Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 33 ■ NO. 1 ■ ISSUE NO. 350 ■ January 6, 2018 CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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REFERENCE

Why I Joined the RCPC Board

— Jesse Humberto Ortega —

by Don Kinkead

Appointed to fill an open position on the RCPC board in June 2016, Jesse Humberto Ortega ran for and was elected to a full term in the June 2017 board elections. In addition to normal board duties, he has served as the board secretary since his election.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Jesse made the move to Rockridge in 2010 with his engagement to his wife-to-be, a Rockridge native. In a happy turn of events, the couple then lived for two-and-a-half years in China and then Kazakhstan, when his wife was placed on overseas assignments. While living abroad, Jesse used his computer expertise to support fellow expats in those countries.

After many years living in a Rockridge apartment, the couple bought a home near the expanded College Avenue Safeway. They are so close that they refer to it as their pantry.

Jesse explained his interest in serving on the RCPC board as follows:

"While living abroad, I was briefly part of a group that helped raise money for orphanages and sponsored special

➧ Why I Joined RCPC, page 16

RCPC Board Positions Available: Joining the RCPC board of directors can be a straightforward process: Rockridge residents 18 years of age or older and living within RCPC boundaries (http://rockridge.org/content/rcpc-boundaries-map-view) can take the first step by contacting board chair Stuart Flashman at chair@rockridge.org to announce their interest. It's time to take that step.

RCPC Town Hall

Thursday, January 18, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Rockridge Library, 5366 College

Topics:

1. BART station tree removal/replacement.
2. City plans traffic circles on Shafter.
3. Claremont Hotel neighbors discuss proposed condominium project.
Details below.

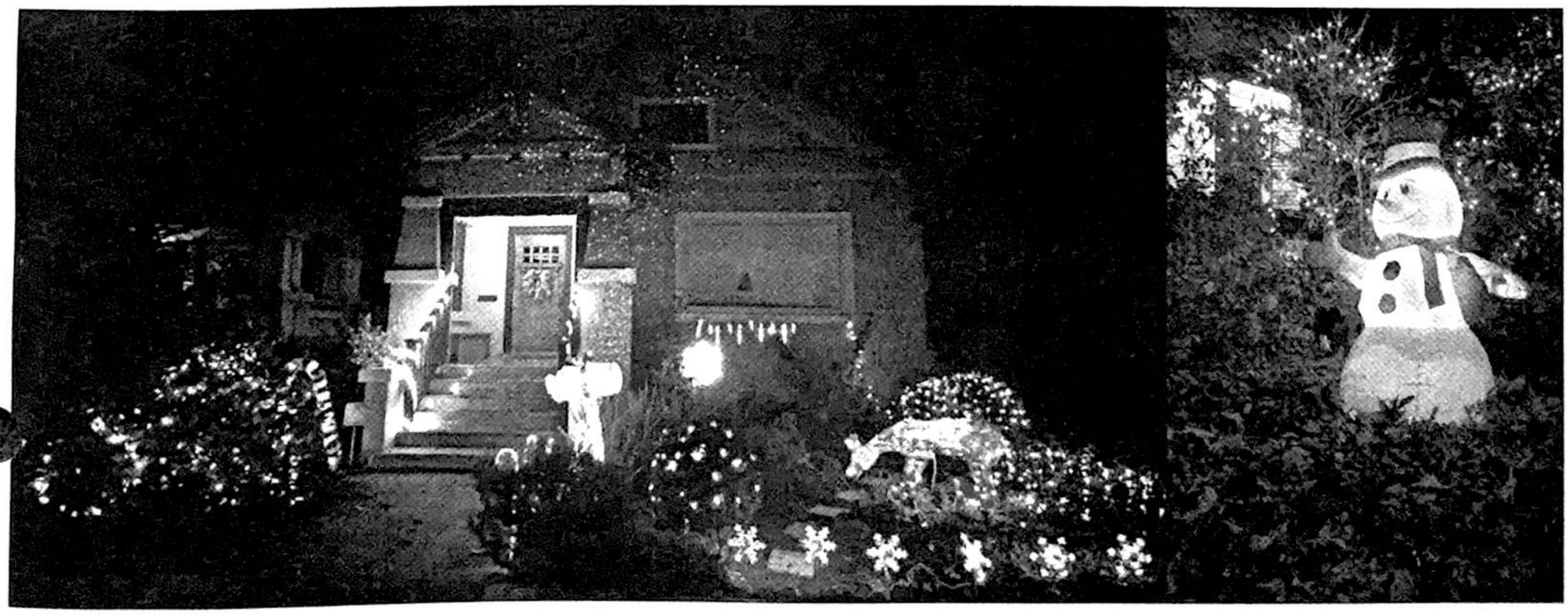
1. BART: Rockridge Station Tree Replacement. BART reports a Rockridge Station Hazard Tree Assessment was completed by an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist in 2017. The results require BART to replace hazardous trees adjacent to the parking lots inside the station. The identified tree hazards include one dead coast redwood at the corner of Forest Street and Shafter Avenue,

➧ Town Hall Topics, page 9

Christmas Lights Brighten Rockridge, Here and There

A recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle told of Oakland's Picardy Drive and that neighborhood's penchant for elaborate annual Christmas lighting installations. Did Rockridge share this type of high-wattage displays in its neighborhoods? The article was silent on that point. However, a couple of quick windshield surveys made on Rockridge streets during several nights before and after Christmas found pockets of displays largely north of Clifton and south of Hudson and around Shafter, Cavour, and Locksley. Lighting installations east of College and north of Forest were scant.

More photos of the displays selected for ingenuity and creativity can be found on page 14.



OpEd

The Imperiled Future of "Transit-Rich" Rockridge

by Dakin Ferris, Rockridge resident

In March of 2017, the Oakland City Council approved a major variance to existing Temescal zoning. The variance gave the green light to construction of a 25-story, 402-unit apartment tower next to MacArthur BART. My first reaction – selfishly – was "OK, better them than us." I love the family-oriented, small-village feel of Rockridge just as it is, thank you very much. Still, it made me ponder. How easily could this sort of thing happen in Rockridge? I've subsequently concluded, it's more a matter of "when" and not "if."

"Transit-rich" is the term used by YIMBYs (the "Yes In My Backyard" pro-development forces) when referring to Rockridge. If you haven't heard of them, YIMBYs in California are organized, very active and gaining momentum in finding ways to provide a rapid response to California's housing crisis. While I support their general objective, I have bristled at some of their aggressive means. Now, more immediately, I believe they and the pro-development forces, spawned by legitimate need, pose a direct threat to the future of Rockridge as we know it.

In the past few years, YIMBYs have achieved impressive results. They have successfully sued numerous cities that had blocked housing projects. They have also been involved in championing substantial state and local legislation that favors pro-growth and fast-tracking of development projects. In recent months, I was surprised to learn that one of the YIMBYs' prize objectives is to bring higher density housing (high-rises, condos) to "transit-rich" Rockridge. In short, because Rockridge is home to a BART station, they see it as a natural and even appropriate target.

My initial (albeit naïve) reaction to this conclusion was that we need to organize to oppose this. As the forces at play are significantly bigger than our tiny village, that won't be easy. Although RCPC, a public benefit nonprofit organization, has earned respect from City decision-makers over the years of representing the neighborhood, Rockridge lacks independent authority in dealings with the City. Legitimate regional needs could overwhelm the neighborhood.

My second thought was more measured. The current housing crisis was born of the Silicon Valley jobs gold rush which caught the historically more measured development process by surprise. That has resulted in the birth of the YIMBYs and significant focus and pressure on the political process.

The concern, then, is that as with any swing in society, the rush to solve one problem — in this case the housing crisis — will come at the expense of a more thoughtful, planned development process.

The micro-battle over the bike stations that recently took place in our village and on Nextdoor.com was an apt example of the approach used by the YIMBYs, and I think presages a much more heated discussion that's headed in our direction when more substantial development is inevitably proposed.

Imperiled Future, page 13

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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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:

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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 February issue is:
- **February 3, 2018.**
- **Submission deadline: January 18, 2018.**

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.)

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RCPC Land Use Committee

The next Land Use Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 24, 7:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch Library upstairs meeting room. **Meeting details or plans may change!** Please check the **rockridge.org website** the week before to confirm meeting and agenda. Meetings are generally open to the public.

RCPC Land Use Committee Update – January 2018

The Land Use Committee met December 20, 2017, but no formal actions were taken for lack of a quorum. However, as detailed below, committee members present discussed one item, and another land use item is currently pending before the RCPC Board.

■ Bourbon & Beef liquor license transfer; 5634 College Avenue

The Bourbon & Beef restaurant and bar closed its doors last month under apparently inauspicious circumstances. (There was broken glassware scattered on the tables and floor near the College Avenue window, and that window had been cracked, apparently by an impact.) A sign has now been posted announcing the pending transfer of the liquor license [full bar] to new ownership, for what seems to be a hamburger-oriented restaurant and bar.

Land Use Committee members had heard from neighbors that Bourbon & Beef had a poor record of addressing neighbors' complaints about late-night noise and garbage problems. The committee members at the December meeting felt it would be appropriate for RCPC to comment on the license transfer. The issue is now pending before the RCPC Board.

■ College Avenue Safeway Use Permit noncompliance (6310 College Ave.)

When this project, the rebuild and expansion of an existing Safeway, was approved by the City in December 2012, a long list of conditions was attached to the use permit. In addition, RCPC, along with two other local community groups, reached a settlement agreement with Safeway that committed Safeway to additional requirements to mitigate the project's effects on the community.

Over time, RCPC and the other groups have attempted to get both the City and Safeway to enforce/live up to the requirements Safeway committed to, with only partial success. Most recently, the groups, assisted by Peterson Vollmann, the Oakland planner who has been assigned to the project, sent a letter to Safeway's offices in Boise, Idaho, pointing out numerous long-standing problems of noncompliance. Safeway has responded, promising to fix some problems and asserting other problems have already been addressed. The groups, while happy to get any kind of response, disagree with some of Safeway's claims of compliance. Further follow-up with Safeway and the City is in progress.

RDA Successes, Rockridge's Direction

RDA Pleased with 2017 Achievements

by Chris Jackson, general manager of the Rockridge District Association

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) was invited by The Rockridge News to present a few highlights of our work in 2017.

Let me start by saying that the Rockridge District continues to be one of the largest tax revenue generators for the City of Oakland for a district of this kind. That in itself in this tumultuous time is an accomplishment.

Following is a list of other specific accomplishments in 2017:

RDA Successes, page 12

Reflections at the Cusp of the Year

Looking Back & Looking Ahead: My Personal View

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Board Chair, writing as a Rockridge resident

With 2017 ending and 2018 looming, it seems appropriate to take stock of where things are in Rockridge, and where they may be heading.

Certainly 2017 has been an eventful year. While President Trump wasn't named "Man of the Year" by Time Magazine, his administration has had a large impact,

Cusp of the Year, page 12

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Reset for Old Chase Bank Building Demolition Date

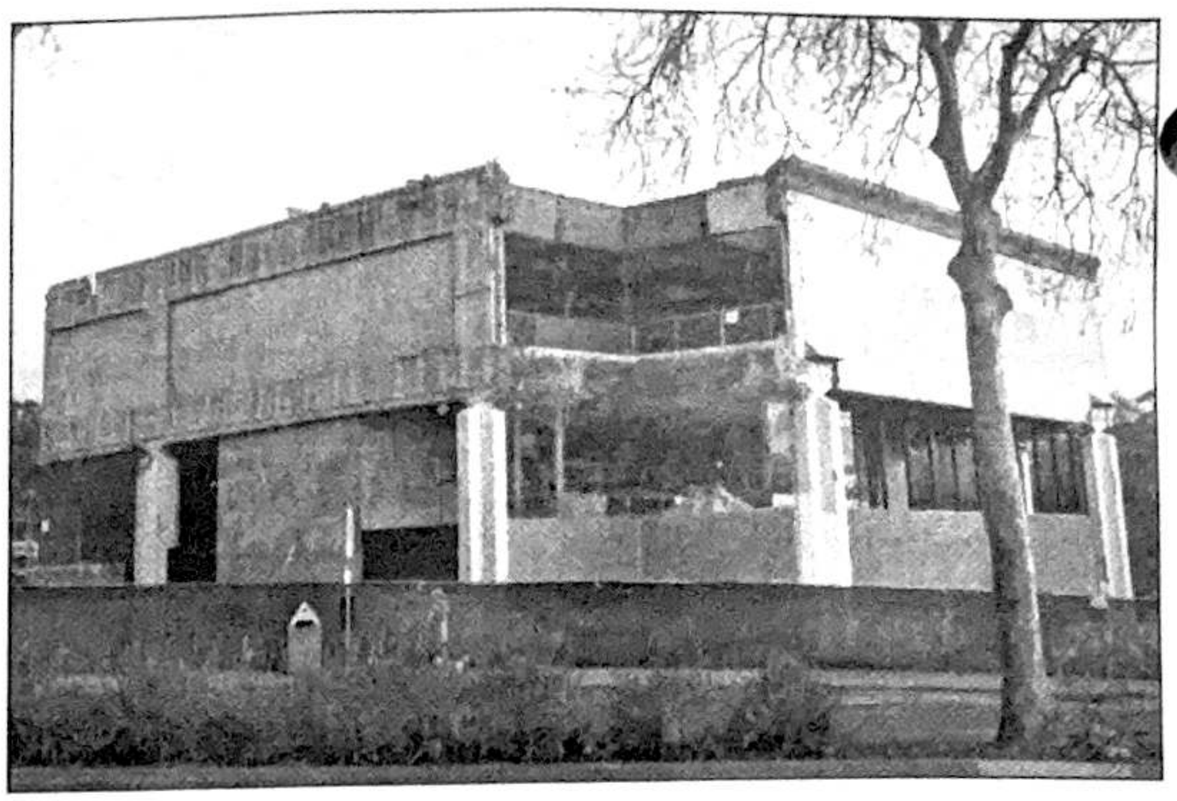
by Don Kinkead

Late in November 2017, Carlos Palafox of SVP Development, owners of the "Shops at the Ridge" development at Broadway and Pleasant Valley Avenue, wrote to the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and other interested (read: concerned) local groups to report a planned start date and demolition procedures for the mouldering Chase Bank building located on the northeast corner of the intersection.

Now, in early January 2018, there has been no evident activity at the site since the letter was received. While the neighborhood awaits a new start date, plans for managing the demolition, minimizing the release of asbestos and other hazardous materials, and ensuring street traffic safety were detailed as follows in Mr. Palafox's letter:

I want to provide an update on the demolition of the former Chase Bank building. Our anticipated start date is between December 11-14, 2017, and continuing through February 2018. Please see the additional bulleted information below:

- Work will be conducted in accordance with a site-specific health and safety plan, City of Oakland demolition permit, and Bay Area Air Quality Management District regulations.
- All work will be overseen by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and an environmental consultant, TetraTech.
- A licensed contractor will safely remove hazardous materials, such as asbestos, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.



Once asbestos problems are resolved, demolition of the former Chase Bank building is expected to resume.

/D. Kinkead

- Some of the building materials will be recycled, but any material that cannot be recycled will be disposed of at an off-site facility.
- Measures to minimize potential dust, noise and other impacts will be used throughout the project.
- You may notice crews wearing personal protective equipment, as well as minor truck traffic, as materials are transported for off-site recycling or disposal.
- Flaggers will be present to safely manage truck, car and pedestrian traffic, when needed.

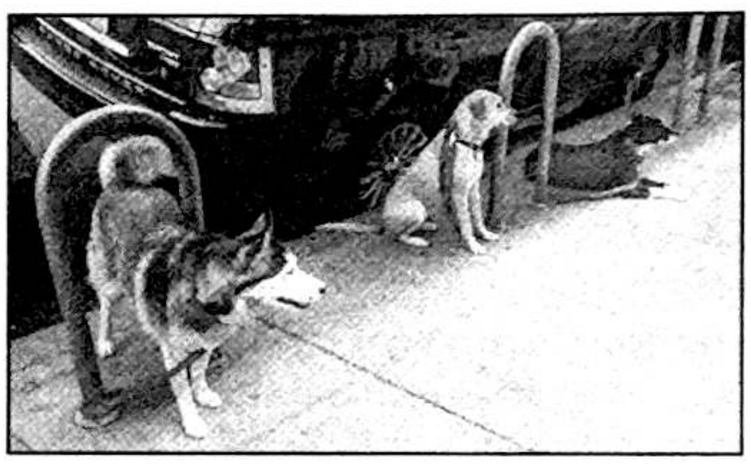
— Carlos Palafox, SVP Development

CAPC Continues Centennial Celebration

Join us for an evening with Julia Morgan as portrayed by Oakland historian Betty Marvin. Learn about her work, local buildings, life, travels, relationships and her impact upon Rockridge, specifically through the building of College Avenue Presbyterian Church (CAPC) in 1917. This is a free, community event that is part of the CAPC continuing centennial celebrations: **Saturday, January 13, 5-6:30 p.m.** More info at http://www.capcoakland.org/centennial.

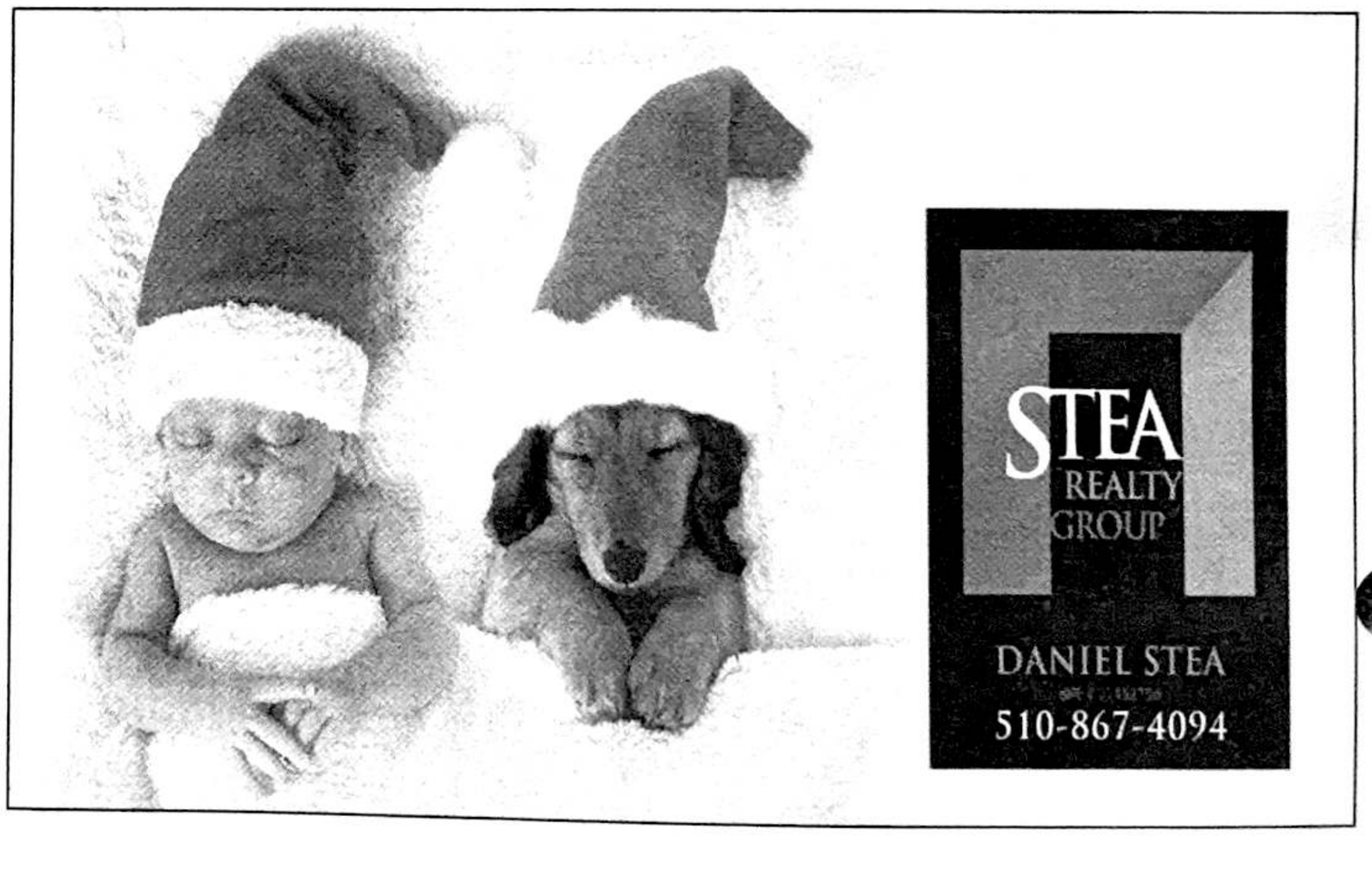
CAPC Explores the Future

As we enter our 101st year of living and serving the greater good from our location on College Avenue in Oakland, the College Avenue Presbyterian Church community is considering how we can best serve the greater good of 21st century Oakland. Help us develop and paint a new picture of how we will be a church. See our website at http://www.capcoakland.org/paint-the-picture.



Is College Avenue parking going to the dogs?

This trio of faithful pooches was spotted recently, waiting — more or less patiently — outside a College Avenue restaurant, their guardians having made creative use of the bicycle stanchions.



Report: December 2017 NCPC Meeting — Burglary Prevention —

by Karen Ivy, NCPC secretary

Our December meeting began with a presentation from SaferRockridge. Paul Liu of the SaferRockridge board briefly outlined the history of the group and their current status, running Premiere Protective Services (PPS) private patrol cars in an area which generally conforms to Oakland police beat 12Y (Rockridge below Broadway). These patrol officers are not armed. They currently operate on monthly and one-time donations from residents. Patrol hours vary based on recent donation amounts. SaferRockridge worked with Rik Belew of OpenOakland to analyze Rockridge crime records; the data show a 30 percent decline in robberies and burglaries, coinciding with the beginning of patrol activities. However, this doesn't prove cause; it's merely observation.

Gordon Jacobs of the Upper Rockridge Neighborhood Association (URNA) explained that they have contracted with Bay Alarm for patrol duties in their neighborhood (Rockridge above Broadway, roughly beat 13Y). Bay Alarm was already patrolling at least part of their area. URNA charges residents monthly dues of $30, and membership includes discounts on Bay Alarm products.

Both patrol providers offer vacation coverage and night-time escort services.

Lia Duncan of Bay Alarm explained how their patrols work. They mainly patrol during the day since that is when most burglaries happen, backing up OPD. She then emphasized the following safety points:

- Owners have to protect their houses – get to know the neighbors, so you know who should be around.
- Keep shrubbery and hedges trimmed back.
- Keep drapes closed.
- Don't make it obvious that no one is home – use timer lights indoors, motion-activated lights outdoors, leave a radio on.
- If you travel, have mail held or arrange for a neighbor to get it.
- Patrols, security cameras, and lighting don't prevent burglary, but they deter it. Make sure you have solid locks.
- Security cameras are a big help as video footage can help OPD identify suspects, and may possibly be used in court.

Next Meeting: February 8

The NCPC has no meeting in January 2018. Our next meeting on **Thursday, February 8,** at the Rockridge Branch library will include a presentation from Neighbors for Racial Justice entitled "Creating Safe and Welcome Neighborhoods." It will cover issues of implicit racial bias. Neighbors for Racial Justice operates out of the Dimond district and is giving this presentation around the city.



Scenic Streets of Oakland

Scenic Streets Oakland Begins Anew

Volunteer organization Scenic Streets Oakland is almost all the way through a transition period that's been ongoing for over a year. Formerly operating under the auspices of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), we are now sponsored by another 501(c)(3), the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation (OPRF).

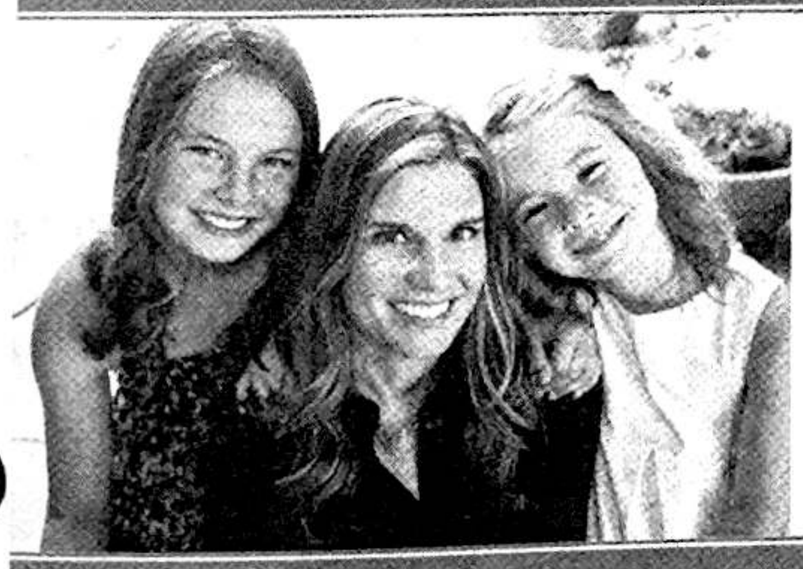
We are continuing to maintain Rockridge area sidewalk plantings and the Claremont Avenue/Highway 24 on- and off-ramp plantings.

We still need volunteers. If you're interested in keeping the area looking cared for, please contact Lee Patterson: lee.scenicstreetsoakland@gmail.com.

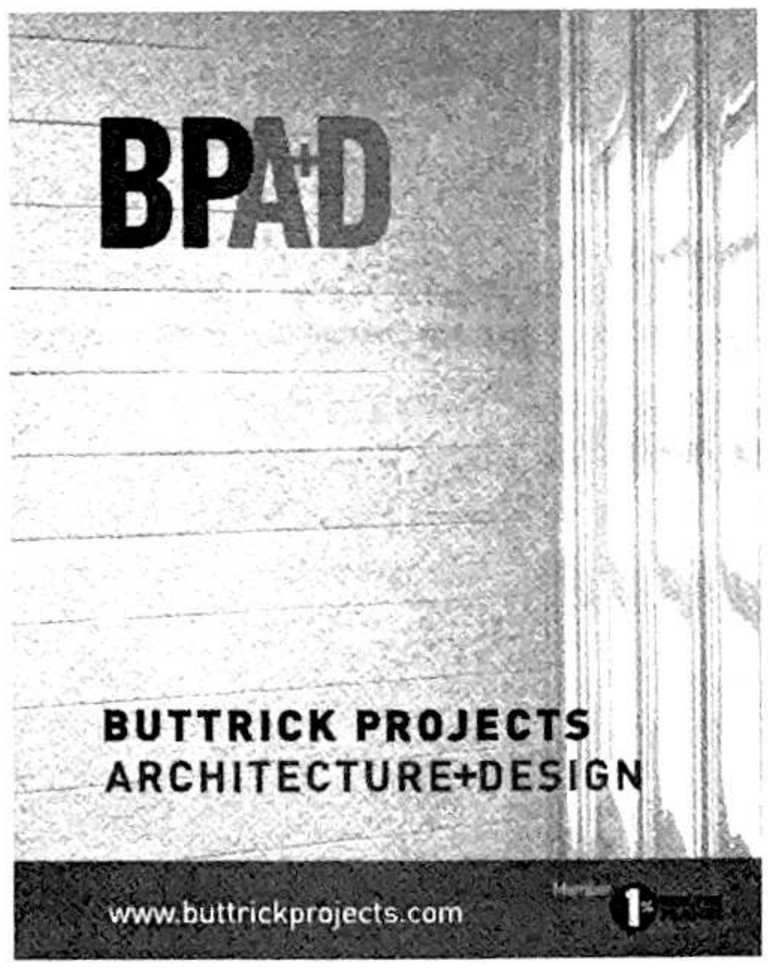
Volunteering to improve your own neighborhood is a great New Year's resolution.

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Eyes on Rockridge

Delaying College: 'No Longer a Stigma Or Taboo Topic' – Says Abby Falik

by Judith Doner Berne

My New Year's resolution is to create a book using past Eyes on Rockridge columns that highlight the residents and neighborhoods that are Rockridge.

Whether that will actually happen — or go the way of many of my resolutions — I don't know. But in reading through the six-plus years of monthly columns, I found one from April 2013 that cried out to be updated, sooner — not later — and for sure — **not maybe**.

My memory was jogged by a recent announcement that Rockridge resident Abby Falik, founder and CEO of Global Citizen Year, was named as one of the 100 Most Intriguing Entrepreneurs of 2017 by Goldman Sachs at this year's Builders + Innovators Summit. Her nonprofit organization offers a global "bridge year" between high school and college.

When last I had written about Falik, Global Citizen Year was in its fourth year; 100 students (up from the 11 who began the program) had been selected to go to rural villages in Brazil, Ecuador and Senegal to live with families and work with other nonprofits to support local projects; and one of those was Kaitlyn Johnke, an Oakland Tech graduate and the program's first student from Rockridge.

Now in its ninth year, the organization has 50 full-time employees; increased the number of "bridge year" students to this year's 150; strengthened its leadership training; and added India to its itinerary. A year ago, 500 applicants from across the country vied for 140 spots. And in the more than four years since Johnke took part, participants include graduates of Oakland Tech, Berkeley High, Bishop O'Dowd, College Prep and Head-Royce high schools.

"It's quite selective," Falik told me, as we sat overlooking uptown Oakland from Global Citizen Year's fourth floor, colorful, light-filled offices. "We are looking for leadership potential rather than grades, for the go-getters not just the do-gooders. Part of the 'secret sauce' is to bring together teens from different backgrounds."

She reminded me that 80 percent of those chosen receive financial aid and a third are on full scholarship. "This is not just another privilege for privileged kids." Indeed, much of her focus is on fundraising, since full tuition is $30,000.

By combining deep community immersion in the developing world with intensive leadership training, Falik explained in our original interview, the program seeks to give participants the critical skills and global awareness necessary to become transformative, social impact leaders in college – and beyond.

"We use the term 'bridge year' instead of the more traditional 'gap year' because the gap year is often perceived as a luxury reserved for privileged kids, or those who are somehow 'off track,'" she said. "The notion of a bridge year conveys an intentional transition from one life stage to the next. The goal is to give young people, regardless of income, a deeper understanding of the world and their role within it."



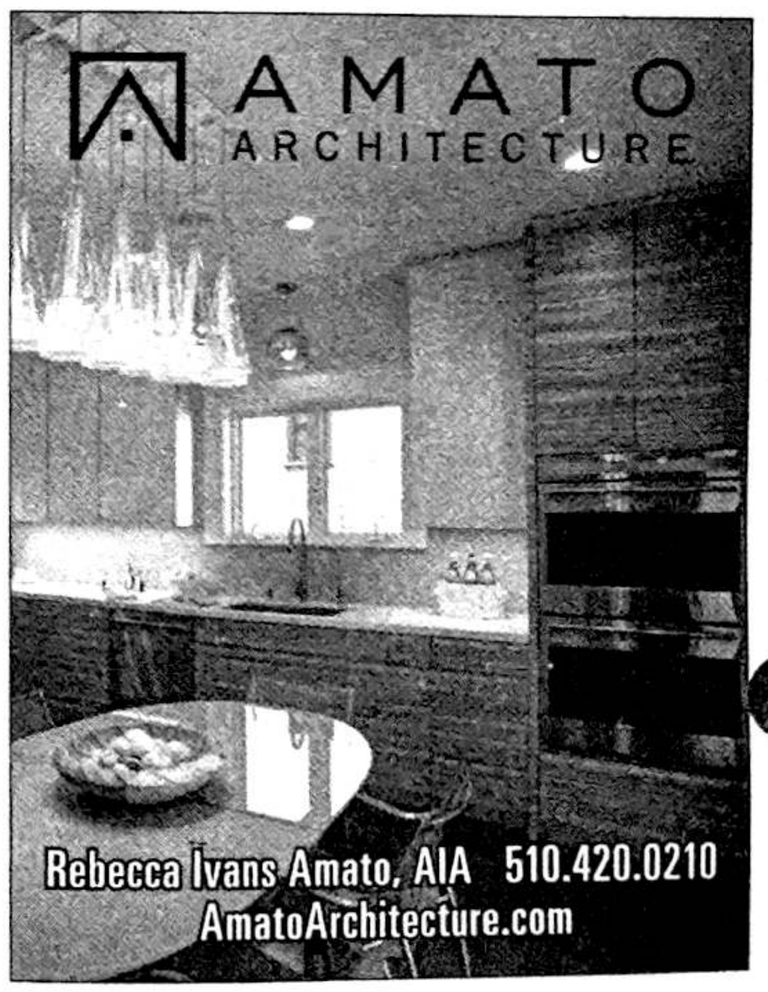
Pictures of the young people who have experienced a Global Citizen Year are the centerpiece of Abby Falik's Oakland offices. /Judith Doner Berne

"I think the biggest thing that has changed is that taking a year to do something else between high school and college is no longer a stigma or taboo topic," Falik told me. "That convention has shifted faster than I thought it would."

Falik is an East Bay native, who grew up in Berkeley near the Claremont Hotel in the house where her parents, Bill Falik and Diana Cohen, still live and where she and her husband, Joel Segre, were married. She graduated from Head-Royce, then got her B.A. and M.Ed. from Stanford — where Segre also went — but the two didn't

Global Citizen, page 7

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Global Citizen

from page 6

meet until their paths crossed at Harvard Business School.

And just as Global Citizen Year has expanded, so has their household. She and her husband had recently relocated from San Francisco to Rockridge "for its walkability and diversity," when last I wrote about her. Segre worked with the Gates Foundation and now is at Google X. And they have two boys, Rio, age 3, and Luca, age 1, who "both speak Spanish as their first language," she said.

"I can't wait until they can travel with me," said Falik, whose fundraising can take her to the East Coast as well as to India, where support often comes from expats living there. For now, she relies on an au pair program — which offers young people from other countries a home and employment with an American family for a year — to help care for her young sons when she is at work or traveling. "There's a whole community of au pairs in Rockridge," she told me, describing it as a sort of Global Citizen Year "in the other direction."

"They're superstars," she said of many of the students who have experienced the Global Citizen Year. "Ninety percent get into more selective schools. Two have won Fulbrights, others are working at Tesla, Microsoft and the United Nations. Two are on our board of directors, and three are currently working for us, two in the Oakland office and one in India."

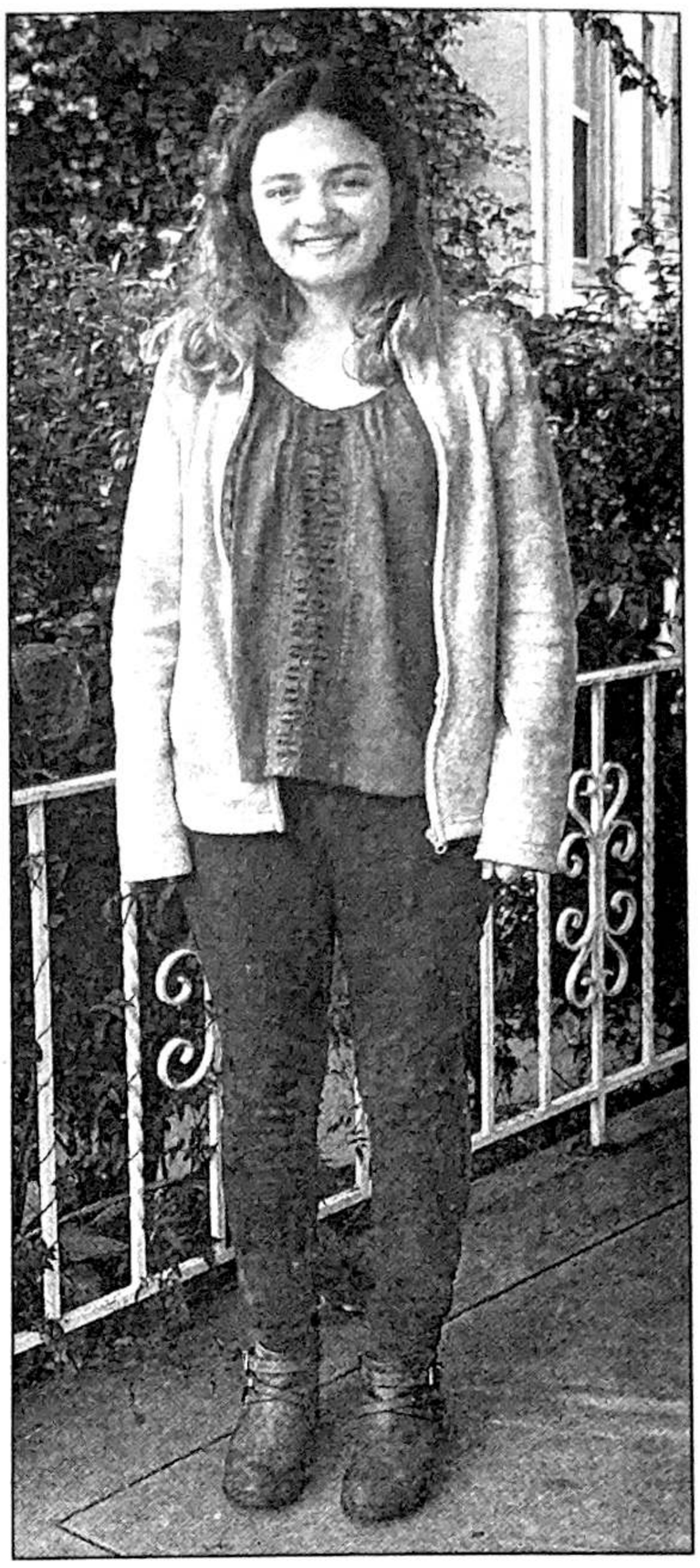
And like many alumni, Kaitlyn Johnke's bridge year in Senegal continues to impact her life. Now a senior at California Polytechnic Institute, "my major in anthropology and geography with a concentration in international development is completely inspired by my Global Citizen Year," she wrote in an email.

After spending the summer following her freshman year doing a study abroad program in Chiang Mai, Thailand, as a junior she studied Spanish in the small agricultural town of Jaen, Spain. There, "I found a huge population of Senegalese immigrants, connecting my Spain experience with my time in Senegal." And before returning home, she visited her host family in Senegal.

For her senior project, Johnke will return to Spain and Senegal and also go to France, "to study whether or not immigrant Senegalese women are experiencing women's empowerment, through factors such as socio-cultural integration or changing of dominating masculine norms," she wrote.

"By the time my kids graduate high school," Falik predicted, "most will not go on to college right away." She pictures a new paradigm when colleges will routinely require a year of work and/or travel before acceptance. "My hope is that parents see that this is the next best step for their kids — a new path to college."

For more information, go to globalcitizenyear.org or call 415/963-9293. To comment on this column or to submit ideas for future stories on you, your neighbors or your neighborhood, email judyberne@att.net.



Even during a rare moment at home, Kaitlyn Johnke is focused on her senior project which is rooted in her Global Citizen Year in Senegal.

/Judith Doner Berne





Park Day School 6th Grade: Frog Park Cleanup

by Theresa Nelson

On a bright, sunny, end-of-the-year December day in 2017, the entire 6th grade class from Park Day School volunteered for a cleanup at Frog Park.

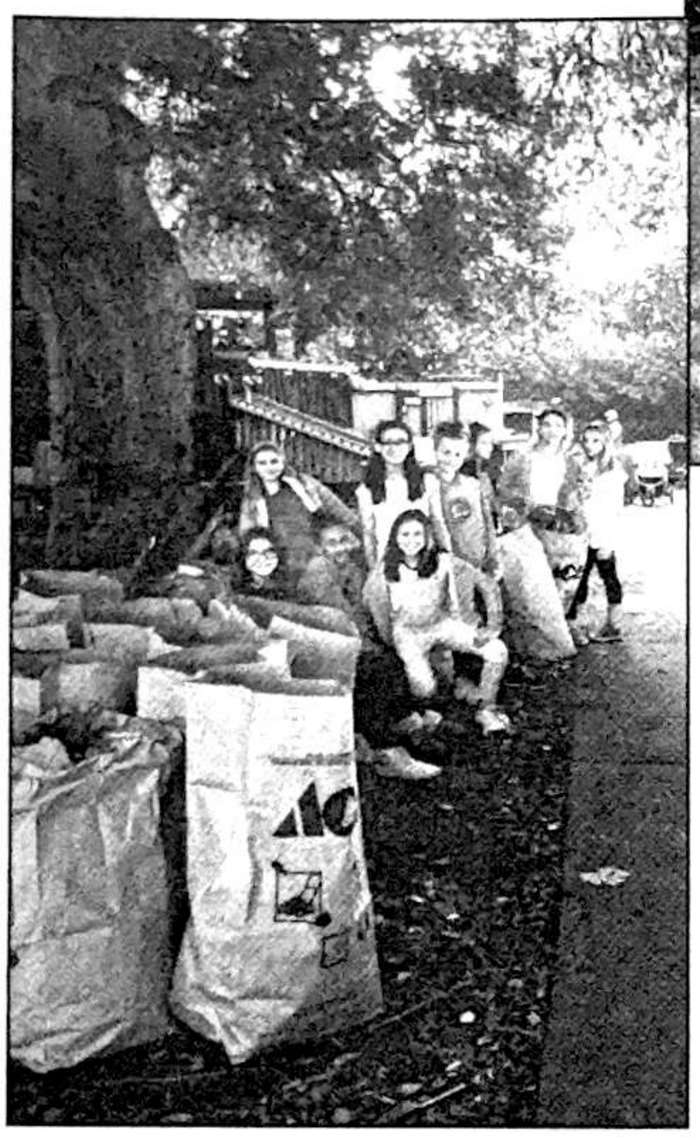
These 40 students swept the pathway (full of leaves and redwood needles from the recent windstorms), cleaned the play structure, and cleared the creek of debris. They even inspired some of the toddlers at the park to help. We're grateful to Park Day School for their hard work, and they will be coming several more times this year.

We invite any other school classes or groups who would like to do a cleanup to contact us. Please email Lynn Gitomer at: lgsendme@sbcglobal.net.









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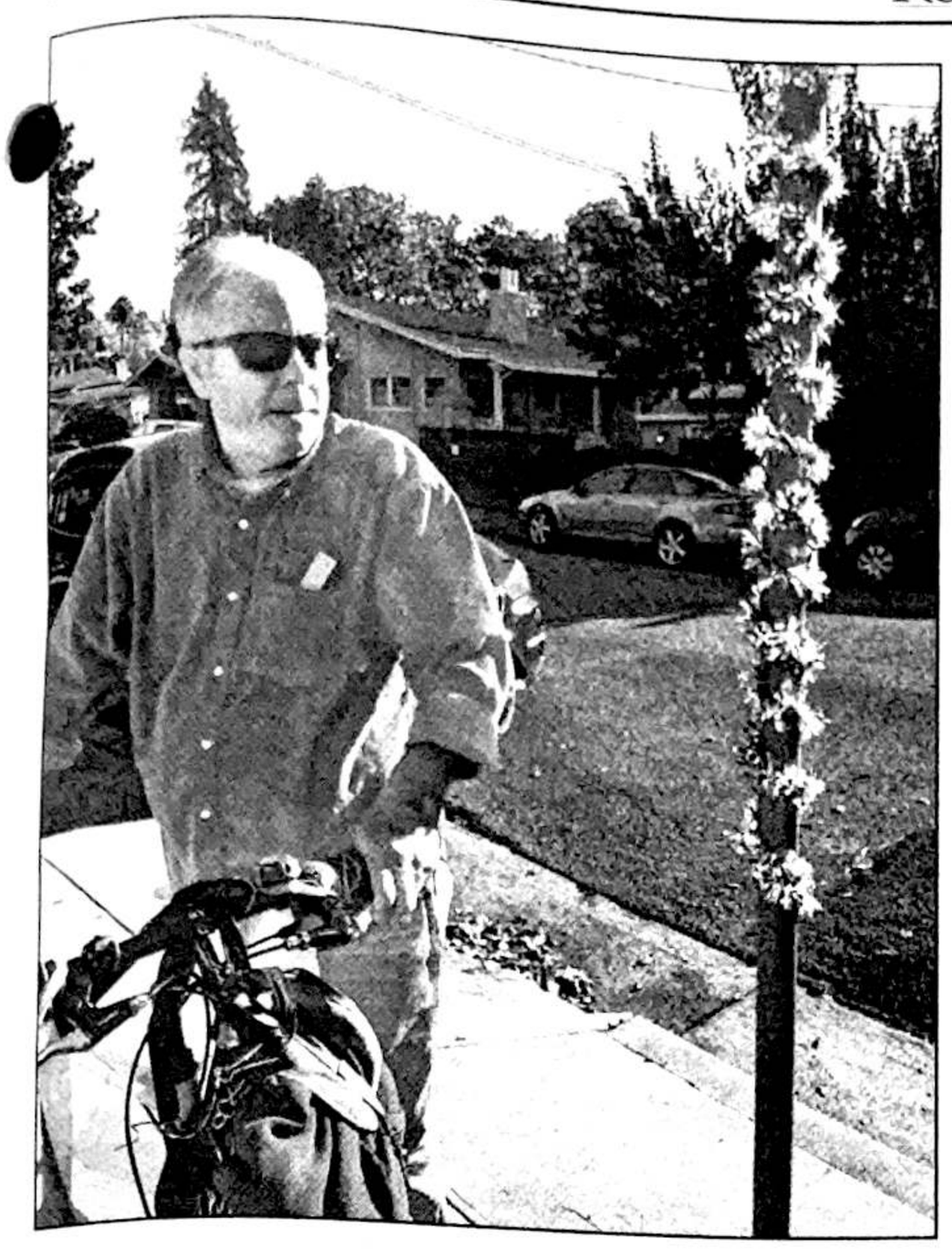
Wishes for a healthy and joyous coming year for all in 2018!!!

Happy New Year!



Perry Riani, Senior Associate
"2016 Realtor of the Year"
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Thank you, Mick Kenney

Mick Kenney is the long-time Rockridge resident responsible for those sparkly garlands wound around the poles of stop signs and parking restrictions along Clifton Street to brighten our holidays.

For the past several years, Kenney said, he has been buying them at a Dollar Store, filling up a pack on his bike with them and riding along Clifton from Desmond to the freeway, stopping to adorn poles closest to each corner.

"It's beautiful; I love it," said Clifton resident Jane Diaz, expressing what many neighborhood residents feel.

— Judith Doner Berne

Town Hall Topics

from page 1

and 16 red ironbark eucalypti along Keith and Shafter Avenues. Community members will be invited to participate in a selection process for replacement trees in Spring 2018. For additional information, contact Richard Fuentes, Principal Representative of Government and Community Relations, at rfuente@bart.gov.

2. Sarah Fine, City Transportation Planner, will discuss plans for mini roundabouts as presented in the November issue of The Rockridge News. (See the letter from Sarah Fine, at page 11 of this issue, responding to Laura Schlichtmann's letter to the editor in the December 2017 issue of The Rockridge News.)

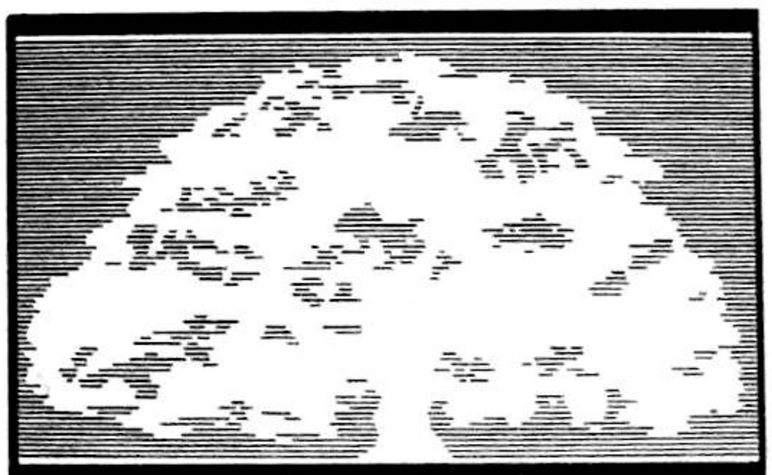
3. Update on the Claremont Hotel Condominium Project from "Save Our Claremont." A follow-up to the OpEd article in the December issue of the newsletter (page 9) and further discussion.

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The College Avenue Presbyterian Church continues its 100th anniversary celebration. See page 4.


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Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes posted letters and emails to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, email address and city/neighborhood must be included in either for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity at the editor's discretion. Views expressed in any letter are the writer's own, and may not necessarily be shared by the editor or by RCPC.

Let's Have a Conversation About the Future of Rockridge

Editor:

With the holiday season now come and gone, I would like to start a conversation about the future state of the retail stores on College Avenue. The strength of the economy and the number of over-crowded BART trains should equate to a boom time for retailers, but it seems like there are far more than the normal number of empty retail spaces now, some stubbornly so.

It is a distinct possibility that there are just more storefronts than the current demographics will support in the future. Our predominantly single-family home community, with, I dare say, an aging population (young people can't afford to buy) can only consume so much. We must also admit that we are all complicit in retail's demise by participating in and fueling the relentless growth of internet shopping (the most powerful destroyer of small businesses since the big box store). Who doesn't like one-click shopping and nearly free shipping? We can all try to buy locally when at all possible and avoid the local corporate stores, but social consciousness and altruism will only go so far.

So I am advocating a conversation about increasing the density of housing along College Avenue and attracting more non-retail businesses, including some night life. I am thinking of three- and four-story buildings. This is necessary for two reasons. One, we need more people to maintain a vital retail and dining/nightlife climate. Two, College Avenue needs to compete with Broadway and eventually Telegraph and San Pablo Avenues, with their high-density housing. Restaurants and retailers will naturally gravitate to where the demand is greatest. Sleepy College Avenue that is a ghost town after 10 p.m. won't be attractive.

Keeping things the way they have always been is easier, but we won't thrive. What do you think?

— John Dal Pino

My Neighborhood Petitioned for Roundabouts. We Hope the City Can Also Study a Sudden Increase in Traffic

Editor:

Laura Schlichtmann's letter to the editor about proposed roundabout traffic treatments on Shafter Avenue ("Has OakDOT Considered Public Involvement?" The Rockridge News, December 2017), raises many questions about the City's process for public input about such projects. Likewise, recent debates in the media and social media raised similar concerns about the installation of commercial, bike-sharing kiosks throughout our neighborhoods.

In my neighborhood, more than 100 residents recently petitioned the City to consider a roundabout solution at the over-sized and hazardous intersection of Golden Gate Avenue and Acacia Avenue. To us, the original article about the city's interest in such traffic-taming projects (The Rockridge News, November 2017) offered us encouragement that the new Department of Transportation (DOT) is open to ideas and suggestions from the community.

Another concern on Golden Gate Avenue is the dramatic increase in commuter through-traffic, often at high speeds. Some neighbors assert it is due to the advent of traffic apps like Waze which divert traffic from often-congested Highways 24 and 13 through our neighborhood. Others attribute the steep rise in neighborhood traffic to the "road diet" project along the Broadway/Keith corridor.

Whatever the case, we would like the City DOT to study this sudden shift in traffic patterns, and its implications for neighborhood safety and livability. I hope The Rockridge News will follow these issues and that the City is as responsive to community input as they advertise themselves to be.

—Skip Fogarty

Residential Permit Parking Program Has Big Problems

Editor:

This is a copy of a letter I sent to Da Kalb. I wonder if other people in the Rockridge neighborhood are concerned and troubled by the way this system is managed, and if so how to effect change:

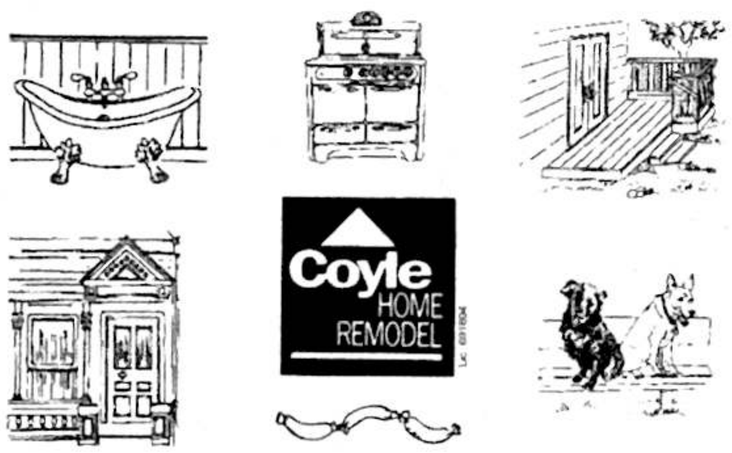
Dear Councilmember Kalb:

Please let me draw your attention to the Oakland Residential Permit Parking program. (RPP)

There is no convenient unregulated parking at a reasonable distance for visitors to the Rockridge neighborhood. This imposes an unreasonable burden upon people who live in the neighborhood.

The system for issuing permits is dysfunctional and byzantine. Working people do not have time to visit the Parking

Letters, page 11





Letters

from page 10

Enforcement Department even once, much less many times to obtain a permit; nor, since there is no convenient unregulated parking in the area, can they wait weeks for their application to be processed and the permit mailed. What should be a simple process is chaotic and maddening.

I ask that someone from your office look into this troubling failure of our city government.

— Jeffrey Gillman

Was Sufficient Study Given to Bike Kiosk Location?

Editor:

I can understand why the merchants who made College Avenue what it is today are worried the blue bikes will take away the parking they feel is essential to their survival. Was the project initiated as a trial with measurables to determine usage and justify its continuation? For example, were studies done to determine the specific number of rentals and returns from a location per month, the number of available bikes between hours of 7a.m-7p.m must be less than 'x', etc.? I also hope the city has access to the raw data for objective assessment. I'm not for or against the bikes, but when I hear aims such as having bike racks within five minutes of walking distance from one another I want to make sure the bikes are benefiting Oakland and not just Motivate, the organization behind the bike program.

— Robert Teal

Editor's Note: The December 2017 issue of The Rockridge News contained a letter from Laura Schlichtmann to Sarah Fine, Senior Transportation Planner for the city, raising questions about the extent of effective public involvement in the planning process leading to the decision to install traffic-slowing mini roundabouts on Shafter Avenue. Ms. Fine's reply is printed below. Schlichtmann made clear in the letter that she is an RCPC board member writing simply as a citizen and resident, not as a representative of RCPC.

Hi Laura,

Thank you for your email. We are still very much engaged in community outreach, and look forward to discussing the mini roundabouts in more detail at the upcoming RCPC town hall in January.

To your questions, the surveys were mailed in August to residents along Shafter between 51st and Forest and approximately the first 1-2 houses on the cross streets. The surveys were returned by mail or completed online. We also understand many neighbors shared the survey link with additional neighbors, listservs, and Nextdoor. To date, we have received 80 responses. We received 61 responses before the Rockridge News piece was published, and another 19 after. Of these 80 responses, 56 (70 percent) supported the planted roundabouts. Additionally, we have heard from 30 people who live along Shafter or on cross-streets who said they would be interested in volunteering to help maintain the roundabouts. We're reaching out to these people to identify volunteer "captains" and volunteer teams for each of the three proposed roundabouts to become caretakers of the mini gardens.

These types of mini roundabouts are found in other neighborhoods in Oakland, and we are using a standard shape to ensure neighborhood vehicles can navigate the circle. Generally, we anticipate some minor traffic diversion (~5%, or about 120 vehicles per 24-hour period) and minor delay for emergency vehicles (both of which we'll monitor after implementation). At the same time, the traffic circles will likely discourage through truck traffic, as you bring up. This is generally seen as a benefit.

As for plants, we are working with our partners in the environmental services and watershed groups within Oakland's Public Works Agency to identify a recommended plant palette.

Regarding cost, mini roundabouts are approximately $20,000 each. While that is a significant amount of money to a household, it is a very minor cost within a repaving project where the major cost driver is how degraded the pavement is.

As reference, the Shafter project is about half a mile long and is part of a 5.7 mile repaving project that we'll be implementing this spring. These 5.7 miles will cost approximately $8.5M. So about $60K of that $8.5M would be the mini roundabouts on Shafter. And yes, this repaving project was included in the FY 17-19 budget as part of the citywide pavement rehabilitation program, which the infrastructure bond is helping support.

We've heard a lot of great questions from community members and are happy to keep the conversation going. Thanks for reaching out, and we look forward to talking more at the January Town Hall. ***— Sarah Fine***

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RDA Successes

from page 3

■ We were able for the first time, after a year and a half of negotiation with the city, to bring lighted holiday decorations to College Avenue. This was no small feat; the

rockridge district association

District invested approximately $45,000 of members' funds to accomplish this. Overall, the RDA has been working to make College Avenue a more festive place for holiday shoppers and all residents of Oakland.

■ We are looking forward to the addition of five new businesses to open soon on the Avenue.

■ The RDA continues our ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Avenue. We have just completed another round of tree trimming of city street trees, and soon we will have the decomposed granite replenished in all of the tree wells. We continue to maintain the watering of our newly planted trees to ensure their success, and have replaced several trees that have been damaged by trucks delivering goods to our merchants.

■ The RDA has purchased 12 PVC trash container liners. This is to help eliminate the unsightly staining of the concrete and odor due to the broken galvanized liners. To further improve cleanliness, our board has allocated funds for power washing of the city trash containers, and we are soon to add two new Bigbelly solar-powered trash containers.

■ We continue to work very closely with the Oakland Police Department to help in the reduction of crime against our members and the community at large. We are grateful to have been assigned a walking officer and for the support from our Community Resource Officer (CRO).

■ The District is looking forward to another successful Out and About street fair coming up in September 2018.

To summarize, as we continue to work with one of the smallest budgets in the City of Oakland, the RDA is proud to be able to deliver this level of service and improvements to our members and community.

Cusp of the Year

from page 3

both in what it's done (roll-back of federal regulations, passage of tax cut bill) and what it's tried to do (repeal of Obamacare, the "Muslim Ban" immigration orders). Here in Rockridge, those effects may not have been as obvious as in some other communities, but this is only the first year of the Trump Administration. One can certainly expect more changes to come.

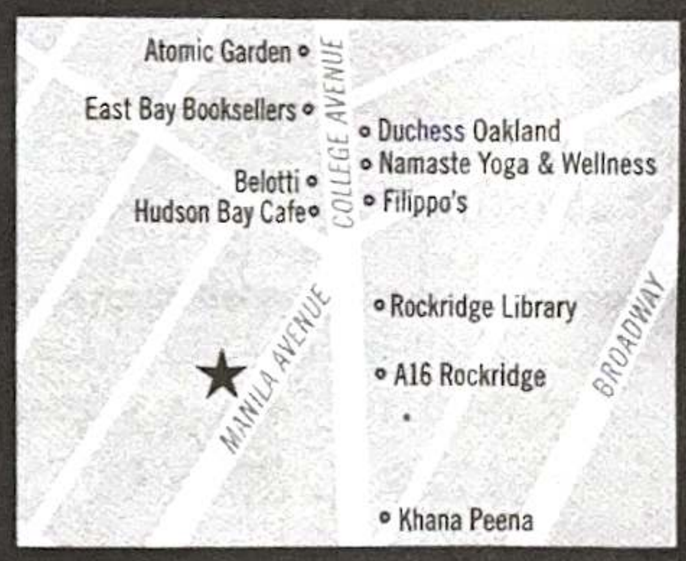
What has been and continues to be a large issue in Rockridge is the shortage of affordable housing and the concomitant growth in the homeless population. It's hard to ignore the continuing sharp increases in housing sale and rental prices, with Rockridge outpacing Oakland and much of the East Bay in the rate of increase. RCPC has begun studying what can be done — in consultation with other neighborhoods — both in Rockridge and in Oakland, to help address this problem. The hope is to get that study finished this year and then ask the City to help implement its recommendations for action.

In the meantime, Rockridge residents will be continuing to deal with the homeless population in our midst. It's worth remembering that the majority of the homeless are native Oaklanders, and that they have not always been homeless. Many are the victims of displacement and evictions as rental prices rise and houses are sold and removed from the rental market. Some are retirees attempting to live on reduced income. We need to respond with sympathy, compassion, and, where possible, assistance, rather than with distaste for shabby clothing and makeshift encampments.

Lastly, online retail businesses continue to shake up the retail environment, on College Avenue as well as throughout our economy. If local retail is to survive, we need to appreciate and patronize local businesses, and to keep in mind that local businesses offer things you won't find on a website: knowledgeable and helpful sales people who live in our community; the opportunity to actually look at, feel, and try on merchandise before buying; and, often, related services that help make the purchase (for example, a bike) best meet the customer's need.

Local retailers are part of our community and deserve our support.

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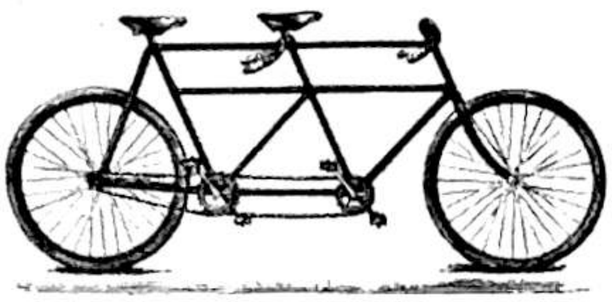
From page 2

For those that missed it, the City of Oakland ceded the location of the bikeshare stations to Motivate, a private for-profit company. Unlike San Francisco, San Jose, Berkeley and Emeryville, which put thought into negotiating with Motivate and obtained significant concessions, Oakland signed the Motivate contract without any of the resident-focused modifications exacted by these other cities.

More immediately, Motivate promised a station would not be installed in one residential location in lower Rockridge, deceptively lulling the affected neighbors into a false sense of safety. That promise was broken, however, and some residents woke up to find a new station being installed outside their kitchen window. When those residents objected, they and others (myself included) were attacked via public media as being elitist, affluent "NIMBYs" only concerned with property values. Many of the people doing the attacking (a few being suspiciously brand-new to Nextdoor.com) were neither interested in civil discussion nor did they seem to care even remotely about thoughtful urban planning. There was only one interest to be considered and it was theirs. Dan Kalb, the City of Oakland and Motivate have been non-responsive to review requests as well.

The last major upheaval in Rockridge was in the mid-1960s when construction of the Rockridge BART station and Highway 24 displaced a significant number of residents and businesses and changed the fabric of the neighborhood for years. Current circumstances seem ripe for another sea-change. The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) is aware of this and has been trying to get ahead of the curve by spending a major portion of 2017 focused on developing a land-use proposal for the City, prior to the City imposing its will on us. I fear that, as a private nonprofit entity, when push comes to shove, the organization will be ignored. Still, we must try.

To have a chance at even limited success, we will need to consider ways to empower RCPC so that it can lead the charge in protecting our interests. We are also going to need an active and engaged local base working to support RCPC and smart-growth city council and mayoral candidates. The idea is not to stop development, but to make sure it's done thoughtfully.



Dakin Ferris is a Rockridge resident. The views and opinions expressed in this article are his and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) or of The Rockridge News.

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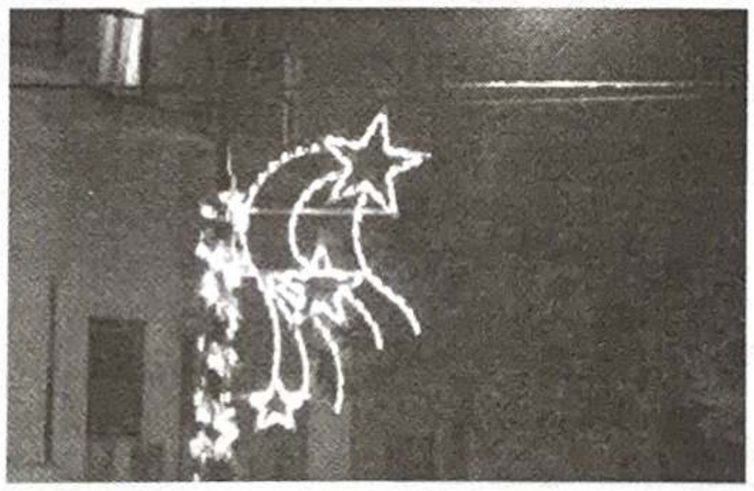
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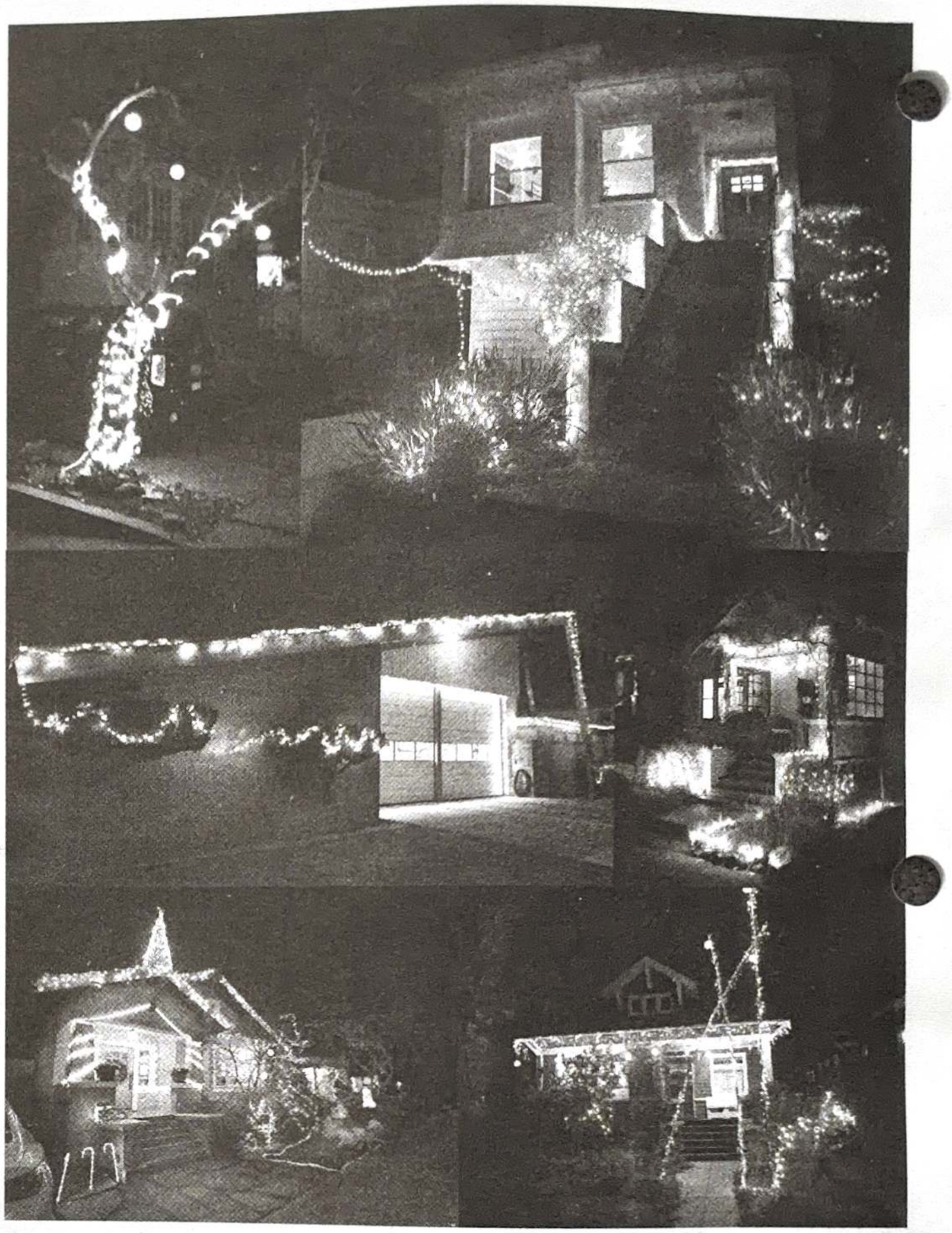
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Email Rockridge News Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: Rockridge News Community Calendar, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month. **Compiled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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

District 1 Councilman Dan Kalb

- **Drop-in Community Office Hours:** Temescal Farmers' Market, 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Teleg.) at DMV parking lot. 3rd Sunday each month,10:30am-12:30pm. Times/locations of other office hrs. or more info: mmharris@oakland.net or www.dankalb.net/contactdan.
- **Dan Kalb's Annual MLK Day of Service - Blood Drive;** Mon, Jan 15, 1pm – 4pm; American Red Cross Oakland Blood Center, 6230 Claremont Ave. To sign-up for a time slot and for more information about the process, contact Coordinator for the Blood Center Geri Hernandez at Geri.Hernandez@redcross.org.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

- **Family Story Time:** Stories/songs/rhymes (for all ages); Saturdays, 10:30am; (not on 1/6).
- **Toddler Story Time:** Songs, active rhymes and stories (for 9 months to 2 years), Thursdays, 10:30am, **upstairs**.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** Read-alouds, songs, and rhymes (ages 2 to 5); Thursdays, 10:30am.

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

Special Events:

- **Winter Bingo:** Get your Winter Bingo Card at any Oakland Library. Complete 5 activities in a row, and get your PRIZE BOOK. Prizes available thru 1/13. For toddlers up to 5th graders.
- **Bay Area Discovery Museum: Stretch it, Shape it, Grow it!** Tues, 1/30, 6:30pm. Drop by for this science workshop ideal for 5- to 9-year-olds.

FOR TEENS

- **Study Room Hours: Do your homework at the library.** A high school tutor is available for homework questions. Tues & Thurs, 4 - 5pm; Wed: 3 - 4:30 pm.
- **Teen Advisory Board (ages 14-18)**: Help advise the library how to better serve teens; **get community service credit for school.** 2nd Sat. each month, 1 to 2pm.
- **Teen 'Scape Program:** Play video & board games; make crafts. Every Tues, Thurs, and Fri 3:30 to 5pm; Wed 1:30 to 5pm (during school days).
- **Letter Jewelry Bracelets:** Choose your favorite letters to make bracelets. All supplies provided. 1/17 at 2 pm.
- **Book Page Roses:** We will use the pages from discarded books to make paper roses (can be gifts for Valentine's Day). All supplies provided. 2/7 at 2pm.

FOR ADULTS

- **Ready, Set, Connect!** One on One computer help. Tuesdays 5:30-7:30pm and Saturdays 11am to 1pm. Call 597-5017 for appt.
- **eBook Help:** Work one-on-one with a librarian to download eBooks; get started using amazing collection of digital resources. Fridays, 2 -3:30pm. Make appt. online or call 597-5017.
- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** Bring 15 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (OK to come empty-handed). 3rd Sat. each month,1 to 5pm; wheelchair-accessible. Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com. Call to confirm.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal info and referral. 1st Tues each month;** 6pm-8pm. Sign-up for lottery starting 5pm; lottery at 5:45 pm. Call day of program to confirm.
- **Refresh & Renew 2018:** Learn Mindfulness techniques to relax, renew, and set positive goals for the new year. Sat, 1/13, 11am-1pm.
- **Knitting Workshop & Meet-Up:** Learn to knit or ask questions about your project. **All levels welcome.** Supplies provided. Sat, 1/20, 3 -4:30pm.
- **Podcast Meetups:** Tues, 1/23, 6pm. Learn about podcasting: share ideas and resources.
- **Indie Writing Workshop;** presented by the **Mystery Writers of America.** Focuses on the nuts and bolts of independent and self-publishing. Sat, 1/27, 10:30 am -3:30 pm. **Registration required**.
- **From Age-ing to Sage-ing:** Grow whole, not old. **Janet Piggins**, LCSW, introduces the philosophy of Sage-ing, which offers a roadmap for living a vital and engaged second half of life. Sat, 2/3, 10:30am -12pm.

Art Exhibits; upstairs gallery

Jan and Feb: **Oakland Arts Association:** painting and photography.

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.

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

Fri, 12 to 5:30pm.

Closed: Sun and Mon. Also: Tues, 1/16.

East Bay Booksellers Book/Poetry Readings and Events

FREE and open to the public.

- Fri, 1/12, 7pm. **Release Party** for ***ZYZZYVA: The Winter Issue:*** exploring the theme of art and resistance in times of turmoil. Contributing readers: **Troy Jollimore, Dean Rader** and **Ismail Muhammad,** in conversation with Managing Editor **Oscar Villalon.**
- Fri, 1/19, 7pm. **Alex Vitale:** *The End of Policing.*
- Sun, 1/20, 3pm. **Poetry Flash:** tribute reading to **Chana Bloch** by six members of her close- knit writing group in a celebration of her posthumous book, *The Moon Is Almost Full.*
- Tues, 1/30, 7pm. **Local author Jasmine Guillory:** *The Wedding Date.*
- Wed, 1/31, 7pm. **Colin Winnette: The Job of the Wasp.** In conversation with **Jordan Bass.**

East Bay Booksellers, 5433 College Ave. More info abt. the authors, books and other events: 653-9965 or info@ebbooksellers.com.

Jazz at the Chimes

- Featuring vocalist **Kenny Washington** in an intimate duo concert with guitarist **Jeff Massanari.** Sun., Jan 21, 2pm. Tickets $15: in advance at https://kennywashington.brownpapertickets.com/ or at the door (cash only – depending on availability) beginning 12:30pm (doors open 1:30). **Refreshments and reception follows.** Honoring the 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: http://kennywashingtonvocalist.com, www.jazzatthechimes.com, chimesjazz@gmail.com or 654-0123.

Square Dance in North Oakland

Music by The Squirrelly String Band. **Calling by Jordan Ruyle.** 1st Fridays each month, 8 – 10pm. All levels welcome; all dances taught on the spot. Come alone or bring friends. $5-10 sliding scale donation. The Niebyl-Proctor Marxist Library, 6501 Telegraph Ave. Info: squirrellystringband.com.

North Oakland Senior Center

Mon. – Fri., 9am to 4:30pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way: 597- 5085

Programs include: Arts/crafts; health counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's support groups, computer classes/more.

Seniors age 55+ join for $12 annual dues to get discount and other benefits. Receive "The North Oakland Senior Times" for full schedule of classes/events, lunch menus, and volunteer opportunities. More info at 597- 5085.

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. **Live music. Bring reusable bags.** 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot.



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Why I Joined RCPC

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events for the children throughout the year. Upon returning to the United States, I became inspired to get more involved in our neighborhood and learn how RCPC works. I wanted to help out with local events, create better communication between community members and city officials, and assist with moving Rockridge in a positive direction.

"At first, I viewed my role as a passive member who shared my thoughts at meetings and events. As time went on, I needed to put more thought and energy into the changing political and housing environment. Now, I try to read up on current local events and action items so that I am aware of not only Rockridge, but the greater Oakland area. I want to be more knowledgeable about Oakland's business and land-use laws so I can have a better understanding of how the new businesses and buildings are likely to affect Rockridge.

"I believe safety to be our biggest concern, next to the question of 'where is the next big building going up?'"

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Hoping? Find it in Rockridge!

Wishing you and your family a happy holiday season!

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