THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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April RCPC Town Hall
Thursday, April 18, 7:30 p.m., Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue.

AGENDA

RCPC Board Elections
Vote: Three incumbents and one new candidate present their interest in Board service.

SB 50: Housing/Transit Bill
Robert Gammon, communications director and policy advisor for State Senator Nancy Skinner, will discuss SB 50 and its potential scope.

RCPC Board: Three Incumbents, One New Candidate Stand for Election

The April RCPC Town Hall Meeting doubles as RCPC's annual meeting and election of members of the Board of Directors. This year, three incumbents and one new candidate seek board positions; their photos and statements appear on page 3. At the meeting, candidates will briefly recap their statements and discuss their interest and goals in serving on the Board, then take questions from the audience. Rockridge residents will then cast their ballots.

Persons age 18 and over who live within RCPC boundaries are eligible to vote. Voter verification in most cases will be by driver's license or DMV ID card showing a residential address within RCPC boundaries as depicted on the RCPC website: rockridge.org. Alternatively, certain other forms of documentation can be accepted; see website (under heading "RCPC") for details. In order for a quorum to be established, at least 25 residents must sign in and be verified as members eligible to vote. If a quorum is present on Thursday evening, residents who were unable to attend the Thursday meeting may vote on Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., in the lobby of the Rockridge Branch Library.

Kitchens in Rockridge? Yes! Tell us About Yours

Calling Rockridge kitchens! Planning for this year's Rockridge Kitchen Tour is in full swing, and we've extended the deadline to April 30 to submit a kitchen for this year's Tour.

Rockridge kitchens come in a variety of styles, sizes, and budgets: traditional, modern, Craftsman; range from modest updates to large-scale renovations; and feature green construction and interesting designs. We want to see it all.

If you have or can recommend a kitchen to be included on the tour, the Kitchen Tour Committee invites you to submit it now for the Autumn 2019 tour, set for Sunday, September 22, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. For more information, contact Leonora Sea or Ronnie Spitzer, Kitchen Tour co-Chairs at kitchentour@rockridge.org



RCPC's Kitchen Tour: Each kitchen different and interesting.

Kitchens in Rockridge, page 11

SB 50; Focus On Housing Near Transit Stations & Major Bus Lines — *How Would Rockridge Fare?*

New Bill From State Senators Wiener & Skinner

by Stuart Flashman, Chair, RCPC Land Use Committee

Some may remember the panic that briefly ran through much of Rockridge in January 2018 when State Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) introduced SB 827, a bill that threatened to convert much of Rockridge into 5- to 8-story buildings. The bill, co-authored by our own State Senator, Nancy Skinner, aimed to address California's housing crisis by forcing the statewide upzoning of all areas within a half-mile of any "major transit stop," which included all BART stations. An enormous backlash ensued, with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles City Council, among others, quickly expressing opposition. While Senator Wiener tried to walk back some of the more stringent provisions of the bill, it died at its first Senate hearing.

Senator Wiener promised to bring back a bill with goals similar to SB 827, but with more consultation with "stakeholders" prior to its introduction. True to his word, Senator Wiener has introduced a follow-up bill, SB 50. The bill, again, is co-authored by Senator Skinner, and also by recently elected Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, as well as a number of other urban legislators who have made housing their major legislative focus. This time, it's clear that Senator Wiener has done his homework.

As with SB 827, SB 50 has the support of the

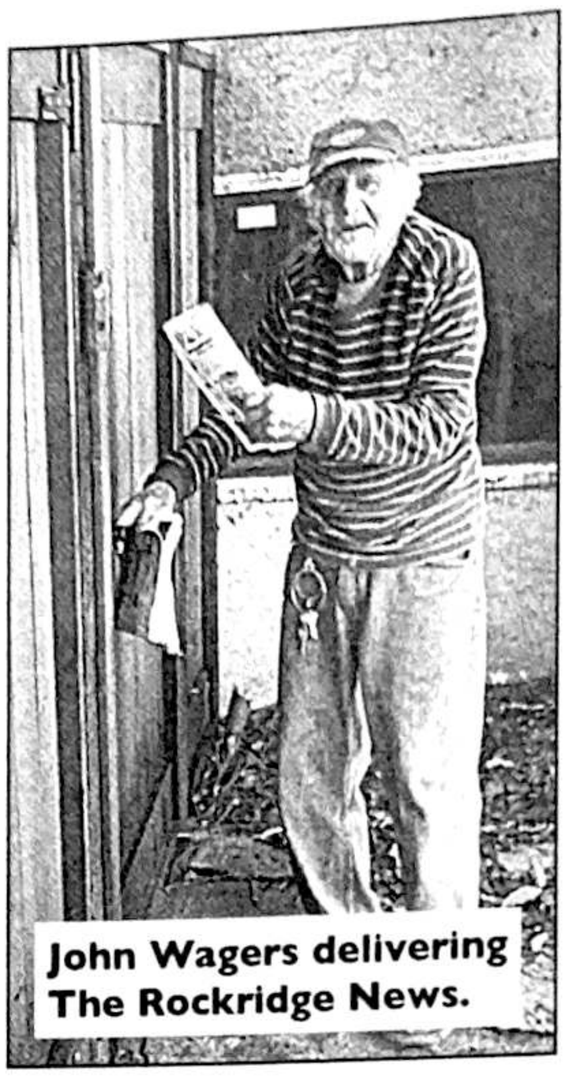
How Would Rockridge Fare?, page 12

John Wagers at 100 Years — Park and Greenery Advocate Still at it

In 1919, when Rockridge resident John Wagers was born near Shickley, Nebraska, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed, guaranteeing women the right to vote, a postage stamp cost $0.02, and the Green Bay Packers were established at Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Some things have changed since then, some have not. As far as is known, John Wagers has not changed a bit, at least not during his many years in and around Rockridge. And that is a good thing because John is an early environmentalist who remains committed to the cause. That means, for example, he ensured that his friends and neighbors composted garbage and yard waste years before there were Green Bins, a practice he still follows. It means, too, that he knew the importance of planted greenery in urban landscapes, and that he would always welcome, or insist upon, your help in developing another, local, pocket park. Pictured below, John

☛ John Wagers: Indefatigable, page 15



John Wagers delivering The Rockridge News.



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Library program details/hours: Calendar, page 15

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.

Rockridge News Production

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Jo Ellis.....Advertising & Community Calendar
Susan Montauk.....Business Manager
Don Kinkead.....Graphics & Layout

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Contact the board: chair@rockridge.org
For information: info@rockridge.org

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To subscribe to **The Rockridge News**, send your check for $20, payable to ***RCPC*** *with* ***"Rockridge News Subscription"*** *on the memo line*. Mail to the address below.

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 sent to the address 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 May issue is:
☛ **May 4, 2019.**
☛ **Submission deadline: April 18, 2019.**
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 it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)

RCPC Election 2019: Board Candidates Introduced

Mia Ashleigh
Broadway



My husband and I moved to Rockridge last December, returning to the Bay Area after many years overseas. We have always loved Rockridge. Our values and our experiences make us a great fit to this vibrant, diverse, and welcoming community, and we are delighted to make our home here.

I have a passion for the environment and for community service. These two lifelong interests have had a profound impact on my life choices, starting with my decision to study and then to pursue a career in civil and environmental engineering. I believe that a clean and healthy environment is fundamental to our quality of life and that community service is a cornerstone of a healthy and functioning society. Since my student days at Cal, I have enjoyed participating in activities to give back to the communities I live in.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve our community in a meaningful way and make a positive impact on the quality of life of its residents as an RCPC Board member.

Alden Conner
Hillegass Ave.

Incumbent



I have been a Rockridge resident for almost ten years, and I was elected to my first term on the board in 2017. I would like another term to continue my work with the board, especially in the area of transportation. Just last month, we re-launched the Transportation Committee to help address residents' concerns about a number of recent changes to our roads. Going forward, the committee will continue to monitor new city projects and keep the community informed.

Outside of transportation, I'm looking forward to this year's Kitchen Tour, and I'm closely following land-use proposals and legislative changes that are affecting Rockridge. I think the next two years will be an exciting time for the RCPC and Rockridge, and I hope to continue representing the community to shape the future of our neighborhood going forward.

Stuart Flashman
Ocean View Dr.

Incumbent



My family and I moved to Rockridge in 1992, and I run my law practice (environmental and land use law) from our house on Ocean View Drive. In 2007 I was appointed to the RCPC Board, and in 2008 became chair of its land use committee, a position I still hold. I've served four full terms on the board, including six years as board chair.

While the board has many responsibilities, right now I feel my most important duty is spearheading the Land Use Committee's Rockridge Housing Study, which seeks to analyze how we can add more housing to Rockridge and increase its affordability, while maintaining its desirable qualities. I hope to bring that study to a close in my coming term, so residents can make an informed decision about what they want for Rockridge's future.

Ronnie Spitzer
Kales Avenue

Incumbent



I joined the RCPC board to help preserve and enhance Rockridge's unique neighborhood character.

I have served as vice-chair, chair and currently Treasurer of the board; Fourth Bore Coalition representative and Vice Chair; Halloween Parade organizer; Kitchen Tour co-chair; and past chair and current vice-chair of the RCPC's Transportation Committee, which addresses issues concerning traffic, transit and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

If re-elected, I would work to continue my efforts with the RCPC board to best serve our community. Thank you.

RCPC Board Election: Vote

RCPC Board Election: Vote

RCPC Land Use Committee

The April Land Use Committee meeting will be held Wednesday, April 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library. The agenda includes an update on the housing study. Please check at https://rockridge.org the previous week to confirm meeting date, time, and place.

RCPC Land Use Committee Report – April 2019

by Stuart Flashman, Chair

The Land Use Committee met on March 27 with a quorum present.

Rockridge Housing Study: While our efforts to analyze the effects of the alternative scenarios suffered a setback when

Land Use Committee, page 11

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FROG and DMV Neighbors Invite You to Join Earth Day Fun Saturdy, April 20

by Fay Gordon

After a long winter cooped up indoors, most families are counting down the days to warm weather and afternoons in the sunshine. For our Rockridge community, FROG Park is a special gathering place for families and neighbors, and the beautiful trees, green-space and playground are the backdrop of many happy memories.

To celebrate spring park days, join your neighbors for Earth Day, the annual celebration of community care for the park and greenbelt. The DMV Neighbors Association and FROG committee are jointly sponsoring the 2019 Earth Day cleanup event Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m. – 12 noon. Cleanup activities will happen throughout the park and greenbelt. To work on the creek, greenbelt and "Little Frog" (the tot park at Redondo and Clarke), sign in at the table at Cavour and Redondo. There will also be a sign-in at the play structure at "Big Frog" to work on the pond, play areas, and path.

Tools and gloves will be provided, or bring your own, marked well as yours. Many tasks are kid-friendly. We'll be raking redwood duff out of the pond; sweeping the greenbelt path; trimming ivy; turning over the fibar (the soft material under the play structures); pruning overgrown shrubs and trees; weeding the creek bed; and cutting back willow roots. Parents or guardians must sign for volunteers under 18. Snacks, coffee, and drinks for volunteers will be at the tables, and water will be available. As always, remember your sunscreen.

Taking care of and celebrating our park is truly a community event. If your company or employer supports volunteering, recommend the Greenbelt and park as an Earth Day project. There's plenty to do, and you and your co-workers will be most welcome.

For more information, contact LeonoraSea@comcast.net or info@frogpark.org.

Remember: April 20. Remember too: The official Earth Day is Monday, April 22.


D. KINKEAD

➡ **Leonora Sea**, RCPC Chair and DMV Neighbors leader, invites all to visit Frog Park for a lively spring spruce-up day.


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Oakland Public Library Expands Hours

by Alona Rivord
Friends of the Rockridge Library

As of April 1, all Oakland Public Library locations have expanded their days and hours of service as a result of Measure D, a parcel tax that passed with 76.9 percent of the vote on the June 2018 ballot. The library system last increased operating hours 15 years ago in 2004.

The Rockridge Branch is now open six days a week, including Mondays, and is open until 8 p.m. Wednesday nights. Prior to the change, Tuesday was the only evening of service. Sundays and Friday mornings remain closed at the Rockridge branch, although the Main Library downtown is open at those times. **See the Community Calendar, page 15, for the new Rockridge Branch hours.**

"We are truly excited to increase access to libraries across Oakland," said Director of Library Services Jamie Turbak in a press release. "We hope that everyone will take advantage of our evening hours, extra days of service, and additional programs and resources."

More hours mean more employees in order to staff the added hours of service and increased programming for children, teens and adults. Expect to see some new faces behind the counter on your spring visits to the branch.

The Friends of the Rockridge Library, a volunteer nonprofit organization that supports the library, and continues to collaborate with staff to assist with materials and activities not covered under the city budget.

"Several board members of the Friends of the Rockridge Library were very active in the Measure D campaign and worked really hard for this. We are so excited that less than a year later we are seeing such a big impact," said Elizabeth Falkner, Friends president.

"Through generous donations from the community, the Friends of the Rockridge Library has been able to support many ideas and programs formulated by branch librarians and staff. More open hours means having more opportunities to expand activities and see the materials that we fund get even more use," she said.

For a full list of new Oakland Public Library hours, pick up a flyer at the Rockridge Branch or visit oaklandlibrary.org/morelibrary.

Claremont Middle School: Take a Bow

Claremont is one of 162 schools – and the only one in Oakland – named as a California Distinguished School in 2019 by the state Department of Education.

It is the first time Claremont has received the honor for "outstanding education programs and practices," the state Department of Education reported. "Schools are awarded for achieving exceptional student performance for two consecutive school years or closing the achievement gap between two school years."

"It's been a long journey, we have been working hard," Principal Jonathan Mayer told KPIX-5 citing improvement in math and English scores over the past two years. "Our teachers have done an amazing job, and over the last five years we've had a tremendous turnaround. So we were honored for especially the work of the last two-and-a-half years."

Awardee schools hold the title for two years. Some Claremont teachers will be honored with the other schools at an April event at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim.

Way to go, Knights!

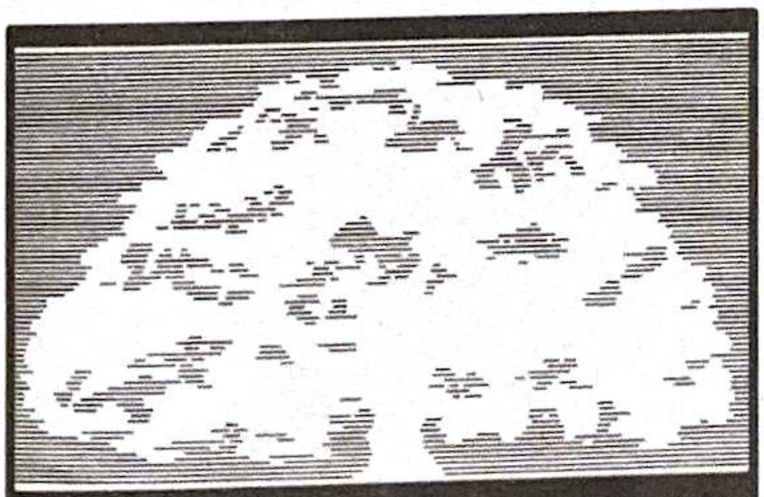
Claremont Music Teacher Scores Grant

At the beginning of the year, music teacher Ari Brown applied for a Grammy Foundation grant. "I had to do some writing as well as submit a sample of my teaching. I hadn't thought of it since then and the other day got a call that said I was given the grant of $5,000 to spend on the band program. Super cool, right?"

Oakland Tech and Oakland High also received similar grants.

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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.

Much to Question in March CCA Park Personal Statement

Editor:

As a group of concerned Rockridge neighbors, we found much to question in ashley cruz's personal statement in the Rockridge News March edition.

1. The statement posits that we will begin to accept a 19-story residential building that bears no relation to the surrounding community. What causes the writer to think that we will soften our view of this extremely outsized building?

2. If The Glade is to be a privately owned public place, who will oversee its maintenance? Has there been any thought about how this could become a homeless encampment or a loud hangout site on weekends? Additionally, the size of The Glade itself is tiny in proportion to the buildings around it and completely isolated.

3. How will this open space "thrive" in the shaded footprint of the buildings around it?

4. How will this development accommodate all the cars generated by renters and their visitors? They can't all be walkers, bikers and BARTers. Moreover, the traffic at that intersection is already causing major gridlock – not to mention poor air quality resulting from idling cars.

5. We question the theory stated in the article that this space on a very busy and noisy street — not to mention the expanding shopping center — will be a place that "relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety and enhances well-being."

6. We already have Merrill Gardens and The Baxter at this intersection, with more development to come. Moreover, The Baxter, as of this writing, has only 62 of 160 apartments rented. Plus, one needs only to drive down Broadway to see multiple, very large condo/apartment developments (although not one is 19 stories tall). How many highrises does Oakland need? The real need in Oakland is for truly affordable housing.

We agree that Rockridge needs some additional open space and parkland. But you don't accomplish that by installing a postage stamp green space, surrounded by buildings that are radically tall for the environment.

We don't find the current zoning laws offensive and are not sure why the developers can't simply stick to them. Land is worth a lot of money, and there's an opportunity for a lot of housing to go on it without asking for a single variance.

Finally, we would like to see comments from the RCPC Land Use Committee regarding the general progress of this proposed project.

Along with the overall welfare of our neighborhood, we have other questions and concerns:

- As part of the design review and application process, has there been a request to the City of Oakland for any preferential, special zoning approval in the way of a Conditional Use Permit or an amended approved Planning Permit? Has any such zoning request been granted and, if so, on what grounds?
- Has an Environmental Impact Study been conducted? If so, by whom?
- Has public input been weighed and, if not, are there any plans for neighborhood inclusion either by the RCPC or the City of Oakland?
- We would like to think that the RCPC has our neighborhood's best interests in mind. Where does the RCPC stand on this proposed design?

Jody Stevens ***Margaret Wahlberg***
Dee Stevens ***Chris Wahlberg***
Greer Alley ***Laura Miller***
Dale Alley ***David Miller***
Dominic DiMento ***Patte Bishop***
Steve Yedlin
Craig Lyall

RCPC Replies:

Dear Jody et al.: The RCPC Board will not vote to take a position on this project until it has been thoroughly discussed within the Rockridge community. The RCPC Board and the Land Use Committee, which advises the board, will continue to solicit input from neighbors over the course of this project. Ms. cruz's and your letters are both part of that discussion, as were comments made at the January Town Hall meeting. Ms. cruz was very careful to note at the beginning of the article that she was not speaking on behalf of the Board. The RCPC Board is committed to keeping the community informed of the progress of this project from start to finish, and the long timeline of such a large project means that this is only the beginning of the discussion. There will be a full environmental impact review (EIR) conducted by the city, and we expect it to address all of the issues your letter raises. The RCPC Board plans to submit "scoping" comments on the issues the EIR needs to address, as well as to comment on the Draft EIR once it is released for public review. The developers have made clear that they expect, and intend, a full public process for this project. As always with major projects, the RCPC Board will continue to keep the community fully informed as that process moves forward, including additional articles and Town Halls as needed. We encourage all Rockridge residents to involve themselves in the environmental review process. A fully engaged citizenry will help RCPC solidify a position on the project that best represents the interests of

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Letters

from page 6

the neighborhood. In response to your comments on zoning, the site is currently zoned for an educational institution, and any other use will require new zoning. It would be premature for RCPC to lock itself into a position on the project this early in the process. As we learned with the College Avenue Safeway project, a project can, and often should, undergo major changes before it is finally voted on by the City Council.

For the Rockridge Community Planning Council:
Leonora Sea, Chair;
Alden Conner, Vice Chair;
Stuart Flashman, Chair, Land Use Committee

New Park a Good Idea; 19 Stories is Overwhelming

Editor:

The description of the new park by Ms.cruz in the March issue of The Rockridge News sounds very exciting and would be a boon to the community. But the inclusion of a 19-story building overwhelms the entire site. A huge building of that size would cast a deep shadow on the park and also the neighborhood. Furthermore, Ms. cruz recommends that we all "band together in solidarity" to bring this about. But let us not forget that the developer at the library meeting made it quite clear that a large building is part and parcel if this project is to work for him. We cannot join in any commitment to this plan and would never accept the presence of a building this size in a residential neighborhood

Kathy & Bill Garcia

What was sprayed on that Rockridge vacant lot?

Editor:

What was sprayed on that vacant lot? We all know that lot; it's the one at the corner of College and Claremont, a literal crossroads at the heart of our Rockridge neighborhood. For years it has sat vacant, but not empty. That little acre has sprouted green grass and yellow flowers, art installations and grand ideas about public parks and low-cost housing. But now, after the wettest winter in more than a decade, it has produced nothing. It's a brown wasteland of shriveled plants.

I asked an acquaintance if he knew what happened. Yes, it had been sprayed and he was a nose-witness. "It stank for days," he said.

So now I'm wondering.... Who sprayed it? Was any permit needed or obtained? Was any advance notice given or required? How much went into the air and drains, and how much was left behind in our Rockridge neighborhood?

Just what was sprayed on that vacant lot? And why? I look forward to the answer.

Chuck Afflerbach

Regarding the Shafter Avenue Traffic Circles: Confusing

Editor:

I am writing to express my confusion and concern regarding the traffic circles on Shafter Avenue, and to see if anyone can confirm my understanding that they are primarily intended to aid cyclists.

In the months since their appearance, I have witnessed and experienced countless close calls involving cars, cyclists, pedestrians, and scooter riders, in various combinations. The problem may be that no one has a clear understanding of intersection protocol at the traffic circles. Signs warning that cross traffic does not stop are ignored or misunderstood by most drivers. In a car or on foot, I now consider those intersections to be "every man for himself" situations. God forbid someone should attempt a left turn.

There is also the question of design and aesthetics. Counteracting the decorative plants at the center of the traffic circles (which seem to too large for the spaces they occupy), large yellow signs labeled "Traffic Circle" and printed in black with accompanying arrows

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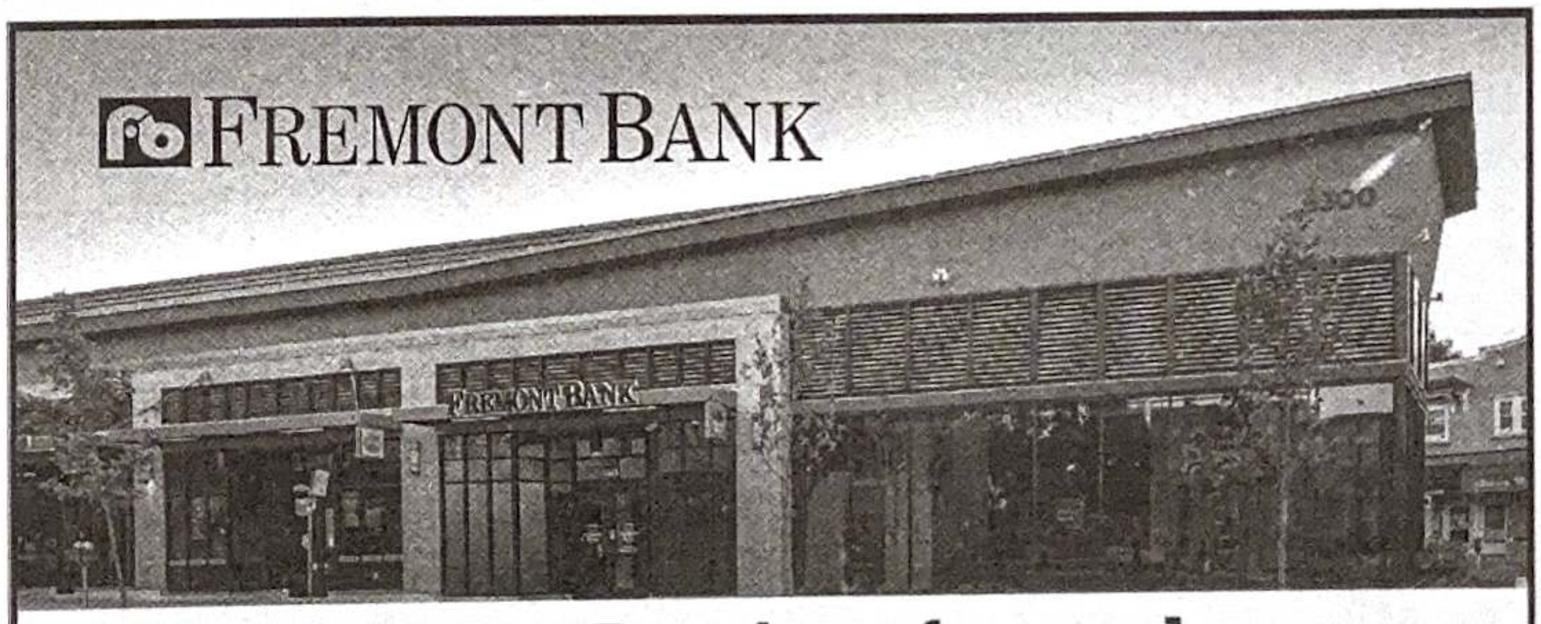
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Eyes on Rockridge

Originators Liken Quirky Garden to Jazz— 'No Rules, Creative Harmony, Interesting'

"Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are."

Alfred Austin, Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, 1896-1913

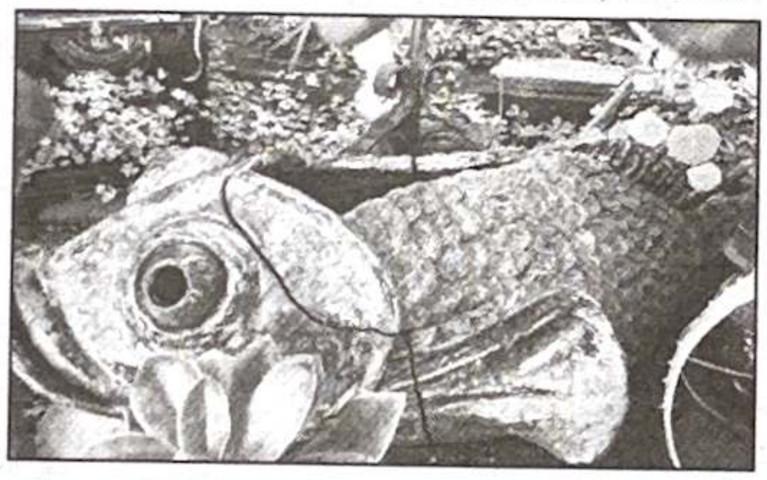
by Judith Doner Berne

"People don't say they like it; they say they love it."

Nick Chase is talking about the eclectic garden that he and his friend Susana England created at England's house on Clifton between Boyd and Lawton in the heart of Rockridge.

"This is one of the things about the garden – everyone stops by," Chase says. "People and dogs," England chimes in. "We have mothers coming by with their children – they play with some of it. A neighbor touches the fish every day."

She is talking about a life-size ceramic fish, one of a number of ceramic pieces that she inherited from her artist-aunt, and displays as an homage to her among a lush display of her own beloved flowering plants and succulents. They are intermingled with an assortment of old and mainly rusted gadgets, tools and objects from yesteryear, such as oil lanterns, typewriters, sewing machines as well as a bevy of birdhouses. "Nick makes the birdhouses," England tells me.



This fish, one of her late aunt's ceramics, is a favorite — of Susana England and of a regular passer-by.

Nothing is too small – a row of bottle caps lines a portion of the fence... or too large – a ladder or chairs hanging from the front façade of the house... or too near – succulent cuttings came from neighbor Julianne Sherback's garden... or too far – rocks and found objects from England's and husband Roger Thompson's off-the-grid Nevada homestead where he spends months at a time. "I never outgrew Boy Scouts," he says.

But for England, her Rockridge home and garden are her "rock." "When I moved in – 35 years ago – I thought I was being exiled to Siberia," she says. ("Market Hall was either a pumpkin patch or Christmas trees," Chase interjects.) "Rockridge wasn't Berkeley," she continues. "Now, it's become more than Berkeley."

ALL PHOTOS: JUDITH DONER BERNE



Susana England and Nick Chase take a break from garden collage: Shades of American Gothic?

Both she and Chase are artists – he first came to Rockridge 35 years ago, as a student at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts), becoming a graphic designer and art illustrator. He lived on Locksley for 20 years before moving to San Francisco.

Creative Harmony, page 9

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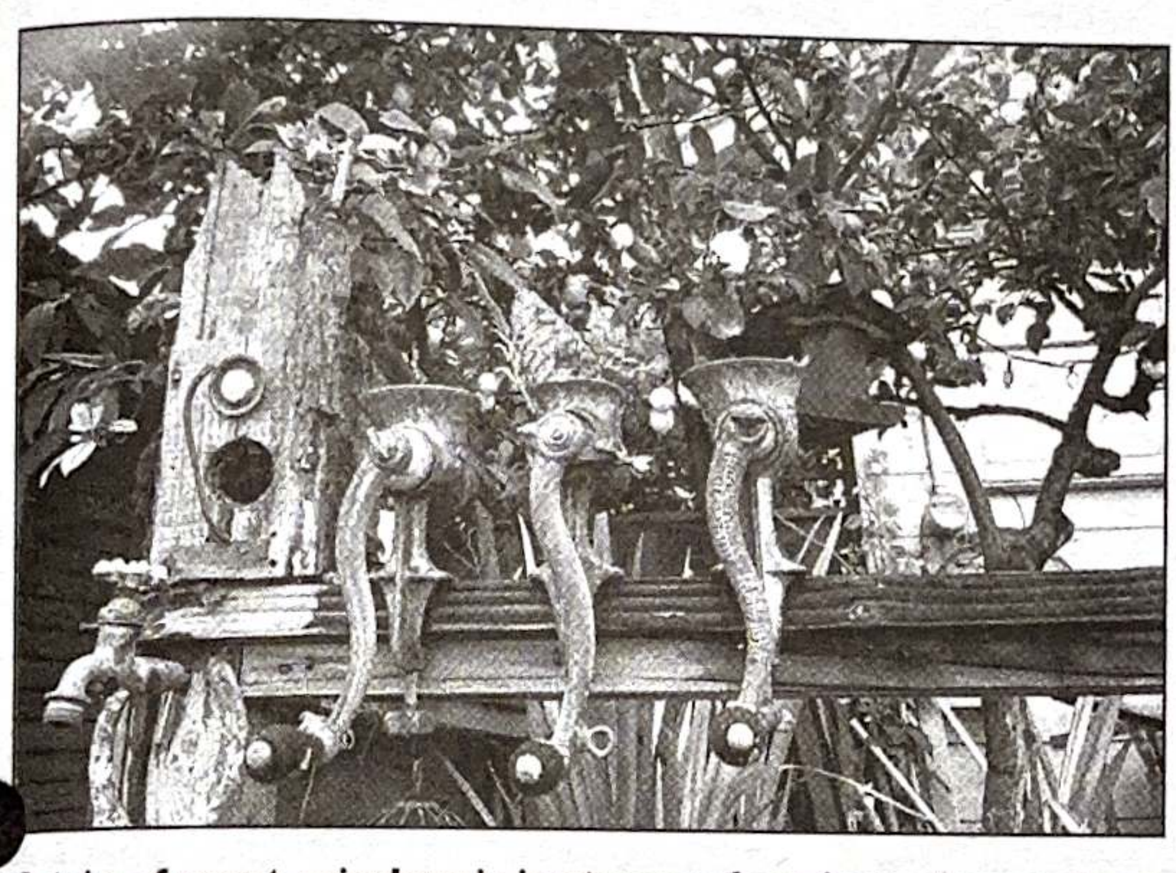
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Creative Harmony

from page 8

England, who studied painting and music at UC Berkeley, is a collage painter but has also done photography, wearable art and handmade paper collage. Her art is displayed in corporate collections, notably at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland and Stanford Medical School. And she describes the garden as "a living, changing composition depending on the light, the weather, who's coming by."



A trio of meat grinders is juxtaposed against a lemon tree.

She also plays harp and cello, once appearing with Miles Davis and Gil Evans at the Berkeley Jazz Festival, and is a former member of the Community Women's and the Oakland Civic orchestras.

"We're like a jazz combo," Chase said, in explaining their garden partnership, formed four years ago when Chase was still in the neighborhood. "We are working off each other's inspiration. It was a very healthy thing to do."

It began with England's desire for a rock garden using rocks she carts back from the Nevada property. "I come from a family that loves to garden," she tells me. "I am a collector. I've always had a feeling for the old and the ephemeral. It (the garden) grew from one pile of rocks and a planter on top. We found we had an affinity for collecting and collaging. He would bring things he wanted to put in."

"I had an old Remington typewriter, railroad lamps, a lot of quality, rusting swag, which no one saw or would ever see until we put it in the garden – a perfect 'creative re-use' fit," he says. "I love the typewriters; they're sculptures now." He's a fan of *wabi-sabi*, the Japanese aesthetic that accepts transience and imperfection. "They put things out and they deteriorate and you see time passing," he says.

They divide the work, with England supervising the planting and Chase creating the scenarios which, in concert with the plants, change from season to season. "We both go for it," she says. "That's why, kind of like jazz – no rules, creative harmony and interesting." Plus, they listen to music while they're working. "I do the classical. He does the rock and roll and blues."

"One of the key elements of the garden was *fun*," Chase says. "Everything was done with a sense of play. No formal plan other than an off-beat sense of jazzy folk-art harmonics."

"I had the spark but Nick has been equally influential," England says. "He was the muscle and inspiration. The eclecticism of the garden wouldn't have happened without him. But the daffodils wouldn't have been there without me." She looks forward to warm weather, when she invites friends over for "a paint-in" — an opportunity to paint in her garden. "I'd like to expand it to more people."

"Susana is an artist both on canvas and in nature," says fellow gardener Sherback. "Walking by her garden is like looking at a piece of art. Not only are the plants and flowers beautiful, but the sculptures and different objects placed between the plants make the garden very magical."

"She's an artist," echoes another neighbor, Jack McGuire, "and the garden is just a very imaginative expression of what she does every day. I see people watching it all the time."

"It's my treasure of memories," England says. In addition to her artist aunt's ceramics, there is a Japanese maple that stands in memory of her father (her mom is nearing 100 and lives in the Berkeley Hills), and wisteria vines twist around the fence to honor

Creative Harmony, page 10

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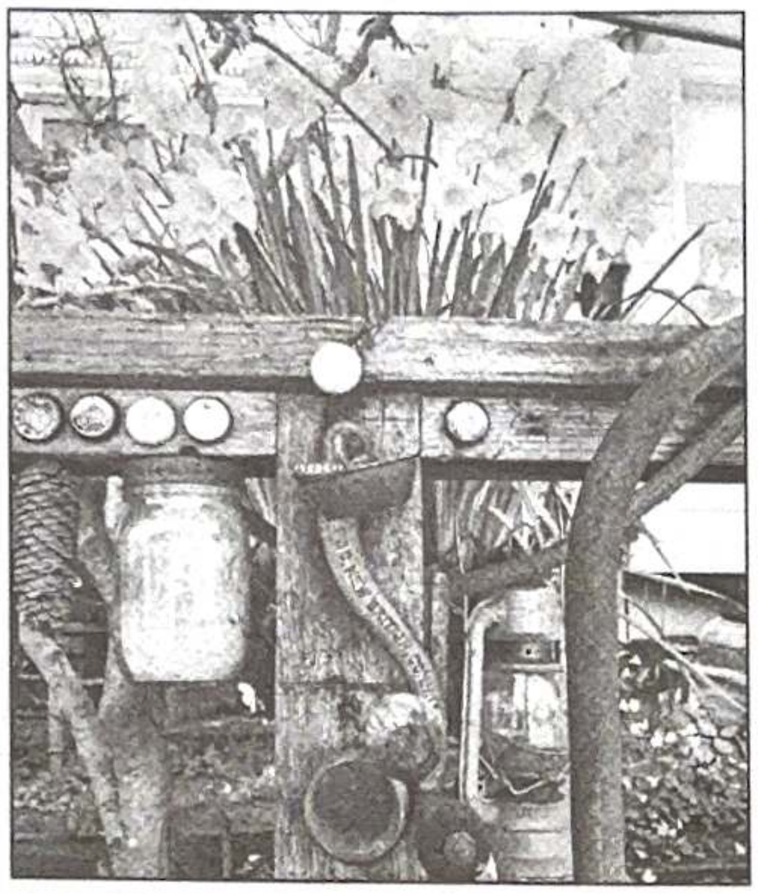
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Creative Harmony

from page 9

another favorite aunt. "When the wisteria blooms, all of a sudden, I have hope again."



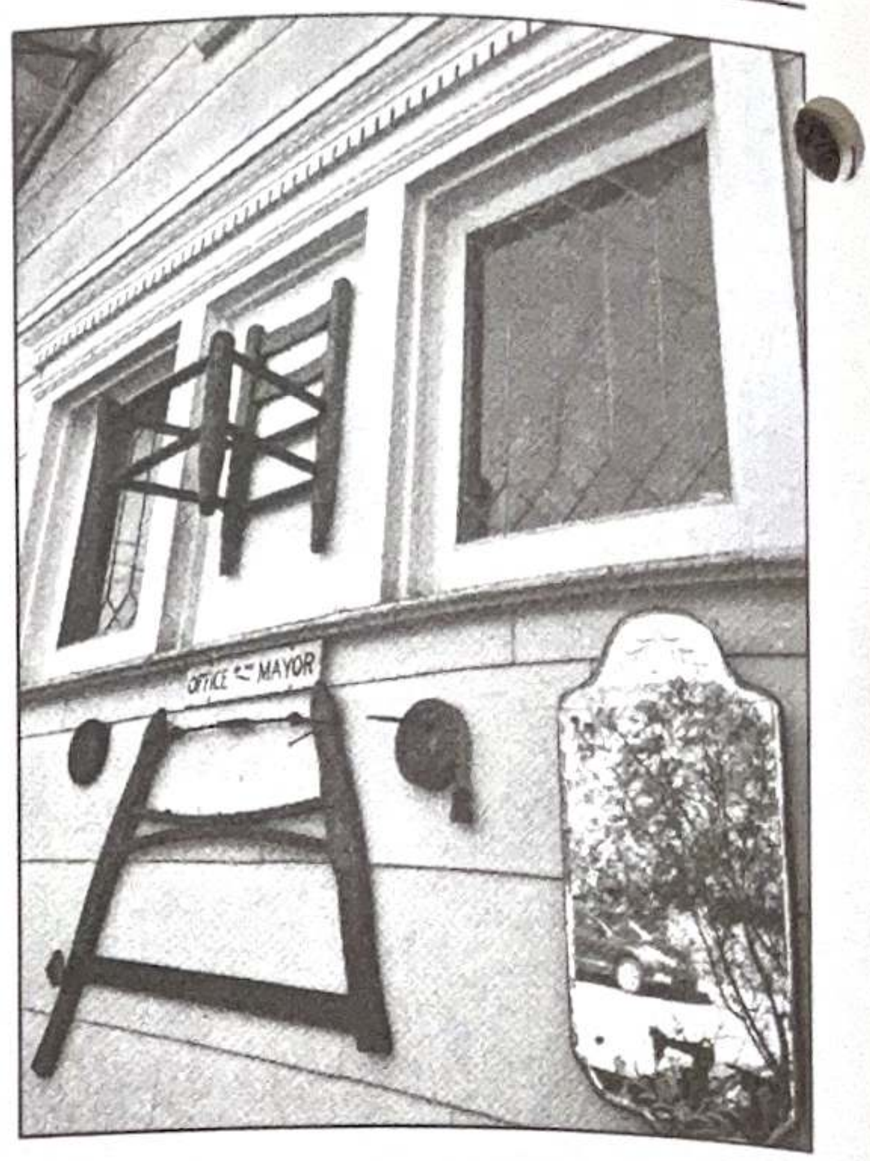
Daffodils bloom flanked by a row of bottle caps ("Nick is a bottle cap guy") and "old rusted stuff."

Nick Chase designed and carried out this collage of objects bolted to the front of the house. ➡



A sewing machine is perched just back of the wooden fence, where wisteria is waiting to bloom.

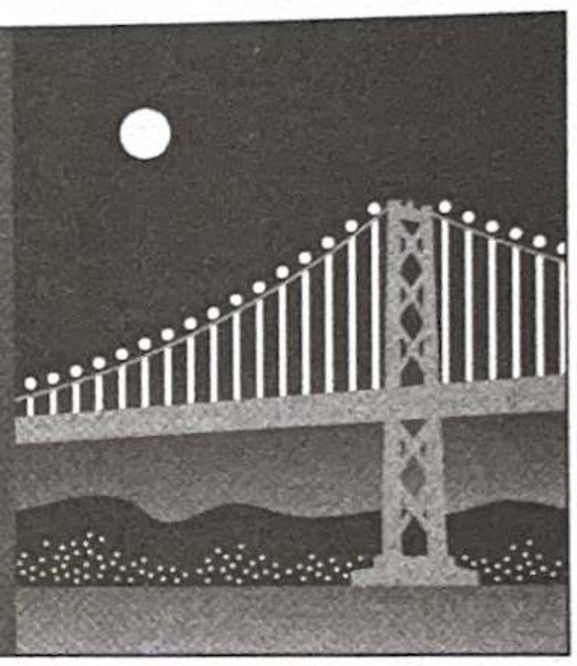
Comments on this column and ideas for future columns are welcome. Please email judyberne@att.net.



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COMPASS

Competition Drives Price in March

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
3/5/2019	4	2.5	5302 Lawton Ave	$1,818,000	$1,818,000	12	$1,950,000
3/8/2019	2	2	434 Avon Street	$1,250,000	$1,250,000	0	$1,250,000
3/11/2019	3	1.5	5876 Ocean View Dr	$1,449,000	$1,449,000	15	$1,600,000
3/12/2019	3	2	6055 Rockwell St	$1,600,000	$1,600,000	0	$1,550,000
3/14/2019	2	1	315 Hemphill Place	$895,000	$895,000	14	$1,000,000
3/15/2019	3	2.5	19 Ross Circle	$1,395,000	$1,395,000	11	$1,750,000
3/18/2019	2	1	5850 Lawton Ave	$995,000	$995,000	16	$1,450,000
3/18/2019	4	1.5	5126 Coronado Ave	$899,000	$899,000	15	$1,090,000
3/20/2019	1	2	5405 Carlton St	$750,000	$739,000	29	$710,000
3/20/2019	4	4	5377 Bryant Ave	$1,495,000	$1,495,000	14	$1,902,000
3/22/2019	3	2.5	5408 Bryant Ave	$1,795,000	$1,795,000	13	$2,185,000

Homes sold in March closed 15% over the asking price on average.

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Kitchens in Rockridge

from page 1

For those new to the neighborhood, this autumn will mark the 13th biennial kitchen tour since 1995 and it will feature eight beautifully renovated, restored, or remodeled Rockridge residential kitchens. The Kitchen Tour is the primary fundraiser for the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), the nonprofit community organization that sponsors publication of The Rockridge News; holds town hall meetings on topics of importance to the neighborhood; and supports community-building through programs like the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Community Grants.

Report: Land Use Committee

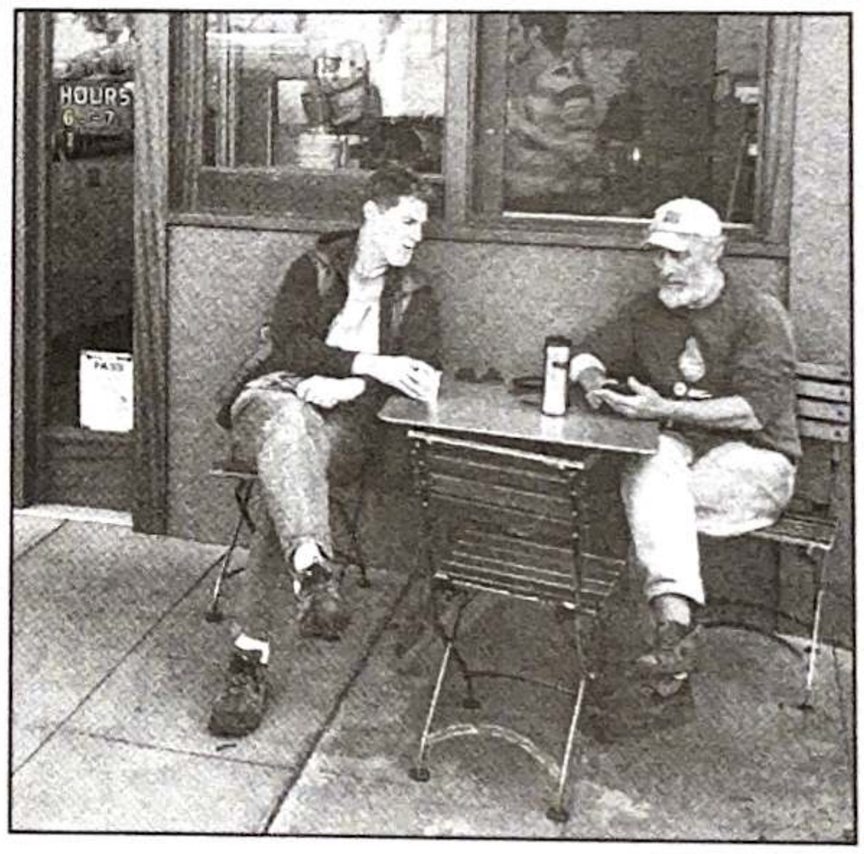
from page 3

two U.C. graduate students were unable to participate, the Committee was extremely lucky to be able to recruit Rockridge resident Darin Smith of the Oakland planning and consulting firm Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. to help us with the analysis. We hope to present a short update on the study at the April Town Hall.

5346 College Avenue

This narrow lot is currently occupied by a one-story bungalow that has been converted to commercial use. The developers met with the Land Use Committee last fall and presented several alternative proposals. After receiving feedback from the committee, particularly about the need for more affordable housing, the developers redesigned the project to include one verylow-income rental unit. With that unit, the project qualified to add a fourth story. It now includes a small first-floor retail space, six two-bedroom units, and a first-floor one-bedroom unit with backyard area. There would be rooftop common open space fronting on the College Avenue side of the building.

Under the City's zoning regulations, the lot is narrow enough that it is exempt from having to provide any on-site off-street parking for residents. The assigned planner, Jason Madani (jmadani@oaklandca.gov, 238-3790), has proposed exempting the project from all off-street parking requirements. The committee is concerned that if, as seems likely, at least some of the units are rented by families, they *will* have cars; and where will they park them? It's a question that seems to deserve an answer.



With good weather now coming often enough to dry out the streets and warm up the outdoor chairs, can there be many better ways to spend time out of doors than with a friend and a cup of coffee? Rockridge residents and Cole Coffee patrons Bill Crews, left, and Roger Hammar take advantage of one of the recent dry days in Rockridge. /D. Kinkead

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How Would Rockridge Fare?

from page 1

Bay Area Council; the Silicon Valley Leadership Group; and SPUR, the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association; as well as the Building Industry Association and the "Yes In My Backyard," – or "YIMBY" – movement. More importantly, unlike SB 827, SB 50 starts off with support from not only some tenant and affordable housing groups, but also the state Building Trades Council – a powerful ally within organized labor.

SB 50 Promotes Denser Development Near Major Transit Centers

Like SB 827, SB 50 focuses on promoting denser development near major transit stops (e.g., BART, train, ferry, and light rail line stations) and stops on "high quality bus corridors" – that is, bus routes with service at least every 15 minutes during peak commute hours; at least every 20 minutes between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. weekdays; and at least every half-hour from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekends. It adds to that, areas that are close to jobs; have a high median income relative to the local area; and have good public schools. (None of these terms are currently defined.) It appears that Rockridge would qualify for denser development under all of these criteria.

The bill includes protections for existing rental properties, as well as requiring compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and local planning requirements, except for projects submitted under the previous Wiener/Skinner bill SB 35 – which could apply to many Oakland projects – where the local government would be required to approve a qualifying project.

Under SB 50, all qualifying projects would be exempt from density limits (i.e., a maximum number of units per acre), and off-street parking requirements would be limited to 0.5 parking spaces per residential unit. The projects would also be entitled to three incentives or concessions such as reduced setbacks and fee waivers.

In addition, projects with a certain percentage of affordable units and located between one-quarter and one-half mile from a major transit stop could have heights up to 45 feet (Rockridge height limits normally would be 30-35 feet), and would be allowed almost full lot coverage at 3 stories. Within one-quarter mile of the transit stop, the height limit would be 55 feet, and almost full lot coverage up to four stories. In either case, all off-street parking requirements would be eliminated.

If the law sounds complicated, it is. Further, some of its provisions are, as yet, not well defined, and it is likely there will be numerous amendments during the legislative process. Nevertheless, given the bill's support by many of the major political powers in Sacramento, and barring a groundswell of popular opposition, most political observers expect the measure to pass – in one form or another.

SB 50 Presenter: Robert Gammon

Robert Gammon works for Nancy Skinner as communications director and policy advisor. He is the former editor & publisher of the East Bay Express, former senior editor and publisher of Oakland, Alameda and The East Bay Monthly magazines.

Learn more about this major bill and have your comments and questions heard at the RCPC Town Hall meeting.

Rockridge News Delivery Routes Open: Broadway and Broadway Terrace Routes up for Grabs

We thank Gail Giacomelli for delivering The Rockridge News to her fellow Broadway Terrace residents for the last 9 years. Other responsibilities dictate her stepping down from her block captain job. Thanks also to David Herrenbruck for his service as a district captain. He is moving east. We wish them each the best and now look for someone to fill their shoes.

Route 08B: Block Captain* needed to deliver to Both sides of Broadway Terrace, odd numbers from Broadway to 5409, even numbers from Broadway to 5400.

Route 11: District Captain* needed to drop seven bundles at houses along 5400 and 5500 Taft, Kales and Manila between Broadway and College.

Route 16D: Block Captain delivers to both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment at 5248.

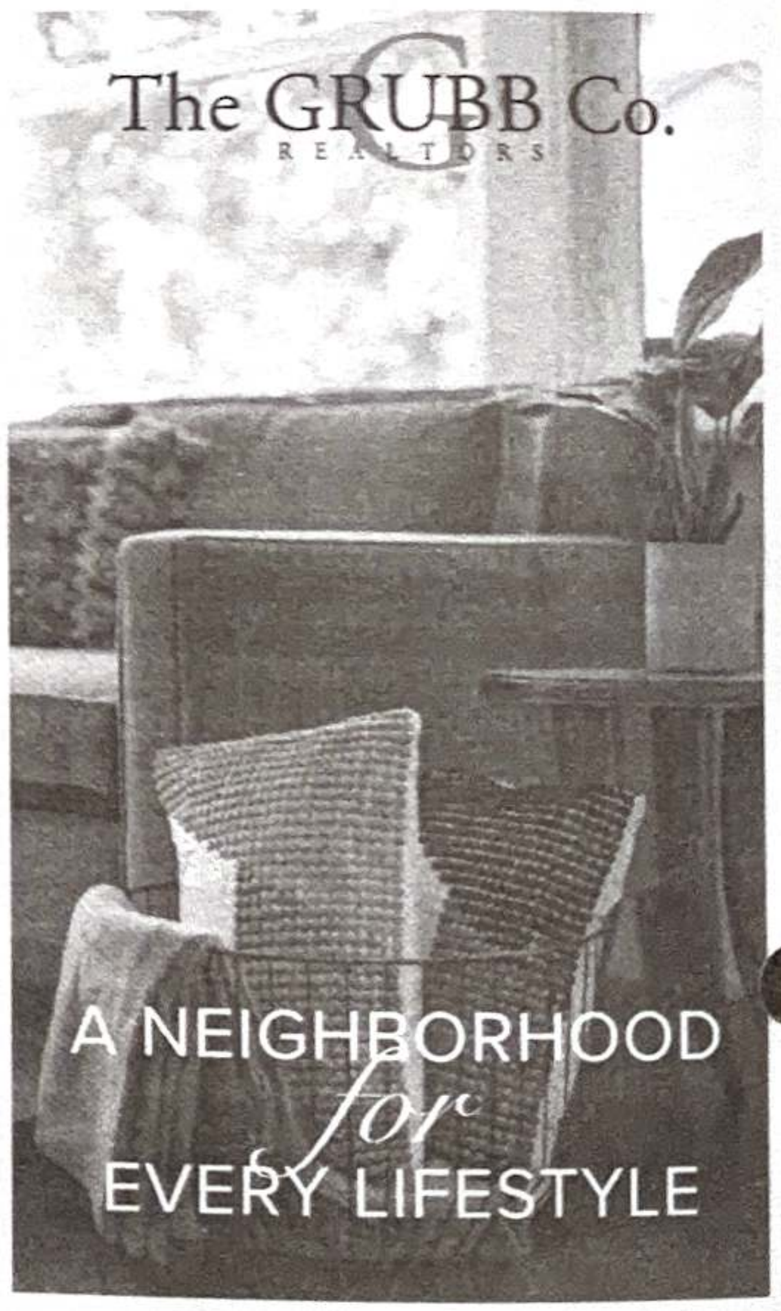
*Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door; *District Captains deliver bundles to the Block Captains.

The newsletter is published the first weekend of each month except August. Your bundle will be delivered to your doorstep.

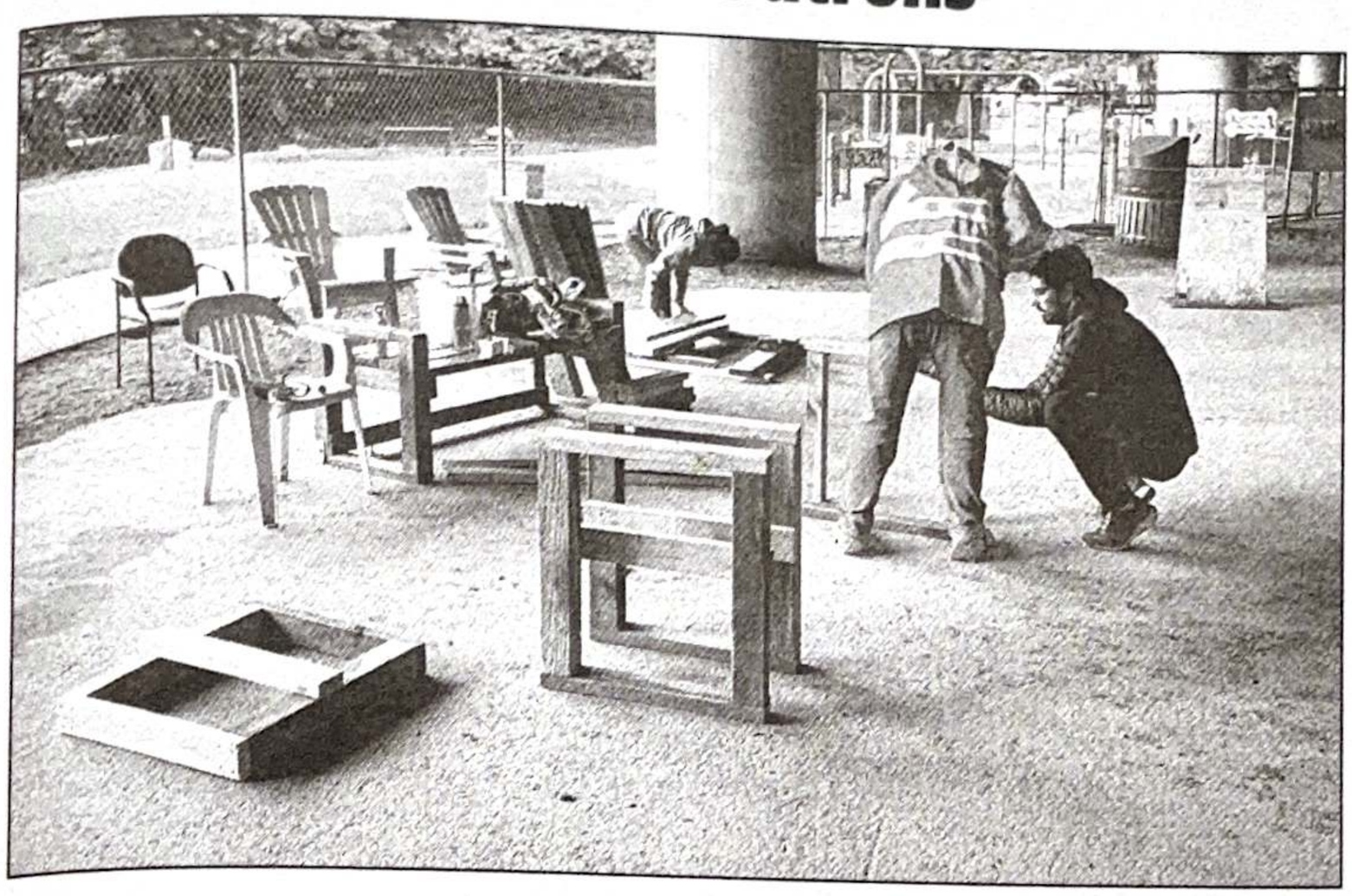
Call 510/547-3855 or email Susan Montauk (smontauk@gmail.com) to volunteer.


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Hardy Dog Park Builds Comfort for Pooch Patrons



The Hardy Dog Park Group hosted its first Bench Building Day March 2. Because of the rain and wind, we were not able to get the benches finished on that day. They are currently being sealed and painted and will be installed in April. When finished, the new benches will have backs for added comfort. Thank you to all the great volunteers who came out to help. We even had one volunteer who had never used a power tool and now wants to purchase her own drill because she had so much fun. We built new newspaper bag collectors on our April 6 clean-up day.

We continue to have monthly clean-ups the first Saturday of every month. All volunteers are welcome, but the park is closed to dogs from 8:30-10:30 for their safety.

Remember: We need your tennis balls and clean newspaper bag donations. Leave them at either entrance to our park at the corner of Hudson and Claremont. Thank you for your support. Arooooo!

/Dog Park photo

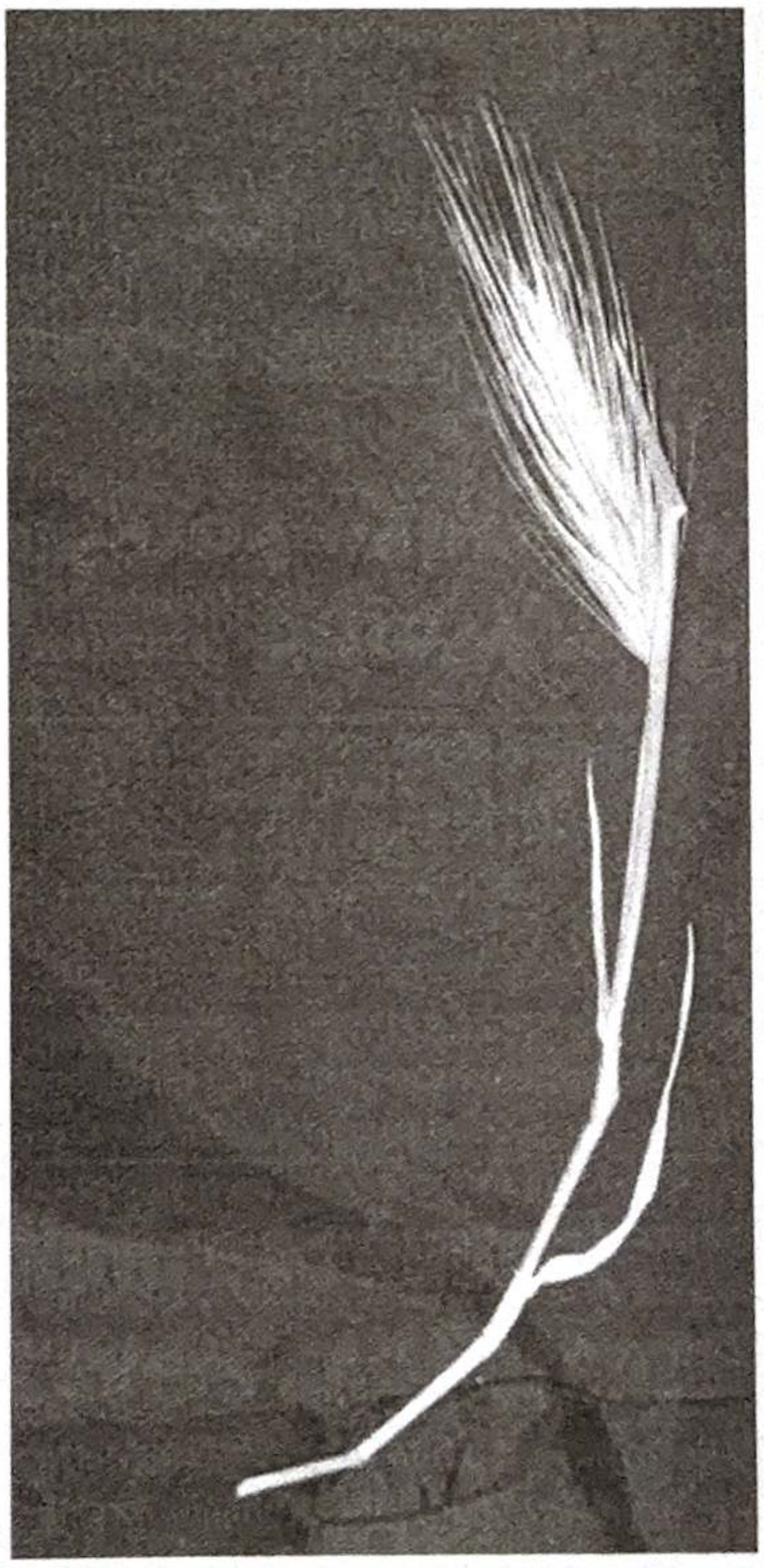
Notice to Animal Lovers and Parents

This is the beginning of Foxtail season. This means potentially big problems for animals and young children. You can help protect your pet and/or child by watching for foxtails (see picture below) when out walking. When you come across them, yank them out by the roots, then put them in a plastic bag and then into the trash, not into the green bin where they can survive and later get mixed into mulch material.

Why are Foxtails dangerous? These barbed grasses can easily be inhaled by animals or young children, or they can enter the body through eyes, ears, nose, and feet. Once they're in, the barbed structure ensures they stay in, and makes them extremely hard – and very expensive – to remove. They can cause infections, organ damage, and loss of hearing or vision.

Questions?: Call Sari Kulberg at 510/653-6432.

Below: a typical Foxtail. There are many varieties, often different in appearance.





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Your 36-word message is $22. (Phone number counts as one word.) **Make check payable to RCPC** and write **Rockridge News Classified Ad** on the memo line. Mail to: **RN Classifieds**, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. ***The classified ad May issue deadline is April 18. The May issue*** *will be out* ***May 3.*** *For information: Email Susan Montauk via smontauk@gmail.com*

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Feather River Art Camp for Adults
http://www.featherriveerartcamp.com June 9-16, 2019. "a perfectly joyful blend of art, nature, creativity, camaraderie." A rich selection of Fine Arts Painting; Crafts, and Music classes. Family friendly.

MOVING SALE!
Every Sunday, 11am-4pm starting Sunday, April 7th through mid-May. Great items at great prices. Home furnishings, odds and ends. Manila/Cavour. See you there! leti.aguime@gmail.com. Private showings for furniture pieces. Priced to sell.

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Letters

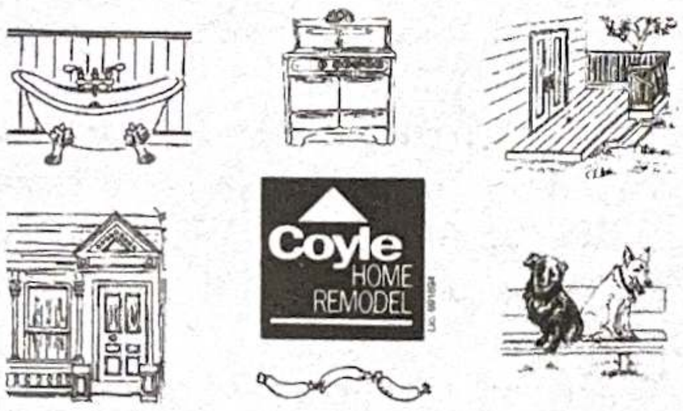
from page 7

indicating their function dominate the urban landscape on our street. In addition, white oversized plastic buffers have appeared near the crosswalks. I am trying to go with the flow and adapt to our increasingly populous and developed neighborhood and its changes, but am having a tough time understanding how the circles are an improvement. My questions at this point are: What was the rationale for installing them? Whom are they supposed to benefit? Cyclists, drivers, pedestrians, emergency workers? Don't cars and pedestrians still make up the majority of traffic on this street? Is anyone studying accidents at these intersections? Is there a more effective way to educate the public about traffic and pedestrian rights of way? Are they meant to slow down or speed up Shafter Avenue traffic? Are we stuck with them forever?

Are there civil engineers, design consultants, urban planners, or community activists who could address these concerns?

Just ranting and wondering,

P. B. Covell
Rockridge resident since 1986



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Claremont Middle School Girls Basketball: 2019 Middle School Champs!

Congratulations to Claremont's girls basketball team, the 2019 Oakland City Middle School Champs! This team played as a strong unit of veteran 7th and 8th graders with an infusion of sixth graders. Masterfully coached by David Doubley, hard work by these athletes gave them confidence. They dominated the game against Montera in a 36 to 31 point victory. Our school and community can be very proud of these athletes.

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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

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

- **Family Story Time:** Stories/songs/rhymes (for all ages); Saturdays, 10:30am.
- **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: all ages welcome.

- **Food Allergies:** presented by Children's Hospital of Oakland. Thurs, 4/11, 11:15-11:30am.
- **Stretching for Caregivers:** bring your children to free basic stretching session for adults. Wednesdays, 10:10am.
- **Chess Club:** learn the basics; Instruction and chess sets provided. Best for ages 8 to 12. Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30pm.
- **Paws to Read:** Sandy's dog Scout loves to help kids practice reading. You pick the book, Scout will sit by you and listen as you read aloud. All ages welcome. Every Thursday, 3:30-4:30pm.
- **Mix It Up Family Game Night:** Bring your favorite game or try one of ours. Every Tues 6:30-7:45pm (except for Family Craft Night).
- **Family Craft Night:** 2nd Tuesdays, 6:30-7:45pm. April craft: Make your own postcards to send them on 4/9 for International Letter Writing Month.
- **Kamishibai Stories:** from a Japanese-style paper-theater on the back of a bicycle, while you nibble on Japanese treats. Sat, May 4, 10:30am.

FOR TEENS

- **Creative Writing Club:** (ages 11-18). Get prompts, share your writing. **Free pizza.** Tues, 4/9, 4-5pm.
- **Rockridge 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 games and make craft; every Tues, Thurs, and Fri, 3:30 - 5pm; Wed, 1:30 - 5pm (during school days).
- **Peer Circle, A Healing Space for Youth:** series of youth-led Restorative Justice (RJ) circles about relationships, racism, social justice, and more. Safe space provides opportunity to engage in community building and to learn skills to become RJ leaders in their community. Age 11 and up. (Gift cards available for participation). Second Wednesdays, 4 – 5 pm.

FOR ADULTS

- **Gardening Workshop; Raised Beds:** Advantages/disadvantages, growing medium, plant selection, types of raised beds and more. Taught by an Alameda County Master Gardener. Sat, 4/13, 11am-12pm.
- **Gardening Workshop; Plants That Attract Hummingbirds & Butterflies:** Alameda County Master Gardener discusses butterflies and hummingbirds found in our region and the best methods for growing the plants they need. Sat, 4/ 27, 11am-12pm.
- **Urban Cycling Tips & Tricks:** Learn the basic rules of the road for a fun and safe ride: how to equip your bicycle, fit your helmet, avoid bike theft, ride after dark, and prevent common crashes. Sat, May 4, 1 to 3pm.
- **eBook Help:** Work one-on-one with a librarian to download eBooks. Fridays, 2 -3:30pm. Make appt. online or call 597-5017.
- **Second Saturday Book Club:** 2nd Sat each month, 3 - 4pm. Phone for details and book selection: 597-5017.
- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** Bring 15 copies of up to 5 pgs. of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (OK to come empty-handed). 3rd Sat. each month,1pm; wheelchair-accessible. Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Lawyer in the Library:** Free legal info and referral. 1st Tues each month. Sign-up for lottery before at 5:45 pm; see lawyer 6pm-8pm.

UPSTAIRS ART GALLERY

April: **East Bay Landscape Painters** - recent work.

Note New Library Hours. See story page 5.
Tues, Wed: 10 am to 8pm.
Mon, Thurs & Sat: 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri, 12 to 5:30pm.
Closed: Sun

East Bay Booksellers Book/Poetry Readings

FREE and open to the public.

- Sun, 4/7, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with poets from Sixteen Rivers Press: **Maya Khosla, Barbara Swift Brauer,** and **Camille Norton.**
- Wed, 4/10, 6:30pm. **Freud's Bar** (talks by local Bay Area psychoanalysts/psychologists). Drinks and snacks provided. **Mtg topic:** Subversiveness in Adolescence. Presenter: **Mary Brady, Ph.D.**
- Thurs, 4/18, 7pm. Local author **Jenny Odell**: *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy.*
- Sun, 4/28, 3pm. **Poetry Flash.** (Details not yet available).
- Tues,4/30, 7pm. **Norman Fischer**: *The World Could Be Otherwise: Imagination and the Bodhisattva Path.*

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

Book Signing, Tastings, and Conversations

New cookbook by **Elizabeth Minchilli:** *The Italian Table: Creating festive meals for family and friends.* Get recipes/taste ingredients. Sat, May 4, 1 to 3pm. Market Hall Foods at Rockridge Market Hall, 5655 College Ave. More info: 250-6005 or rockridgemarkethall.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert

The Quitters: Saturday, May 4, 7pm. A guitar duo of right-side up finger picking (**Stevie Coyle**) and upside-down flat picking (**Glenn Houston**). Hear examples at https://www.quittersduo.com/#new-album-section. **Inside venue; not wheelchair accessible.** $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door). 383 61st Street. More info and reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

North Oakland Senior Center

5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way

Mon. – Fri., 9am to 4:30pm. **Programs include:** Arts/crafts; health counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's support groups, computer classes/more.

- **Free AARP Tax Preparation: Thursdays, by appointment. Call 597-5085 to schedule appointment.**

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). Sample the goods; meet the growers. **Live music. Bring reusable bags.** 5300 Claremont Ave. (off Telegraph) at DMV parking lot.

John Wagers: Indefatigable

from page 2

is surrounded by neighbors of Ayala Park, a now-green oasis he resurrected many years ago from an ignored and desolate plot of land next to a freeway off-ramp with help from friends and neighbors. Later, John received a commendation from the Oakland City Council for creating Ayala Park and others in the neighborhood. Today, Ayala neighbors, as others have before them, continue to tend the park, usually with John's close supervision.

Throughout it all, John has been a distributor of The Rockridge News since the publication's beginning. Rain or shine, he walks his paper route each month. Indefatigable.

Thank you, John, from everyone.

Don Kinkead, text and photos.
Information about John's early days prepared by Bob Hawley, John's nephew.

CLAUDIA MILLS REAL ESTATE TEAM

Proudly launching a new website dedicated to the understanding and celebration of our wonderful Rockridge neighborhood. Please visit it at www.rockridgelife.com

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ROCKRIDGE MARKET UPDATE

The 1st Quarter listings are closed and ready for dissection.

In general, the market is still very active and appears to have shaken off the late fall/winter blues.

Almost 75% of the closed sales received offers over asking and one had 10 offers and sold for a whopping 45% over asking. Rockridge is still one of the most desirable neighborhoods in the East Bay.

There is still more demand for homes than is currently available.

Please feel free to call me for a personal market update and home valuation.

If your house is currently listed for sale this is not a solicitation for that sale. The information used here was provided by the EBRDI MLS

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