Brooklyn. (Who'd 'a thunk it?) They have a great map of Oakland Brooklyn. More to follow.

Barry is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for cooking classes and East Bay ethnic market tours. Email: kaufman42@comcast.net

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Rockridge Flora and Fauna

My sunflowers have been the talk of the block, with everyone commenting as they grew, at one point 6" per day, reliably. It's a variety called Mammoth from Berkeley Horticulture. The rascally creature I photographed seemed to be as addicted to the young seeds as we all get with a bowl of seeds in front of us. "David" was leaning over the tuffet to reach for a white seed, then munch it. I tasted one, and decided the sweetness must be the appeal. — **Susie, Lawton Avenue**

Out and About

from page 3

Other highlights include Hipline Dance and Friends featuring dance demos and interactive dance performances, Kinetic Arts Center (circus arts) and Soja Martial Arts and Drumming Crew. Find comfort and beauty in the Wellness Area sponsored by Pharmaca, or shop local craft artists and retail booths by local merchants including See Jane Run, Crossroads Trading Company, Trader Joe's, Namaste Yoga, Vero's, Curves and Tootsie's.

Many candidates running for City Council District 1 and City Attorney will be present to meet folks and hear their concerns. The Livingroom Lounge will

host a relaxing atmosphere to do some wine and beer tasting while hearing from representatives in the professional services including Caldecott Realty, Hank Levy, CPA, Strahan Insurance and more.

The event will be fun and festive for the whole family. Children will enjoy a Claremont Middle School kid's stage, climbing wall, face-painting, pumpkin carving, goat petting zoo, bicycle stunts and hula hooping. Valet bike parking will be available.

To see the artist lineup and festival map, visit the RDA site, <http://www.rockridgeoutandabout.com>, or phone 510/604-3125. For Picnic in the Street schedules of tastings and demos: www.rockridgemarkethall.com, or phone 510/250-6011.

Land Use Cmte

from page 3

a parking variance. The city has proposed to exempt the project from environmental review as an infill project. The Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) opposes the project because of its zoning inconsistency and traffic and parking impacts. For example, the project is one block from the heavily-congested intersection of Piedmont and MacArthur Boulevard, which will be further congested with the completion of the Kaiser Medical Center Expansion Project.

The Land Use Committee has recommended that, because of the CN-1 zoning consistency issue, RCPC support PANIL in its opposition to the project.

The board will take up the recommendation at its September 6 meeting.

■ Citywide Rezoning – Phase II

City planning staff is moving forward with several aspects of phase II of the citywide rezoning. Phase I, which included revising the overall zoning standards and maps, was completed last year. Much of what is being considered, and particularly a number of specific plans for different parts of the city, will not affect Rockridge. However, potential changes to off-street parking requirements for new development could. This part of the rezoning effort, also being handled by Darin Ranelletti, is still in the research phase. He says to expect public roll-out of a draft plan, including public meetings, some time in the late fall or early winter. Stay tuned.



What's RCPC been up to lately? Make a direct connection via your smart phone to RCPC's web page: Scan this QR code.

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Town Hall Agenda

from page 1

City Council candidates forum will run from 8-9 p.m. League of Women Voters (LWV) representatives will lead and moderate the discussions.

Join your friends and neighbors for these informed and lively presentations.

This is an opportunity to meet the candidates in a non-partisan environment to learn their platforms and their views on Rockridge and city-wide issues. The moderator will present audience questions to the candidates. We look forward to seeing you September 20.

Candidates for City Attorney, School Board and BART board (time permitting) will appear at the October meeting.

blocks on College Avenue.

This outraged concerned residents and local business owners who came together to fight these projects. It was feared that these large apartment buildings would further cut up College Avenue and destroy the urban village feel that Rockridge had previously and was trying to regain.

Residents Seize the Initiative

Rockridge still was home to a number of professionals, including architects and city planners, who had the foresight to understand what these changes would mean to the neighborhood and could help in an effort to rezone Rockridge.

Through their efforts, coordinated by RCPC, the city rezoned Rockridge in 1974, adopting the R-35 (residential zoning) and C-31 (commercial zoning) codes developed by local residents. These zoning standards provided for lower density housing, preserved existing housing stock and supported the pedestrian-friendly, comparison shopping format of today's College Avenue.

Every new business and housing unit that has come since then has been affected by the foresight of these early protective urban pioneers. This tradition was continued in the years to come.

In 1985 RCPC incorporated as a non-profit organization.

Next month, I will highlight another project in the long history of RCPC.

RCPC Projects

from page 2

also was home to professionals, including architects, doctors and lawyers who worked from their homes, and UC Berkeley faculty and staff. Many of the houses had separate street-front rooms that were used as offices. Starting in the late 1950s, the Key System trains began to be dismantled in favor of buses and highways.

When BART was planned, Rockridge was not the first choice for a station. Telegraph Avenue was seen as a more logical location. However, Temescal residents did not want the station for fear it could destroy their neighborhood. Temescal was the stronger of the two neighborhoods with more established businesses at the time and BART moved the planned station over to Rockridge. Today, the station is the only one in the BART system located on a two lane street.

Impact of BART and HWY 24


Thousands of homes in Oakland were destroyed in the construction of the track

and highway, including many in Rockridge. College Avenue was cut in half. Construction stagings were massive with many located right on College Avenue. Numerous businesses moved or closed. No one wanted to go to Rockridge to shop as it looked like a war zone with a large number of its storefronts boarded up. Crime increased. Some have said that the Neighborhood Watch project was started in Rockridge in response to the high crime rate that followed in the wake of BART and HWY 24 construction.

Over time, antique shops began to come into the neighborhood, attracted by cheap rent, and College Avenue began to revive. However, when BART service started in the early 1970s, the city of Oakland decided that high-density housing units should be built near the BART stations.

This appealed to city planners because large numbers of people could live near BART and access it for commuting and otherwise getting into San Francisco. In addition, commercial zoning was to extend 500 feet (about 1 block) into residential areas on both sides of College Avenue. One such high-rise was planned to take up three


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8/9/12	2	1.5	480 Clifton Street	\$569,000	\$569,000	28	\$576,000
8/10/12	3	2	5272 Lawton Avenue	\$795,000	\$795,000	16	\$925,000

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Residents Welcome DaVita Renovation Plans for Claremont Avenue Site

by Sean Riley, Rockridge Resident

Nearly 80 residents packed a Colombo Club meeting hall on July 17 to hear landscaping plans for the DaVita Dialysis facility at 5354 Claremont Avenue. The former supermarket near the Highway 24 off-ramp has been a prominent community sore point for decades and negotiations to improve it were initiated by local volunteer group Scenic Streets in early 2011.

Illustrations presented by DaVita Regional Manager Asha Marwah revealed upgrades to the perimeter of the property, including more ornamental fencing, the addition of shrubs and trees, and the removal of longstanding blight.

The plans were well received by the attendees, many of whom live nearby and are eager to see the facility's street



Draft design plans developed by the DaVita Corporation for the corner of Claremont Avenue and Clifton Street, the company's dialysis facility. The company met with residents in July to discuss the project's progress. Plans will not be final until reviewed and approved by the property owner. /GRAPHIC COURTESY OF DAVIDA CORPORATION

view improved. Representatives from FROG Park expressed concerns that the plans did not include repairs to the tattered fencing alongside its Temescal Creek trail, and Marwah reassured the group that the company was researching materials that could better withstand vandalism.

Marwah declined to provide a date for the long anticipated project to break

ground, but DaVita corporate spokesperson Mollie O'Brien says the company expects to complete the work this fall once the property owner, real estate developer Jim Falaschi, has given final approval.

Falaschi reports he remains open to potential improvements and has been awaiting final plans from DaVita for several months.

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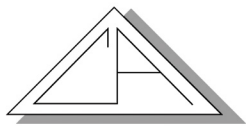
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Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. 2nd Thursday each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. Confirm mtg. info at www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

District 1 Candidates Forum

Hear from the candidates running for Oakland City Council in District 1. Friday, Sept 21, 6:30 to 8pm at Studio One, 365 45th Street.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

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

All story times followed by Play Time

FOR TEENS

- **Teen Advisory Board:** (ages 14-18) Advise the library how to better serve teens and get community service credit for school. Snacks provided. **No meeting in September; then the 1st Saturday of each month from 1-2 pm, starting Oct 6.** To confirm, call Vicky Chen, 597-5017.
- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club:** Watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Tuesdays: 9/18 and 10/16 from 5 to 6:30pm.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 17 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month; 1 to 5pm. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch. Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice and referrals. First Tues. each month (no lawyer in Sept; next mtg. Oct 2), 5 to 7pm (advance sign-up starts 4:45pm at adult reference desk). Volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present.

ART EXHIBITS (subject to change; call to confirm)

Gallery:

Sept: **Mike Grbich;** mixed media paintings.

Oct: **Eric Grbich;** figurative oil paintings

Lobby Display Case:

Sept: **Kim Anderson;** jewelry.

Oct; TBD

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.

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

Fri., 12 to 5:30pm.

Closed: Sundays and Mondays. Also: Tues, 9/4, Sat, 9/8 and Tues, 10/9.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All FREE and open to the public.

- Mon, 9/10, 7:30pm. **Amnesty International Meeting (2nd Mon. each month):** All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed., 7/12, 7pm. BROKELAND BASH for local Pulitzer Prize-winner **Michael Chabon: Telegraph Avenue.**
- Fri, 9/14, 7pm. Publication Party for local author **T. Geronimo Johnson: Hold It 'Til It Hurts.**
- Thurs, 9/20, 7pm. **Ken Weaver: The Northern California Craft Beer Guide.**
- Fri, 9/21, 7 – 9pm. **Live Music** with local acoustic band **Smooth Toad.** Preview the band on MySpace.
- Sun., 9/23, 3pm. Poetry Flash with **Joan Aleshire, Stephanie Brown and Martha Rhodes.**
- Fri, 9/28, 7pm. Local author **Jacob Needleman: An Unknown World; Notes on the Meaning of the Earth.**
- Wed, 10/3, 7pm. **Antoine Wilson: Panorama City.**
- Thurs, 10/4, 7pm. Burning Books reading with **Melody Sumner Carnahan, Thomas Frick and L.K. Larsen.**

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

4th Annual Volunteer Fair

Find a volunteer program that's right for you to help Oakland students and youth. Staff from the OUSD will assist in finding programs to match your interests and find flexible opportunities and training to allow volunteers to maximize their contributions to students. Sept. 15 from 1 to 5pm at Westlake Middle School, 2629 Harrison St. (at 27th St.). **Free Parking.** Hosted by Volunteering for Oakland, in partnership with OUSD and the Mayor's Initiative. More info at <http://www.volunteeringforoakland.org/education-action/> or e-mail contact@volunteeringforoakland.org.

Jazz at the Chimes

Kenny Washington backed by the **Michael O'Neill Quintet** in a benefit concert for the Jazzschool. Sunday,

9/16, 2pm, followed by artists' reception and refreshments. Tickets: \$25 at the door or from the Jazzschool at 845.5373 or <http://jazzschool.org/event/kenny-washington-with-the-michael-oneill-quintet-at-jazz-at-the-chimes/>.

The concert series features Bay Area jazz musicians in a landmark Julia Morgan venue. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. **Free parking.** More info at 654-0123 or chimesjazz@gmail.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert

Kleptograss: seamless blend of bluegrass, Cajun, blues and music from around the world. Saturday, 9/22 at 3pm; doors open 2:15pm (outside venue; wheelchair accessible). Bring a hat, sunscreen and a picnic. \$15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. Sample tunes at: <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/erichthompson12>. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Square Dance In North Oakland

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

Temescal Farmers' Market

Open Sundays, 9am to 1pm (all year). Locally grown fruits and vegetables; fresh ranch eggs; home-made bakery items; fresh cut flowers; unique prepared foods, fresh locally caught fish, handcrafts and more. Sample the goods; meet the grower; learn about unique food varieties and cooking tips; and listen to live music. **Bring your own reusable bags.** 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot. More info about Certified Farmers' Markets at www.urbanvillageonline.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Programs include: Arts/crafts; health counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers support groups, computer classes/more. Annual \$12 membership entitles seniors 55 and older to discounts on activities and trips.

- Sign up now for day trip by motorcoach to Placerville's apple country on Wed., Oct. 15.

Note new hours: Open Mon. – Fri., 9am to 4:30pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times" for full schedule of classes/events, lunch menus, and volunteer opportunities. Info: 597-5085.



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