

Here! Now! The RCPC Rockridge Kitchen Tour Do You Dream of Remodeling Your Kitchen?

by Leonora Sea, RCPC boardmember

If that's your current or future dream, don't miss the 11th biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour on Sunday, September 20, presented by the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

The self-guided tour features eight newly remodeled kitchens in Oakland's charming Rockridge neighborhood in a wide variety of design styles and living spaces, and a full-home tour of the historic Morse House, designed in the English Tudor Revival style in 1936 by renowned Bay Area architect E. Geoffrey Bangs.

An Oakland city landmark since 2013, the Morse House displays the characteristic features of the Tudor style, including decorative half-timbering, tall narrow windows with



/KEN RICE PHOTOGRAHY

multiple pane glazing, decorative brickwork on chimneys, and an arched entry doorway with a detailed wood-carved front door. The house has spectacular views of the Claremont Country Club and golf course to the south, and of the Bay and the Golden Gate to the west.

New to the event this year, for those wanting a more in-depth look at the design process, are the Berkeley Mills Seminar and the Kitchen Expo.

The Kitchen Expo, from 7-9 p.m. Thursday, September 17, is open to all ticket holders. It gives you an opportunity to meet the

▶ **Remodel Dreams, page 5**

Rockridge Kitchen Tour Countdown Calendar

The Kitchen Expo

Thursday, September 17: 7-9 p.m.
Rockridge Library, upstairs, 5366 College Avenue.

The Berkeley Mills Seminar

Saturday, September 19: 2-5 p.m.
Berkeley Mills, 2830 7th Street, Berkeley.

The 2015 Rockridge Kitchen Tour

Sunday, September 20: 12:30-5:30 p.m.
Registration tent at College Avenue
Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue.

Buy Tickets/More Information: Visit RockridgeKitchenTour.org

Advance tickets are available prior to September 18 at the presale price of \$40. Purchase on College Avenue at Rockridge Home or Cuttin' Up on College, or online at RockridgeKitchenTour.org. Premium advance tickets, available for \$65, include the standard tour plus the September 19 Berkeley Mills Seminar. Day-of-tour tickets, \$45, will be available at the registration tent in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, Oakland. More info: pg. 5

What New Kitchen Style Trends Will You Find on the 2015 Kitchen Tour?

by Annette Floystrup

The biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour is back this fall, Sunday, September 20, from 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., and many trends are immediately apparent in the eight homes on the tour.

There is a solid move toward very actively involved homeowners. Most worked closely with architects and/or designers, some contributed design skills, and a few contributed skilled work up to

and including plumbing and electrical.

All the kitchens reflect the personal vision of the homeowners, designed for the way these households live, not built with resale exclusively in mind. In many cases, our

Sinks are deep, deep, deep; large single sinks are the order of the day.

▶ **Tour Reveals Kitchen Trends, page 5**

Joint RCPC/City of Oakland Special Meeting:

College Avenue Bike/Pedestrian Improvements

■ Wednesday, September 30, 7:30-9pm: Rockridge Library ■

The Rockridge community is invited to a special public meeting on proposed pedestrian/bike improvements along College Avenue and near the Rockridge BART station, co-hosted by RCPC and the City of Oakland. Staff members of Oakland's Transportation Services Division will be on hand to discuss preliminary designs and listen to your comments. Come out, give us your input, and make a difference.

Light refreshments provided, no RSVP needed.

For more information, see article, top of page 2.

Focus: The Rockridge BART Station

CHANGES | STUDIES | IMPROVEMENTS | CONCERNS

Rockridge BART 'Safe Routes to Transit' Project Proposed; City Wants Feedback

The city of Oakland is proposing improvements to bicycle and walking access to the Rockridge BART station. **The Transportation Services Division will host a meeting Wednesday, September 30, 7:30-9 p.m. at the Rockridge Library** to present preliminary project plans and to hear comments from Rockridge residents and business owners.

The goal of the project, which is in an early design stage, is to improve safety and

accessibility for walking on streets near the BART station and to provide cyclists dedicated space on College Avenue between Broadway and Alcatraz Avenue.

Funding for the project is provided by Caldecott Settlement Agreement funds and a Safe Routes to Transit grant.

If you have any questions, please contact the City's outreach consultant, Victoria Eisen, at victoria@eisenletunic.com or 510/525-0220.

BART Lot Landscaping

A job that has been a long time coming, landscaping for the Forest Street side of the BART parking lot, has been completed. With irrigation problems now resolved, contractors planted the area and laid down a moisture-conserving bed of mulch. The photo at right shows the irrigation controllers, new plants and mulch, and landscape contractors at work. Also shown, center background, is a BART track



support pillar shedding its flawed protective cover, a problem still on BART's to-do list. —D. Kinkead

BART Plaza Area Spiffed Up

With the backing and support of Rockridge-area BART Boardmember Rebecca Saltzman for concerns expressed by Rockridge District Association (RDA) Operations Manager Chris Jackson, BART maintenance crews have been at work, and the BART Plaza area is looking better.

Broken and missing lights in the landscaped area near the "Rockridge" sign are repaired and working, making the space

warmer and more inviting, and a layer of bark chips has been added to the sign area.

Other work included sanitizing and cleaning the elevator inside and out, and trimming station area ivy.

Saltzman referred to the work done to date as "work in progress" and cited the track pillars' coatings as a remaining problem, among others. She will present further detail in the October issue of The Rockridge News.



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ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY

5366 College Avenue
at Manila | 597-5017
 Library program details/hours: 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?
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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:

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Articles submitted for publication may be e-mailed or mailed to the above addresses. 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. Views expressed in articles accepted for publication do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council. To reprint a Rockridge News article, please contact the editor.

Newsletter Advertising/Deadline

Publication date of the next issue is:
 ☛ **October 3, 2015**
 ☛ **October deadline is September 17, 2015**
 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 September Land Use Committee meeting is Wednesday, September 23, 7:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch library, 5366 College Avenue, upstairs meeting room. Confirm at rockridge.org.

(Front door will be unlocked; auto-open will be off; pull doors apart to enter.) The agenda will be posted on rockridge.org by the preceding Sunday. Meetings are open to the public.

Land Use Update

by *Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee co-chair*

■ CN-1 Zoning Discussion

RCPC has been working on a zoning update with neighborhood and merchant groups in the Oakland commercial areas that share CN-1 zoning (College Avenue, Piedmont Ave., Montclair Village, Lakeshore Avenue, the Dimond District, and the Glenview District).

The main focus has been on coming up with a process that will allow a use permit that has been abandoned to be extinguished. Presently, a use permit, once granted, never expires, even if the business that got the use permit has been gone for many years.

The general outline of the proposal (which is still being discussed among all of the stakeholders) is that if a use permit's use ceased to operate, and, after notice from the City, did not re-establish itself or seek an extension within one year, it would

be deemed abandoned, and re-establishing the use would require a new use permit application. If there is a consensus that this proposal makes sense, the groups would jointly submit the proposal to the City for enactment as an amendment to the CN-1 zoning regulations.

The details of the proposal will be posted on the rockridge.org website. If you have comments on the proposal, please send an e-mail with your comments to landuse@rockridge.org.

Merrill Gardens Rockridge | Construction Traffic Notice

Dear Desmond Street Neighbors:

About the beginning of September, we will begin with the onsite improvement work on the western portion of the Merrill Gardens project at Broadway and 51st Street that will require

access through the alley located on Desmond Street. Construction traffic will be using both Desmond Street and Coronado Avenue for access. If you should have any problems or questions, we encourage you to call or stop

by our construction trailer, located at 313 51st Street, Oakland; 510/250-9600.

As construction continues, we will provide more detailed updates and will post them to our website: <http://www.srmdevelopment.com/rockridge>. Sincerely, SRM Construction Inc.

ART IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The 'Society of Six' Find Inspiration in an Earlier Rockridge

by *Carl Schmitz*

In the 1910s and '20s, before Rockridge developed fully as a residential and commercial district, a group of plein air painters, the Society of Six, took inspiration from the landscape of the area. For this article, Nancy Boas, author of the "The Society of Six: California Colorists," kindly shared her thoughts and answered questions about the Six and their relationship to the Rockridge neighborhood as well as to the larger world of modern art.

The Society of Six painters may be the best-known group of artists associated with the Rockridge area. What were their connections to this neighborhood?

1915 was a watershed year with the opening of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the founding of the Society of Six group of painters. Four members of the Society of Six were living in Rockridge when they formed their group around 1915. Selden Connor Gile, the leader, lived at 5368 James Avenue. Louis Siegriest, then a 16-year-old school boy, lived with his family several blocks away at 5185 Miles Avenue; he studied drawing at the nearby California School of Arts and Crafts [now

California College of the Arts], which had been founded in 1907. Siegriest met Gile when the family's laundryman asked him if he would like to meet "a real artist." Gile was not home but the laundryman took Siegriest



Selden Connor Gile: *Rockridge Quarry*, oil on canvas, c. 1928.

inside and showed him the artist's work and later introduced them. Also living at Gile's house was artist August Gay, 25, who stayed there to escape his family's crowded home in Alameda. Maurice Logan, 29 and newly married, was living at 7117 Chabot Road and beginning work as a commercial artist. Gile invited Siegriest to join their painting expedition and Siegriest soon brought along his friend and classmate, 16-year-old Bernard von Eichman, who lived in San Francisco.

In 1916, Gile moved to a cabin in Rockridge at 7027 Chabot Road, which he called the Chow House. There the five painters gathered for critiques and hearty meals after hiking and painting all day in the East Bay and Marin countryside. (The Chow House no longer exists, having been torn down to construct BART. The site is across the road from the Chabot Canyon Racquet Club.) The sixth member, and last to join the group, was William H. Clapp, who, at 37 moved to Piedmont in 1917.

Where did the Six go on their painting excursions?

The Six would drive to favored spots around the Bay Area and down to Monterey,

Join Chevron Volunteers: Workday in the Pollinator Garden

by Gordon and Susan Piper

Ever since the Oakland Landscape Committee (OLC) adopted the corner at the Broadway off-ramp of Highway 24 and Keith Avenue in 2006, we have relied on volunteers to keep up with the weeds, mulch and plants.

During the 2015 Corporate Week of Caring, volunteers from Chevron will be weeding, deadheading and spreading mulch at the Broadway Pollinator Garden. The committee encourage RCPC and Rockridge community members to join us Tuesday, September 22, and/or Wednesday, September 23, from 9



Pollinator Garden volunteers pull weeds and spread mulch to keep the plants thriving. PHOTOS/GORDON PIPER.

a.m. until 1 p.m. Bring gloves, hats, sunscreen. OLC will provide the tools.

OLC adopted the football-field size Caltrans property in 2006 when it was the site of a homeless encampment and full of weeds. The committee has regularly recruited volunteers to develop the site as a public garden serving area residents and

providing pollinator habitat.

In 2014, Rockridge resident Carl Price responded to an article in The Rockridge News and began volunteering on a regular basis, helping with planting and maintenance



efforts as a Garden Steward, and now supervising and working with crews of high school students from the Alameda County Probation Department's Weekend Training Academy to beautify the Broadway Pollinator Garden. Recently, Maureen Carver from nearby Upper Broadway has become a regular volunteer.

"We are looking for other nearby residents to become garden stewards at this site, which continues to look good despite the drought, thanks to the hard work of volunteers," said the chair of the OLC, discussing progress in the site's maintenance.

To join in working on the Chevron workdays or to volunteer at another time, contact Gordon Piper at 510/843-3828, or via email: rgpiper33@gmail.com.

Give Temescal Creek Some TLC on Creek to Bay Day 2015

by Leonora Sea, DMV Neighbors

Dear Temescal Creek,
Get well soon, we miss you!
Love, your Rockridge and Temescal Neighborhoods

Once again, Lake Temescal is suffering from an algae bloom, and potentially could put toxins into the water of Temescal Creek. For health and safety reasons, Alameda County has shut off the pump that makes our Greenbelt section of the creek flow.

Much as everyone misses the flowing water, this is an excellent opportunity to remove trash, weeds, and detritus from the creek channel in preparation for what might be a wet El Niño winter.

Come out to Temescal Creek for the annual Creek to Bay Day cleanup, and help spruce up the creekbed and banks between Clifton and Clarke Streets. Join neighbors and friends on **Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m. to noon**, for coffee, pastries, and juice at sign-in. After a morning of weeding, pruning, trash pickup, raking and sweeping, snacks and cold drinks will follow at noon.

Meet on the lawn near the big eucalyptus stump at the corner of Cavour Street and Redondo Way. Families and groups are welcome. Students needing service hours for school will receive a signed letter verifying their participation. Tools, gloves, and safety goggles provided. If you bring your own tools, make sure they're labeled as yours.

For more info, email Leonora Sea, DMV Neighbors Association, via LeonoraSea@comcast.net, or look up Temescal creek on the city of Oakland's Creek to Bay Day web site: www.oaklandcreektobay.org.

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5276 Redondo • 3 Offers



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Don't let your weekend fun stop with Creek to Bay Day. Come to the **2015 Rockridge Kitchen Tour** Sunday, September 20, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tour eight beautifully renovated kitchens plus a full tour of the gorgeous Morse House. Info: RockridgeKitchenTour.org.

Docents Needed

We would welcome additional volunteer docents to guide our guests through the eight Rockridge kitchens. Docents receive short pre-event training, at which they can visit several of the houses, before September 20 (precise schedule is being worked out), then are assigned one of two shifts at a single house on the 20th.

Docents also receive a complimentary ticket to visit the other Tour houses before or after their shift. To volunteer as a docent, contact docent coordinator Laura Schlichtmann at laura.schlichtmann@gmail.com.

Remodel Dreams?

from page 1

creative talent behind the kitchens you will see on the Sunday tour and learn how these design professionals approach kitchen renovations.

The Seminar – 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, September 19 – is a chance to follow the kitchen planning and installation process of a construction company that can integrate its history of fine furniture and cabinet making into the kitchen design.

If you're anxious to get started early with your kitchen remodel explorations, there are many good local kitchen design firms. One of them, Jerry Wilkins' Custom Kitchens, 6624 Telegraph Avenue, is holding an Open House on September 9, 6-9 p.m. His designs have been featured in past Tours.

Showcasing the latest in kitchen design, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour features innovative uses of new and traditional materials, interesting floor plans, amazing transformations of larger spaces and creative solutions for smaller kitchens. Docents and architects with extensive knowledge of the remodels will be on hand to answer questions about each owner's goals and challenges. The tour brochure is a treasure trove of photos, resources, floor plans, and personal stories sure to inspire.

The Rockridge Kitchen Tour is the RCPC's primary fundraiser. Past tours have funded a variety of community projects including restoration of the Rockridge BART Plaza, Frog Park renovations and new trees along College Avenue. This year, \$5,000 of the ticket sales will benefit the RCPC Community Grants Program.

Kitchen Tour: Extra Events; Tour Details

The Kitchen Expo is open to all ticket holders. This is an opportunity to meet the creative talent behind the kitchens you will see on the Sunday tour and learn how these design professionals approach kitchen renovations. **Thursday, September 17: 7-9 p.m.; Rockridge Library, 5366 College Avenue.**

The Berkeley Mills Seminar, (\$25 to advance ticket holders) offers the chance to go through the entire process – from kitchen planning to installation – with a construction company that can integrate its history of fine furniture and cabinet making into the kitchen design. **Saturday, September 19: 2-5 p.m. Berkeley Mills, 2830 7th Street, Berkeley.**

2015 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: Takes you to eight fabulous Rockridge kitchens and a full tour of the landmark Morse House. * Buy day of tour tickets/confirm reservations/ pick up your Tour materials at the registration tent **starting at 11 a.m. Sunday, September 20. Tour 12:30-5:30 p.m. College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue.**

For more information/buy tickets: RockridgeKitchenTour.org

Tour Reveals Kitchen Trends

from page 1

homeowners took considerable risk buying houses in need of full house remodels for structural and/or infrastructure deficits. One house, once divided into two flats, was restored to its original single family status.

Restoration of exteriors and respect for the original architecture of these homes are high priorities. While some have a modern interpretation inside of a traditional shell, all feel harmonious.

Specific trends that popped up in previous Rockridge Kitchen Tours have become runaway favorites. The white kitchen is back, but with a twist of tone on tone and texture with dark accents on the islands. Granite and Corian countertops have almost disappeared. Engineered stone, like Caesarstone, honed marble and wood on islands have taken center stage. Tile and vinyl floors have given way completely to wood and natural cork products.

Sinks are deep, deep, deep, and large single sinks are the order of the day. The garbage disposal is going the way of the Dodo, presumably owing to Oakland's excellent city-wide compost program. Sinks are now either stainless steel or fireclay; enamel over cast iron is out. Most sinks, even farmstyle and apron front, are undermounted. Many are in islands. Double ovens are extremely popular, as are large

commercial style ranges and range hoods.

For the most part, these kitchens are designed to be gathering spots for family and friends, reflected in eating areas that are either stand-alone, or integrated into islands. Older Rockridge homes usually have no dedicated family room, so the kitchen has assumed the role of homework spot and family and conversation area, sometimes even incorporating work-at-home office space.

What else is trending? There are early signs of small family tech centers – hidden charging stations and laptop nooks – becoming common. Refrigerators and dishwashers with integrated cabinet fronts are also appearing. Island countertops that contrast with the rest of the kitchen's countertops are an up-and-coming trend. The contrast is rendered in materials like wood and eco-friendly paper-based Richlite, and by color. Several kitchens have no upper cabinets at all; more than one have open shelves, and one combines the open shelves with sliding doors.

Finally, original artworks play a big role in a number of these kitchens, and those kitchens with color have bold colors.

Whether you are looking for inspiration or are just curious, this year's kitchen tour is sure to please, and holds more than a few surprises.

A 'Recipe' for Kitchen Design Success

by Glen Jarvis, Architect

Kitchens have become the new living rooms in the level of finish and in the time we spend there. To make that time as pleasurable and fulfilling as possible, we need thoughtful planning so the kitchen's elements – or ingredients – work well

together.

Ingredients for a kitchen's design are first determined by the space available. Some of the following elements can therefore be substituted for others or left out as necessary.

► **Recipe; Kitchen Design, page 11**

Eyes on Rockridge

Fire Station 19: deeply embedded in the community

by Judith Doner Berne

It's easy to cruise along Miles Avenue from the freeway, to exit the east parking lot of the BART station, or to drop your student off at Claremont Middle School (CMS) without really noticing the Oakland Fire Department's Station No. 19.

But six-year-old Hudson Alsman knows it well. Hudson, back when he was a preschooler, regularly wore his San Francisco fireman's outfit. He was wearing it one day as he and his family walked up their street toward College Avenue.

"He starts waving to a fire truck coming up the street," Tod Alsman told me. "They pull over. All of them hop off the truck and motion to him to 'Come here, fireman.' They grab a hose off the truck, hand it to him and let him spray the hose on the street."

Since that time, "we got him an Oakland fire outfit," Tod says. And the Alsman family, which includes Mom Amy and little sister Harlowe, often visits Fire Station 19, bringing such treats as lasagna and jambalaya.

The family had recently moved to Rockridge from San Francisco, where Tod Alsman owns R Bar. When Hudson started kindergarten at Chabot Elementary, "he was having a hard time," Tod says. "I decided to bring him over to the fire department, and they spent an hour with him," telling stories of their own school experiences.

The history-making story we should all know is that our Rockridge fire house, opened at the Miles location in 1962, was first on the scene of the devastating mid-October 1991 Oakland Hills firestorm. The fire, which was not fully extinguished for several days, killed 25, injured 150 and destroyed 2,843 single family homes, 437 multiple housing units and a school.

Lamont Becton, one of the station's current firefighters, was newly married and working as a civil engineer when he and his wife left their Oakland church on the Sunday the fire took hold. As they were driving home, "I saw this fire. It just kept

getting bigger. Little did I know that years later I would be sitting here," said the 14-year Oakland firefighter, who has been part of the Rockridge crew for four years.

Fire Captain Larry Samson, a life-long Oakland resident, remembers seeing the fire on the news while he was vacationing in Las Vegas. "I couldn't believe it," he says, especially since he was due to join the Oakland Fire Department the next month.

The 1991 fire, plus earlier fires in the same area, have always come at the end of a summer of severe drought, according to news reports. So it was natural to wonder whether our local firefighters are any more on edge because of our four years of minimal rainfall.

"It makes you just that much more alert," Samson says. "You want to get there so quickly, so it doesn't have time to grow." "We are certainly more alert as to what the wind is doing," Becton seconded. "In this business time is everything. We never forget the big fire."

Indeed, an essential part of Station 19's job, as well as that of other area firehouses, is to annually inspect every residential property and vacant lot in the Hills for fire hazards. Laws now limit the height and types of trees and vegetation as well as how close to a building they may grow. And most homeowners have replaced wood roofs with more fire-resistant materials. "Ninety-five percent of the residents get it," Samson reports.

A group of Upper Rockridge residents, grateful for Station 19's work – back then and now – invites firefighters to their neighborhood get-togethers, particularly the one held each October.

"After the fire, we did start our annual anniversary party," says Elizabeth Magee, who says the firemen know her husband

Jerry as "the beef jerky man." Barring an emergency, the firefighters on duty come by fire truck.

Their daughter was just a year old when the 1991 fire demolished their home. It's still important to Elizabeth "for children to see the fire truck in a non-emergency situation and not be afraid."

Jeff Kahn moved into his Rockridge Hills home six months before the fire. Originally, he says, the party was "a celebration of the neighborhood that 'We're back!'"

Now, since most of his current neighbors have moved in since the fire, it is also a way of educating them "because you have no idea unless you experienced it," Kahn says.

"The firefighters are always invited," Kahn added. "They bring little plastic fire helmets for the children. We make sure that they feel appreciated. We just like to thank them for keeping us safe."

These days, 75 to 80 percent of the Rockridge station's emergencies are medical. Each firefighter is also either an emergency medical technician or paramedic. And each four-person squad is on duty for 24 hours, with two days off in between. One resident, whose house they have been called to more than once, expresses his thanks through the stack of barbecued ribs he brings to the station house each summer.

Rockridge has had its own firehouse

▶ Station 19, page 7

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Firefighter Curtis Thompson (left) and Lt. Greg Bell are part of the Rockridge Fire Station 19 crew who have a special relationship with Hudson Alsmann, joined here by his sister Harlowe.

Station 19

from page 6

since 1912, originally located on College Avenue at Birch Court. Now it's sandwiched between two schools, with CMS to its west and Little Elephant Montessori to its east. That proximity may have been crucial to keeping last February's overnight Claremont cafeteria fire from spreading to the classroom building, according to news reports.

In addition, "They are very friendly with our children," Montessori teacher Richard Escandon told me. "They've come and helped with the chicken coop out back. We're very appreciative to have them next to us."

Station 19 actually will be cooking for three families, who bid for and won a dinner at the firehouse at the preschool's

fundraising auction. That reflects both the station's ties with the neighborhood and the sense of community among the firefighters themselves.

Most of the Rockridge firefighters have served at other Oakland firehouses. "Each station is unique," Samson says. Rockridge is a little more complicated than a purely urban or more suburban setting.

"You have all these businesses, the BART station, the tunnel, the freeway and the homes of Lower Rockridge and the Hills," he says. "It is basically an urban interface with wild lands."

"I love being a firefighter," says Becton, whose 20-year-old son "is doing everything he can to be an Oakland firefighter."

"We have a lot of fun with each other, a real camaraderie," says Capt. Samson. "It helps bind us as a unit, because when we go

out the door it's not usually for something good."

It's little wonder that Hudson looks at firefighters as heroes.

Your comments on this column and/or ideas for future stories about Rockridge residents and neighborhoods are welcome: email judyberne@att.net.

The Saving of Station 19

Rockridge resident Annette Floystrup remembers a time in 1986 when the Oakland City Council wanted to close the Rockridge Fire Station as part of a cost-cutting effort.

"It was huge. Everyone was up in arms. But it seemed inevitable that it would be closed," she said.

However, Floystrup, whose family moved to Rockridge in 1955 and who is a former vice-chair of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), is renowned for getting to the crux of problems.

"The fire house was on my Rockridge News delivery route and I knew some of the men." To gather ammunition for a plea to the council, she asked the firefighters: "What makes this firehouse unique? What separates it from others in any way?"

When she learned that Fire Station 19 was designated as first responder for Caldecott Tunnel and Rockridge BART station emergencies, she alerted Caltrans and BART about the Council's plans. They compelled the city to honor those obligations.

"The fire guys hung a big banner up on the station proclaiming, 'Thank You Rockridge,'" Floystrup says.

When the Oakland Firestorm swept the area in 1991, the Rockridge crew was first on the scene. "The fact that the fire house remained there," Floystrup says, "turned out to be important in so many different ways."

— Judith Doner Berne

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* **Remodeling?** See RockridgeKitchenTour.org Coming Sunday 9/20. Tickets available now.

* **Just Sold:** 5215 Locksley 2BD 1BA home w/inlaw \$1,275,000 represented seller

* **Rockridge Market:** Lower summer inventory & vacations didn't hurt prices. 3-5BD homes sold \$1.7M-\$2M+. BART/College Ave still proves to be a huge draw. Will it peak or drop soon? No crystal ball but historical & trend evidence of regular cycles are guides. Interest rates were slated to rise this fall, but our recent stock market volatility caused a shift toward the bond market so rates are hovering at 4% still for conforming loans w/ high FICO scores (rates change daily). New inventory coming, but not huge. With China markets slowing / other global economic impacts, combined with the real estate cycle, we may see a softening within the next couple years or less. Today the demand still exceeds supply, especially in Rockridge. Great time to sell so feel free to contact me for an analysis of your home and/or deciding what will provide the best return.

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FROG Summer Jump Notes

The first months of 2015 were eventful for Frog Park and its work to provide a richer playground experience for all the children and families who come to the park.

Here is a short report of recent progress and a look at remaining work to be done:

■ **“Swings and More” Park Enhancements:** We thank you, our community donors, who helped reach the “Swings and More” Park Enhancements fund-raising goal this spring. Names will be posted on our website at www.frogpark.org and below for donations above \$250 and business contributions for our matching grant.

■ **We’ve heard you asking,** “When will

the building start?” FROG will continue working with our park designer and the park’s immediate neighbors to address their objections to some features.

■ Donations are still being accepted to address the costs of the additional plan revisions.

■ Like us: [facebook.com/frogpark](https://www.facebook.com/frogpark)

■ Contact us with questions or to volunteer: info@frogpark.org

■ **Save the Date:** 2015 Creek to Bay Day with DMV Neighbors Association, Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m. to noon. Volunteers sign up at Hardy Playground or Cavour and Redondo for general cleanup. (See story, page 4, for more information.)



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A big thank you to all who donated by handing us cash, via PayPal, and by checks and credit card donations ranging from a few dollars to \$200 and more. It all added up to help us reach our \$50K goal.

Thank you to our community, businesses and anonymous foundations and other organizations. On to our next step of improving the park for patrons, neighbors and our neighborhood.

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Earth Quake Preparedness TEMBLOR MAKES ROCKRIDGE RESIDENT A BELIEVER

by Michael Kan

AUGUST 17, 2015, 6:49 AM

It was just another Monday morning, and I was in the shower getting ready for the day. All of a sudden, we felt the “shaker.” At first we thought it was just another heavy truck going up the street, but as the shaking continued, we realized it was an earthquake.

My wife and I gathered ourselves, turned on the news, checked the earthquake apps on our phones and confirmed our assessment: We had just experienced an earthquake of about 4.0 magnitude. Giving me a knowing look, my wife asked: “What about that auto shut-off gas valve?” I replied, “It’s still on my to-do list.” Of course, she already knew my answer.

I first learned of the auto shut-off gas valve from Larry Guillot of QuakePrepare

(www.quakeprepare.com) when he gave a presentation and talk at an RCPC Town Hall meeting discussing steps to earthquake preparedness. The valve is designed to shut off the gas line into the house when jostled by an earthquake. It seemed like a sensible device, so I put it on my to-do list, where it remained until the August ’quake.

My wife and I decided the auto shut-off gas valve was a good idea for a nominal cost, and should be installed: I was in contact with Larry the following Monday to make the appointment.

Larry explained he has a set price for the valve and its installation. The only variance is for the difference in the cost of a larger valve – based on the diameter of the gas line into the home.

The installation was quick – within the predicted one-hour time – and the installation

team carefully explained the product, its operation and its characteristics. After the installation, they reviewed the reset procedure, re-lit our pilot lights and tested the valve’s operation. Everything was in order. The actual name for the valve is Little Firefighter.

Out of curiosity, I Googled the name and got a number of hits from plumbers, plumbing supply stores, Amazon, and the city of Los Angeles’ test evaluation of the valve.

While other brands of these valves are available, my search results indicated the Little Firefighter is well received. The following link provides an overview of Little Firefighter’s operation: <http://www.earthquakevalvespecialists.com/EarthquakeValves.html>

There are other installers who use and install this valve. From my research, it appears Larry’s charge for service and valve is quite reasonable. If you will be considering one of these valves for your home or property, you may want to include Larry Guillot and his company on your interview list.

One more thing off the to-do list. Next item: Check to see if the valve’s presence helps our homeowner’s insurance rate. Shouldn’t take any time at all....


Ed. Notes: Mr. Kan wasted no time contacting his insurance agency, and learned that he was now eligible for a discount.

Another user reports that the Little Firefighter has features that set it apart from other seismic shut-off valves on the market. Being relatively compact, it is especially suitable for tight spaces. Also, unlike most seismic valves, it comes in both a horizontal and a vertical version, and thus can be adapted to a wide range of pipe configurations. Finally, if the shutoff is triggered by a quake, it can be manually reset with a screwdriver. Some other valves require that the gas company or a plumber do the reset, the user said.



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Letters to the Editor

CYCLING ON COLLEGE AVENUE IS NOW SAFER AND A PLEASURE

EDITOR:

What a pleasure to have College Avenue under the BART station finally paved. Actually, we'd been told that it wouldn't happen before "the end of the year." I had some hope though, when the detour signs suddenly appeared in early August.... and now it is a dream come true.

After years of that rough surface and the potholes on the west side of the street, not only our cars, but also now our bicycles, can ride without needing to swerve to avoid the hazardous and pitted pavement. It's not only nicer, but safer. Many thanks to the powers that be.

— **M C Haug**

P. S. Now to get the traffic signals at College and Claremont straightened out!

SAFeway BUSINESSES GENERATE LOTS OF TRASH

EDITOR:

Perhaps I haven't yet recovered from the Safeway design controversy and how the Claremont Avenue frontages were treated (very poorly in my opinion), but it seems to me that the businesses that operate in the small retail building next to Safeway sure generate a lot of trash. I walk up Claremont Avenue in the evening from the bus stop and not a day goes by that there aren't ten or more large, sometimes overflowing trash bins out on the sidewalk. This amount of trash is generated by a coffee shop (not counting all of the paper cups that end up elsewhere), a hair salon, an ice cream store, and a credit union with two ATMs and seemingly no people. Not exactly heavy industry. When the remainder of the retail spaces lease, how much more trash will there be? It is an

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

eyesore on what should be one of the nicer streets in Rockridge. Here [at right] is a picture of a recent curb mess.

My question, in addition to how could City planners have missed so badly on the amount of off-sidewalk trash storage required, is: Can the RCPC provide comment to or work with the City to attract businesses that are more sensitive to the environment? Nothing extreme, but at least being aware of local sensibilities? I know that paper is recyclable, but it takes a lot of water and energy to turn trash paper into fresh paper, so could we have businesses that walk the walk?

— **John Dal Pino**

RCPC Kitchen Tour, Sunday, September 20
Tickets, Info:
www.RockridgeKitchenTour.org




/JOHN DAL PINO

MORE TRASH AT WORKER'S OUTSIDE BREAK SPACE

EDITOR:

Since my last letter [sent in August], another issue that has come up at the Safeway location is the use of the planter walls, curbs and benches along Claremont and directly


↳ Letters, page 11



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Letters to the Editor

Letters

from page 10

adjacent to and behind the buildings for employee smoke breaks and snacks, resulting in trash accumulation (cigarette butts, drink cups, ketchup packets, paper wrappers, etc.).

If the businesses aren't going to provide adequate break spaces for their employees (and obviously they don't want them hanging out where the customers can see them), then they really need to clean up the public spaces a few times a day, as littering is still unsightly and unlawful.

— **John Dal Pino**

RCPC Kitchen Tour; Sunday, September 20
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HUGE PARKING PERMIT COST RISE UNEXPECTED AND ASTOUNDING

EDITOR:

I visited the Parking Citations and Permits Office on the 6th Floor of 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza on August 24 to register our family's second vehicle for an Area C residential parking permit.

I was astounded to learn that prices were up – *way up*. When I renewed last spring it was \$35 per vehicle, as it had been for years. Now it's \$82 to get a permit for a car not previously registered for a parking permit. And, as of July 1, it was \$59 for each annual renewal of registered vehicles, up from \$35.

A one-day guest permit is now \$9, up from \$1, and a two-week guest permit is \$25, up from \$5. Nobody I talked to had heard about these increases; apparently the Department told no one about them.

Considering that I once had a \$295 car, it seems rather expensive to purchase Oakland residential parking permits these days.

— **Gary Lippman,**
Rockridge Resident, 41 years



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Recipe; Kitchen Design

from page 5

Ingredient list:

- Appliances: Range; hood; microwave; refrigerator and freezer; dishwasher; small appliances

- Plumbing: Sink(s) and dishwasher

- Cabinets: Base cabinets; islands and peninsulas; countertops; upper cabinets; wall cabinets; and pantry

- Windows, doors, and skylights

- Table, and other seating

Combining ingredients:

- Measure the space available and draw it to scale on a large piece of paper.

- Draw on, cut out, and label pieces of paper that represent your ingredients in proportion to the space.

- Arrange the ingredients on your kitchen drawing.

- Do this many times, overlaying the ingredients and trying different layouts until the plan begins to firm up, but don't let it harden.

- Let the plan simmer, then come back and mix ingredients again.

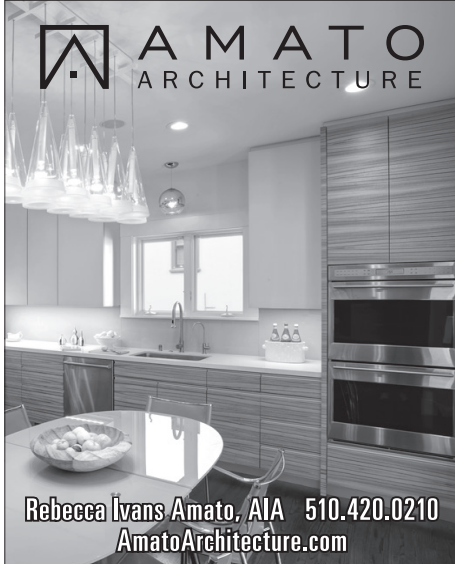
Return to the ingredient list and review for materials and colors. Start with your favorite materials and colors, then coordinate with other finishes and hardware.

Walls, floors, cabinets and countertops are the main surfaces, but in the end, they are in the background. Decorate with cabinet pulls, door hardware, lighting fixtures, and appliances.

Tips: • Arrange cabinets and appliances for continuous countertops with the fridge at the end and a good work area between the sink and range. • Islands help the cook socialize and keep family and friends out from underfoot. • Avoid dead ends and corner cabinets when possible. • Openness and shared space make small areas feel larger.

Consider these questions: • How do the dishes go out, and come back to be cleaned and stored? • What will you see out the windows? • Can the sun light and warm the room? • Is the breakfast table near a good window?

Decorating: Your possessions are what animate and personalize the finished kitchen. Include dishes, decorative platters, bowls with fruit, flowers in vases, pots and pans in use, food being prepared, full glasses, appetizers, conversation... and you are in your new kitchen.



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Swim a Mile for Women With Cancer

by *Judy Berne*


Six hundred swimmers and 200 volunteers are expected to participate in the Women's Cancer Resource Center's 20th annual "Swim a Mile for Women With Cancer" event scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4 at Mills College.

Register to swim or water-walk, collect pledges, volunteer, or donate to the WCRC's largest fundraiser online at wcrc.org/swim or call 510/601-4040, ext. 103.

The event raised \$433,000 last year, according to swim manager Christine Sinnott, approximately a third of the agency's operating budget. "It's raised \$4.5 million since it began in 1996," says WCRC executive director Peggy McGuire, a Rockridge resident. "Wouldn't it be

great to hit the \$5 million mark?" Located at Telegraph and 58th Street, the center provides free supportive services for women with cancer to improve their quality of life.

Read about the part Rockridge residents have played in the center's almost 30-year history in the October issue of The Rockridge News.



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8/18/15	3	1	5314 Lawton Ave	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	8	\$1,150,000
8/18/15	4	2	5303 Lawton Ave	\$1,295,000	\$1,295,000	14	\$1,770,000
8/22/15	2	1	5340 Broadway Terrace	\$655,000	\$655,000	13	\$675,000

• Currently 1 Month Supply of Inventory • Median Sales Price \$930,000 vs. \$925,000 last year
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Society of Six

from page 3

where they would hike and set up their portable easels to paint the rural landscape. Many events across the Bay Area this year celebrate the centenary of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. How important was this Fair to the development of the Six?

Seeing art from all over the world at the Fair was crucial to the painters' development. It broke Californians' isolation and exposed them to an enormous display of over 11,000 works from around the world. Most significant for the Oakland painters were the 50 or so paintings by the French Impressionists, already over 40 years old, which came like a bolt from the blue that freed them to a new way of seeing, just as

it had released so many others before them. How did the public get to see paintings by the Six and what was their reception like? Each year, from 1923 to 1928, W. H. Clapp, director of the Oakland Art Gallery – now the Oakland Museum – invited the group to exhibit as “The Society of Six.” Lengthy reviews brought widespread attention, although their vibrant colors and expressive paint handling shocked more conservative viewers.

At one point in the '60s, when there was apparently little interest in the Society of Six, Siegriest reportedly had a number of unstretched canvases by his fellow painters stored on his back porch. What led to the public's rediscovery of these artists?

Louis Siegriest loaned a number of canvases by the Six to the Oakland Museum. Paul Mills, then director, appreciated their value. Curator Terry St. John, a painting partner of Siegriest in later years, organized an exhibition of the Society of Six at the Oakland Museum in 1972 in connection with the retrospective of Siegriest's work. The catalogue of the 1972 exhibition, my book “The Society of Six: California Colorists,” and an exhibition in 1989 at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco based on the book drew the interest of new generations

of viewers and art collectors.

In “California Colorists” you were able to include reflections on the Six from artists Richard Diebenkorn, Nathan Oliveira, Hassel Smith, and Wayne Thiebaud, all of whom were from a later generation. How relevant are the Six to today's artists?

The Six are relevant because of the enduring quality of their work, their camaraderie, and their pure dedication to painting. They belong to the lineage that characterizes modern painting in Northern California; elements such as thick paint, bold gesture, and luscious color were carried forward by the Bay Area Figurative group. Where can we go to see the paintings of the Society of Six?

Their wonderful work is on view at the Oakland Museum of California; the de Young Museum, San Francisco; and the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento.

“The Society of Six: California Colorists,” published by the University of California Press (who also issued Boas' biography of painter David Park), is available through the Oakland Public Library.

Carl Schmitz, Art Research Librarian at the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation, sees our local Six as being worthy of further study similar to New York's better-known Irascible Eighteen, and can be reached at cschmitz@diebenkorn.org.

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Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Discuss crime and public safety with reps of OPD. 2nd Thurs. each month (Sept 10) 7:30pm. **Topic: Community Policing**, with speaker **Cathy Leonard** from the Community Policing Advisory Board. Rockridge Library, College and Manila. Info: www.rockridgencpc.com or chair@rockridgencpc.com.

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5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

NOTE: no story times on 9/3, 9/5 and 9/10

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

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

SPECIAL EVENT

Expecting a new baby in your family? Call or email to register now (space is limited) for **New Sibling Workshop** on Sat., Oct 17, 11:15am-12:15pm. Parents, bring your toddler, preschooler, or kindergartener to learn songs, read stories, and share questions, answers & ideas, to prepare for big changes. Everyone gets a booklet of songs and a board book. 597-5017 or esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org.

FOR TEENS

- **Teen Advisory Board (ages 14-18):** Advise the library how to better serve teens. Get community service credit for school. 1st Sat. each month, 1 to 2pm.
- **Teen 'Scape:** Join other teens every Wednesday

2-4:30pm for playing video & board games, making crafts, and enjoying light snacks.

- Use bright colored **Perler Beads** to design your own projects or follow patterns. Sept 23, 2 pm
- **Banned Books Week:** Display banned books from Sept 27 to Oct 3.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group: All writers welcome.** Bring 15 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month (9/19), 1 to 5pm; wheelchair-accessible. Sponsored by the Calif. Writers Club, Berkeley branch. Info: 420-8775 or Writefoxf@aol.com.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice and referrals. First Tues. each month, 5 to 7pm. (Advance sign-up starts 4:45pm at adult reference desk). **Note:** Volunteer lawyer leaves before 7pm if no more people present. Call day of program to confirm: 597-5017.

Gallery Art Exhibit

September: Photographs by the members of the **Oakland Art Association.**

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.

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

Fri, 12 to 5:30pm.

Closed: Sun. & Mon; also Tues & Wed, 9/8 and 9/9.

Become a Volunteer Story Reader in Oakland Preschools

Want to foster a life-long love of reading in Oakland's children? Oakland Public Library's volunteer program Books for Wider Horizons holds its annual **training at Rockridge Library** over six evenings - 9/22, 9/23, 9/24, 10/6, 10/7, and 10/8; and one full Saturday, 10/10. For more information: rvenuto@oaklandlibrary.org, or 238-7453.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs, 9/10, 6:30pm. **Margaret Bendet:** *Learning to Eat Along the Way: A Memoir.*
- Fri, 9/11, 9pm (doors open 8:30). **Music Performance with bluegrass banjo and guitar impresario Avram Siegel** and friends. Note: \$10 cover charge; all proceeds go to musicians.
- Tues, 9/15, 6:30pm. **Samuel Sattin:** *The Silent End;* with **Michelle Wallace** in conversation.
- Fri, 9/18, 7pm. Celebrating the release of **ZZZYVA's** Fall issue #104, with readings by contributors.
- Sun., 9/20, 3:00pm. **Patrick deWitt:** *Undermajor-domo Minor.*
- Tues, 9/22, 6:30pm. **Steve DeAngelo:** publication party for *The Cannabis Manifesto: A New Paradigm for Wellness.*
- Thurs, 9/24, 6:30pm. Poet and songwriter **Brian Laidlaw:** *The Stuntman: Poems.*
- Thurs, 10/1, 6:30pm. Local author **Kristin Schreier Lyseggen:** *The Women of San Quentin: Soul Murder of Transgender Women in Male Prisons.*
- Sun, 10/4, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** in a memorial celebration of the life and work of **Steve Kowit.**

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

Wisteria Ways House Concert

- Acoustic trio **Anne Marie and Fiddlearound:** blend of swamp boogie, blues, Cajun, Zydeco, gypsy, fiddle tunes, country & originals. Hear selections at www.sonicbids.com/band/fiddlearound/audio/. Sat., Sept 12, 3pm; doors open 2:15pm.
- **Claudia Schmidt:** Singer/songwriter /entertainer: music, poetry, story, laughter, drama and celebrating the moment. Hear samples at www.claudiaschmidt.com/. Sat., Sept 19, 3pm; house opens 2pm.

Outside venues; wheelchair accessible. Bring blanket or lawn chair, hat, sunscreen and picnic.

- **True Life Trio:** Original songs and folk songs from Eastern Europe to the American South. Hear selections at www.truelifetrio.com/. Sat., Oct 3, 8pm. Inside venue; not wheelchair accessible.

\$15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Jazz at the Chimes

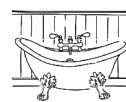
Jazz and blues vocalist **Faye Carol** will perform with pianist **Joe Warner:** blues, jazz, and soul "from then to now." Sunday, Sept 20, 2pm. Tickets at the door (cash only) beginning 12:30pm (doors open 1:30): \$15 general; \$10 srs. (60+) and students. Refreshments and reception follows to meet the performers. Info at www.fayecarol.com. The concert series honors the individual stories and unique artistry of Bay Area jazz musicians in a landmarked Julia Morgan venue: Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. **Wheelchair accessible.** **Free parking.** More info: www.jazzatthechimes.com, chimesjazz@gmail.com, or 654-0123.

7th Annual Volunteer Fair for Oakland Schools

Find a volunteer program that's right for you to help Oakland students. Get linked to school-based volunteer opportunities that match your interests, schedules and abilities. Volunteers fully trained before they begin a program. Sept.12 from 10am to 1pm at Lakeview School Auditorium 746 Grand Avenue (at MacArthur Blvd., across the street from the Grand Lake Theater). Free Parking in lot behind school. Hosted by Volunteering for Oakland, in partnership with OUSD and the Mayor's Office. More info: www.volforoak.org/volunteer-fair/ or email contact@volunteeringforoakland.org.

North Oakland Senior Center

- **Free specialized phones for visually or hearing impaired:** California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) presentation. Inspect the phones and apply in person if qualified. Tues, 9/ 22, 11:00-noon. More info or application forms: 1-800/806-1191 or info@CaliforniaPhones.org or www.CaliforniaPhones.org.
 - **2016 Trips Preview: Travel offers for Srs.** Thurs, 9/24, 10am-noon. For questions or to register for a trip, contact Mary Norton, Sr. Center Dir. 597-5085/ FAX 597-5082 or MNorton@oaklandnet.com.
- 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. More info: 597-5085.



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