

Rockridge Halloween Parade: Ghoulish Tradition



Happy Halloween

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and the Rockridge District Association (RDA) invite all the ghosts and goblins of all ages to celebrate Halloween on College Avenue. **From noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, October 30**, participating merchants will host trick-or-treating along both sides of College Avenue from Alcatraz to Broadway. Join the costumed procession: Meet at Halloween Central in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, at 11:45 a.m. At precisely noon, we'll kick off trick-or-treating, leading the first group along the avenue. At 12:45 p.m., return to Halloween Central for spooky storytelling and silly, scary sing-alongs. A storyteller from the Storytelling Association of California will spin Halloween yarns in front of the church and a singer will serenade the costumed crowds.



ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY
 **5366 College Avenue**
at Manila | 597-5017
 Library program details/hours: Calendar, page 15

THE Rockridge News

The Rockridge News, founded March 1986 by Don Kinkead, is published monthly (except in August) 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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Contacting The Rockridge News

- 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

Articles submitted for publication may be emailed to the editor or mailed to the addresses above. Submissions are limited to 600 words, must include the author's name, phone number, email 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, contact the editor.

Newsletter Advertising/Deadline

Publication date of the November issue is:

- 📅 **November 8, 2016**
- 📅 **November deadline is October 20.**

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

OpEd

Claremont Hotel Development Plans Worry Neighbors, Businesses

by Wendy Markel, community preservationist

On this 25th anniversary of the Oakland Hills firestorm we are full of stories of loss and survival: The loss of lives, of homes and of neighborhoods.

One thing we all remember is the survival of the Claremont Hotel as flames and smoke raged above it. It became part of our community's psyche, and even home to some, as we began to recover. Today, we fear that the hotel was saved only to face a new threat.

Current owners AccorHotels, an international hotel chain, recently acquired the Fairmont Hotel consortium connected with financier Richard Blum. Signature Development has been hired to prepare expansion plans. Gradually, word has spread in nearby neighborhoods, and concerned citizens have realized the project is massive and unsafe for the setting and the community.

The project would create new residential parcels on a portion of the hotel acreage (an area protected by its nomination for the National Register of Historic Resources and listed as a State of California Historical Resource), to enable construction of a

four-story, 43-unit condominium complex atop an underground two-story garage, as well as two large single-family homes. The structures would rise above Tunnel Road and form a wall right next to the historic Short Cut footpath.

To the northwest, there would be enlarged recreational facilities designed to serve up to 1,000 new Club members including: a new



Saved from the Firestorm in 1991, the Claremont Hotel is today under new siege by a development proposal seen by many concerned citizens as unsuitable for the treasured landmark and its neighborhood.

pool and deck of 15,000 sq. ft; event lawn; regulation tennis courts with bleachers to seat 400; an additional parking structure with raised tennis courts on top (adjacent to the famous Berkeley Tennis Club); and a half basketball court across Claremont Avenue from St. Clement's parish church and residences.

Primary health and safety issues include, but are not limited to, the proximity of the Hayward Fault and underground water tables running through the Claremont property which make it a dangerous

▶ **Claremont Hotel Concerns, page 10**

Claremont Hotel Concerns

from page 2

location for the underground parking garage and condominiums. Considering the pedestrian, vehicular and possible emergency traffic, the project would create persistent gridlock and massive parking problems in an area already stretched to capacity. Neighborhood shops and restaurants near the Domingo/Russell corner would land in the eye of a vehicular storm.

Oakland's General Plan calls for housing near public transportation, access for emergency vehicles, and retail access. These conditions are not met, nor does this project provide affordable housing.

In 1991, we lost our home above the

Claremont Hotel in the firestorm, escaping only with our lives. The Hiller Highlands and Caldecott Tunnel condominium complexes were destroyed. The high density of these structures made them impossible to save. To propose another condominium structure wedged within the Landmark Hotel grounds, abutting private residences and near the emergency access of Tunnel Road, seems truly foolhardy.

After the fire, I joined a local Oakland/Berkeley group that worked with the city and the preservation community to designate the Claremont Hotel an Oakland Landmark and to have it (and 12 acres around it) listed as a California Historical Resource. The significant defining features for these designations were found in the hotel's building history, architecture, and community resources, and in its setting within the surrounding homes and natural hillside, making it visible from local

streets and downtown freeways. This setting would be irrevocably damaged by the proposed project's combined effects.

This time around, a group of concerned citizens formed Save Our Claremont (www.SaveOurClaremont.org), to evaluate the impact of the proposed development.

I am writing for myself but have joined Save Our Claremont to inform the community and elected officials of Oakland and Berkeley that this project is inappropriate for our East Bay landmark. It will cause significant negative impacts on the surrounding residences, schools, streets and commercial environment.

More at: www.SaveOurClaremont.org.

A past president of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA), Wendy is a member of the Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA), the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, the Vicente Canyon Foundation and is an Oakland Museum of California Natural Science Docent.

Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School Host Holiday-Themed Fundraisers

— Both articles continued from page 3 —

Chabot Elementary Carnival

Jumpy Slide, and decorating pumpkins and sugar skulls.

The Chabot Carnival also offers lots of fun entertainment such as Jeremy the Dancer; great music; and a silent costume contest. For those that like to shop, stop by the Craft Faire featuring designers and crafters from the Chabot community.

Join us in celebrating all the fun that Fall has to offer— games; food; prizes; music; and crafts – there is something for everyone. All proceeds from this family-friendly event benefit the Chabot Elementary PTA and fund enrichment programs such as the library; music; art; science; Spanish; the garden; coordination of numerous after-school programs; and help in the classrooms. Special thanks to our sponsors for supporting the Chabot community: MPR Financial; Piedmont Dental by Design; Yovino-Young, Inc.; and 1st United Credit Union. Visit www.chabotelementary.org for more information.

Claremont MS Auction

The auction – encompassing an Online Auction from October 17 through 26, and the gala event – is Claremont's biggest fundraiser. Proceeds provide critical support for programs including outdoor education, Math & Science Night, and Family Literacy Night. The event has already received generous donations from many Rockridge merchants – including merchandise and sponsorships – as well as Claremont families, staff, and other Bay Area businesses.

Tickets: \$25 advance/\$30 door.

Tickets/more info at www.claremontms.org/auction.

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Competition Drive Price in August

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
8/5/2016	3	1.5	6037 CHABOLYN TER	\$799,000	\$799,000	12	\$1,180,000
8/8/2016	3	2	5340 LOCKSLEY AVE	\$995,000	\$995,000	11	\$1,425,000
8/15/2016	2	2	5577 TAFT AVE	\$1,249,000	\$1,249,000	12	\$1,640,000
8/22/2016	3	2	5525 Taft Avenue	\$928,000	\$928,000	13	\$1,400,000
8/24/2016	2	2	5290 BROADWAY TER	\$550,000	\$550,000	62	\$540,000
8/24/2016	2	1.5	5119 DESMOND ST	\$849,000	\$849,000	14	\$1,085,000
8/26/2016	2	2	5589 LAWTON AVE	\$2,700,000	\$2,500,000	27	\$2,400,000

Homes sold in August closed 20% over the asking price on average.

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