THE Rockridge News

REFERENCE

www.rockridge.org

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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council • 4123 Broadway, PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94611

Dear Rockridge News Reader: Do You Have ink In Your Veins?

Do you have a desire to bring clarity and understanding to the news?

Your moment could be at hand: With current editor Don Kinkead stepping down to move on to other pursuits, The Rockridge News, sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council, is accepting applications for the position of Editor of The Rockridge News. What's involved? The editor attends monthly meetings of the Rockridge Community Planning Council board as a non-voting member to note events and plans for potential articles; attends RCPC Town Hall meetings every other month, or as otherwise scheduled; determines the content, clarity and layout of material to appear in the newsletter, especially material the Board may wish to have published in furtherance of its interest in providing timely and relevant information to the Rockridge community.

There is more to tell than this space can hold. To apply, or for more information, write: editor@rockridge.org. A stipend is included.

NCPC-RCPC Joint Town Hall Meeting

7:30. Thursday, June 20, Rockridge Library Upstairs Meeting room.

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) will hold their annual joint meeting at **7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 20, in the Rockridge Branch Library upstairs meeting room.** The NCPC will lead off with the Oakland Police Department (OPD) neighborhood crime status report and a consideration of existing NCPC priorities, followed by the introduction of our new Neighborhood Law Corps Attorney David Gomez, who will give a brief overview of the Neighborhood Law Corps and its functions.

The balance of the meeting will cover emergency preparedness, starting with a keynote address by Lars Eric Holm of Eden I&R, which does emergency preparedness training throughout Alameda County. Following this, an OPD representative will discuss the role of the police department in emergencies. Because of staffing shortfalls, the Oakland Fire Department has had to temporatily suspend its CORE (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) program. The meeting will end with time for questions. Mr. Holm wiill talk abut how we can try to fill this gap. We encourage residents to join us for these important subjects. Speakers and discussion leaders will be annouunced on rockridge.org as they are confirmed.

— Karen Ivy, Secretary, **NCPC/secretary@rockridgencpc.com**

Coming September 22: The Biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 22, 2019, and watch for advance ticket sales beginning July 1 at kitchentour@rockridge.org and ending midnight, September 20. **Advance tickets are $45 plus service fee. After September 20, tickets are $50.** The Rockridge Kitchen Tour Committee is looking for volunteers with the following areas of expertise:

Publicity:Ideally we'd like to find a volunteer with experience in writing press releases, and with contacts at local media outlets. This

▶ Kitchen Tour Support, page 13



RCPC Board of Directors Adds a New Member in May



The RCPC Board of Directors recently welcomed new member David Garcia when he was unanimously appointed to an open position at the May Board meeting. David is a resident of Miles Avenue, where he lives with his wife Fay and two-year-old son, Diego. During the day, David works at the UC Berkeley Terner Center for Housing Innovation. He has extensive experience in land use and housing policy. A native of Stockton, David has also worked in Washington D.C. at the Government Accountability Office doing Congressional research. He received his master's in public policy from the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies. He also holds a degree in political science from UCLA.

David is an avid runner and, most importantly, a die-hard Oakland A's fan.

Walk Scores and Rockridge
Walking in Rockridge

by Leonora Sea

Author's note: After my driving ability was derailed last November by an injury to my right hand and the subsequent repair surgery, I found myself walking, a lot. It got me thinking about Walk Scores, which one often sees in real estate listings. This article is based on my first-hand observations and a little background research. And – spoiler alert — my own house's Walk Score turns out to be 89.

Real estate listings for Rockridge properties usually include something called a Walk Score. Houses in the neighborhood consistently get scores in the high eighties and nineties out of one hundred. It's clearly a selling point for prospective home buyers, but what do the numbers mean, and how are scores derived?

From the Walk Score website (www.walkscore.com), "Walk Score measures the walkability of any address using a patented system. For each address, Walk Score analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities in each category. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (.25 miles) are given maximum points. A decay function is used to give points to more distant amenities, with no points given after a 30-minute walk. Walk Score also measures pedestrian friendliness by analyzing population density and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. Data sources include Google, Education.com, Open Street Map, the U.S. Census, Localeze, and places added by the Walk Score user community."

Rockridge gets high scores based on the above criteria because it really is a very pedestrian-accessible community. Even at the slower pace of an older adult, there are few parts of the neighborhood that are more than a 30-minute walk to shopping and transit. (Walking with a young child might be different.)

Within five blocks of each other on College, there are two full-size grocery stores and a pharmacy, plus a number of specialty food shops. Residents have a choice of two libraries: the Rockridge branch on College, of course, and the Temescal Library on Telegraph, actually closer to much of Lower Rockridge. One can get one's hair cut, buy a cup of coffee, get a replacement tub drain stopper, drop off one's dry cleaning, and more, all on College Avenue. Two bookstores beguile book lovers, and restaurants feature cuisines from all around the world. No movie theaters are to be found in the neighborhood, but several are reachable by transit.

And transit options are excellent. The Rockridge BART station is a 15-20 minute walk from many neighborhoods, as are the College Avenue 51A and 51B AC Transit bus lines. The 79 line, which also stops at BART, connects Rockridge with the Claremont District and downtown Berkeley. The 6 line on Telegraph Avenue runs between downtown Oakland and downtown Berkeley, and the 12 line on 51st Street connects Rockridge to Grand Avenue and to Jack London Square. Short walking distances and easy access to transit make it easy to live in Rockridge and work or play in much of the East Bay and San Francisco without using a car.

There are some downsides to being a Rockridge walker. The least pedestrian-friendly: cars. There is a lot of automobile traffic through the neighborhood, and some streets, Hudson, upper Broadway, and Keith, for example, lead to freeway entrances, encouraging speeding. Drivers sometimes

▸ Walking in Rockridge, page 12

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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.

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Judith Doner Berne.....Eyes on Rockridge
Jo Ellis.....Advertising & Community Calendar
Susan Montauk.....Business Manager
Don Kinkead.....Graphics & Layout

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

Articles and letters 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 for clarity and brevity at the editor's discretion and without notice to the submitter. Views expressed in articles and letters 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 July issue is:
☛ **July 6, 2019.**
☛ **Submission deadline: June 20, 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 Land Use Committee

The June Land Use Committee meeting will be held Wednesday, June 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Branch Library 2nd floor meeting room. The agenda will include updates on the housing study. Please check at https://rockridge.org the previous week to confirm the meeting's date, time, and place.

RCPC Land Use Committee Update – June 2019

The Land Use Committee met May 28.

Update: SB50 (Senators Wiener & Skinner, Assemblymember Wicks, and others)

This bill, described in more detail in the May Rockridge News, was – in an unexpected move – placed in the "suspense" file by the Senate Appropriations Committee's chair, Senator Portantino. While some news media pronounced the bill "dead," that would be an overstatement. What it means is that no further action will be taken this year to move the bill forward past its current committee. This often flags bills facing strong opposition and needing significant modification before they can move forward.

The bill's supporters have argued that the bill is urgently needed to help address the statewide housing shortage, because many cities are doing little to add more housing, especially affordable housing. The Wiener/Skinner bill was aimed most specifically at promoting denser housing development in areas with abundant transit or strong job growth.

In its current form, the bill could have had major impacts on Rockridge and other "transit rich" areas of Oakland and the Bay Area. (The Rockridge Housing Study [see next item] will provide more detailed analysis of how different policy changes would affect Rockridge.) It remains to be seen what changes will be made to the bill before January to blunt the strong opposition expressed by many local governments (including the League of California Cities) to the bill's attempt to preempt local land use controls. At present, the RCPC Board has taken no position on the bill, but will continue to follow it.

Update: Rockridge Housing Study

The Rockridge Housing Study, begun last spring, seeks to provide information about how Rockridge might address city housing needs. The Committee briefly reviewed the five alternative policy scenarios that the study will include. The study will analyze how each scenario would affect the amount and type of future housing growth in Rockridge, and the impacts on Rockridge that would accompany that growth.

Darin Smith, a Rockridge resident and a principal of Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., an Oakland economic and planning consulting firm, has volunteered some of his time to help the Committee analyze the scenarios' effect on housing. We hope to be able to present some preliminary results at the June Land Use Committee meeting.

U.C. Graduate Student Projects on Housing at the Rockridge BART Station

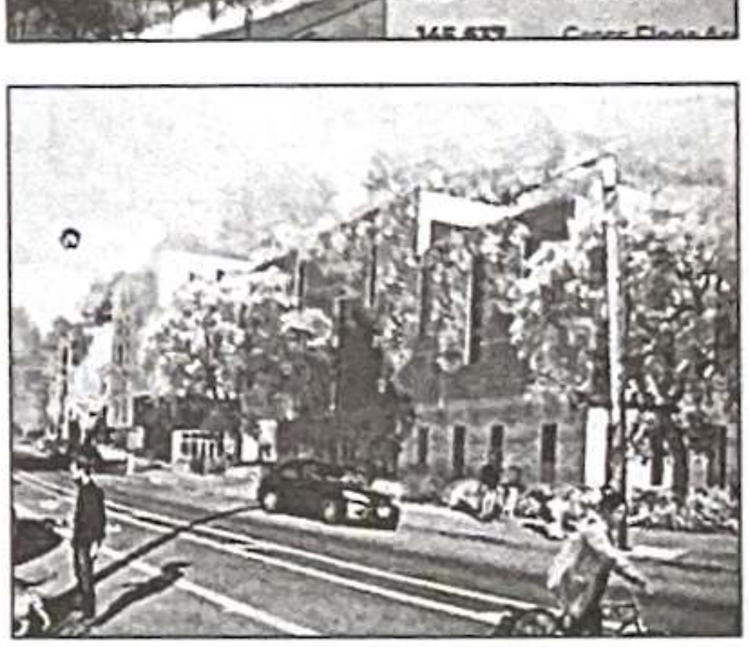
A recent U.C. Berkeley graduate course included student projects studying possible housing projects at Glen Park Station in San Francisco and the Rockridge BART station. The projects were based on state legislation allowing BART to "upzone" land it owned to promote transit-oriented housing, with an emphasis on affordable housing.

Three projects on the Rockridge BART site were presented May 18 at a symposium on the U.C. campus. The Committee heard summaries of the projects and viewed slides presented at the symposium. The projects all satisfied the basic requirements set by the course, but varied widely in the type and amount of housing proposed. Three slides are shown below. More detailed information, including more of the slides presented, will be posted on the Rockridge.org website.

▶ Land Use Cmte, page 5









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Get the Lead Out!

Is Your Home a Lead Paint Hazard?

by Larry Brooks, Director, Alameda County Healthy Homes Department

Lead paint was generally used on properties built before 1978. Unless a home has undergone major remodeling, there is a high probability that some or all of its outside or inside paint is lead-based.

Intact lead-based paint is not considered to be a lead hazard. However, if it is cracking, chipping, chalking, or peeling, it is a lead hazard. Even in remediation efforts, lead dust created by sanding and scraping and by friction on windows, doors, and drawers can be hazardous. Lead dust or chips wind up in the yards our children play in, the yards we seek to grow vegetables in, and the landscaping our pets play in. Unless testing has been done by a state-certified assessor, always assume the paint is lead-based paint even if the property has been repainted.

Why is lead dangerous? Even in small amounts, lead poisoning can cause permanent damage to the brain and other parts of the body. Children under 6 are most at risk for exposure because their bodies are small and still developing. Children are normally exposed by putting their hands and toys in their mouths. The only way to tell if a child has been exposed to lead is to get the child tested. Testing is recommended at 12 and 24 months of age. Talk to your doctor to request a blood lead test. (It's usually covered by insurance. If not, they aren't expensive.)

When remodeling or renovating a property built before 1978, special precautions must be taken. While small chipped areas may only require a spot prime and spot paint, loose, raised or peeling paint must be sanded or scraped. Uncontained dry sanding and dry scraping and lack of containment are some of the common causes of unsafe renovations and lead exposure.

If you are doing work on your home, be sure to follow lead-safe work practices:

- Do not dry sand or dry scrape
- Keep the work area damp by misting to keep dust down
- If you use power tools, use a HEPA vacuum attachment
- Contain dust and debris in the work area by using 6 mil plastic sheets taped thoroughly in place to capture paint chips, dust and other debris generated from the work
- Waste generated from the work should be properly handled and carefully disposed of.

Renovation by contractors, maintenance personnel, and rental property owners doing their own work are subject to the EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule, which requires training, certification, and safe work practices.

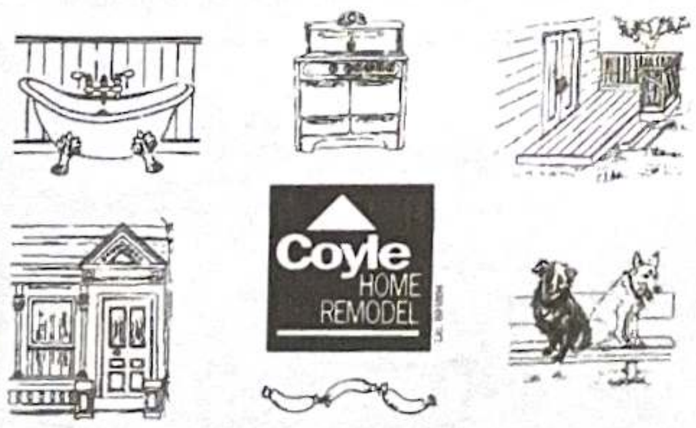
Non-housing sources of lead include some imported products such as some toys, jewelry, dishes and pots, makeup, ayurvedic remedies, and brightly colored spices like turmeric and chili powder. (Note: it is illegal to sell lead products in the United States. However, such products have been known to be sold in Oakland's Fruitvale and Chinatown neighborhoods as recently as May 2017.) Additionally, if members of your household work in lead-related occupations such as construction, painting, auto repair, recycling, or gardening, they can unintentionally bring home lead dust on their clothing. They should remove such clothing and shower prior to entering the home.

The Alameda County Healthy Homes Department lists many resources at https://www.achhd.org:

- Information about how to keep your home lead-safe
- Instructions on how to get your home tested
- Referrals for hiring a lead-safe contractor
- State and federal lead abatement regulations.



At left: Indications of the possible presence of lead paint damage may show up as cracking and peeling paint. Find out about remediation and more information and support available from the Community Development Agency – Alameda County – ACGOV.org. *Material courtesy of Larry Brooks, Director, Alameda County Healthy Homes Department.*



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Land Use Cmte.

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Community Enhancements from the College Avenue Safeway Project

When the College Avenue Safeway Project was given final approval three and a half years ago, RCPC and two other local neighborhood organizations reached a settlement agreement with Safeway to address neighborhood impacts from the project. The settlement agreement included $300,000 to fund neighborhood "enhancements." When Safeway was later found to have violated one of the settlement agreement provisions, the settlement of that dispute provided an additional $100,000 in funding.

The settlement allowed only a limited time for the settlement funds to be used, and the deadline – January 2020 – is fast approaching. With that in mind, the Committee discussed possible uses for the funds. Those possible uses included:

- Further traffic calming measures to mitigate cut-through traffic on Colby Street
- Improvements to the signals at Safeway's Claremont Avenue loading dock
- Perhaps purchase of part of the "point" of the parcel located catty-corner to Safeway across the College/Claremont intersection for a public "pocket park."

If you have ideas for the use of these funds, you can communicate them to the Committee via email at landuse@rockridge.org, or via U.S. mail to RCPC Land Use Committee, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611.

FROG Park Swings and More+ Project Construction Starting Soon

Installation of new park features on the corner of Hudson and Claremont – next to Hardy Dog Park – will begin this summer and is estimated to take three to four months to complete. As early as mid June, you may see signs posted at the park; fenced barriers going up to secure the site; and contractor and city staff with equipment at FROG, all in preparation for construction. We should expect wiggle room, per the city project managers, but the project is finally in process.

You may recall the announcement in The Rockridge News several months ago that we had obtained the required approvals from city, state and county entities (including Caltrans Encroachment Permit, City of Oakland ADA, Trees and Parks Commission, and Alameda Flood Control) and our next steps were to find a contractor.

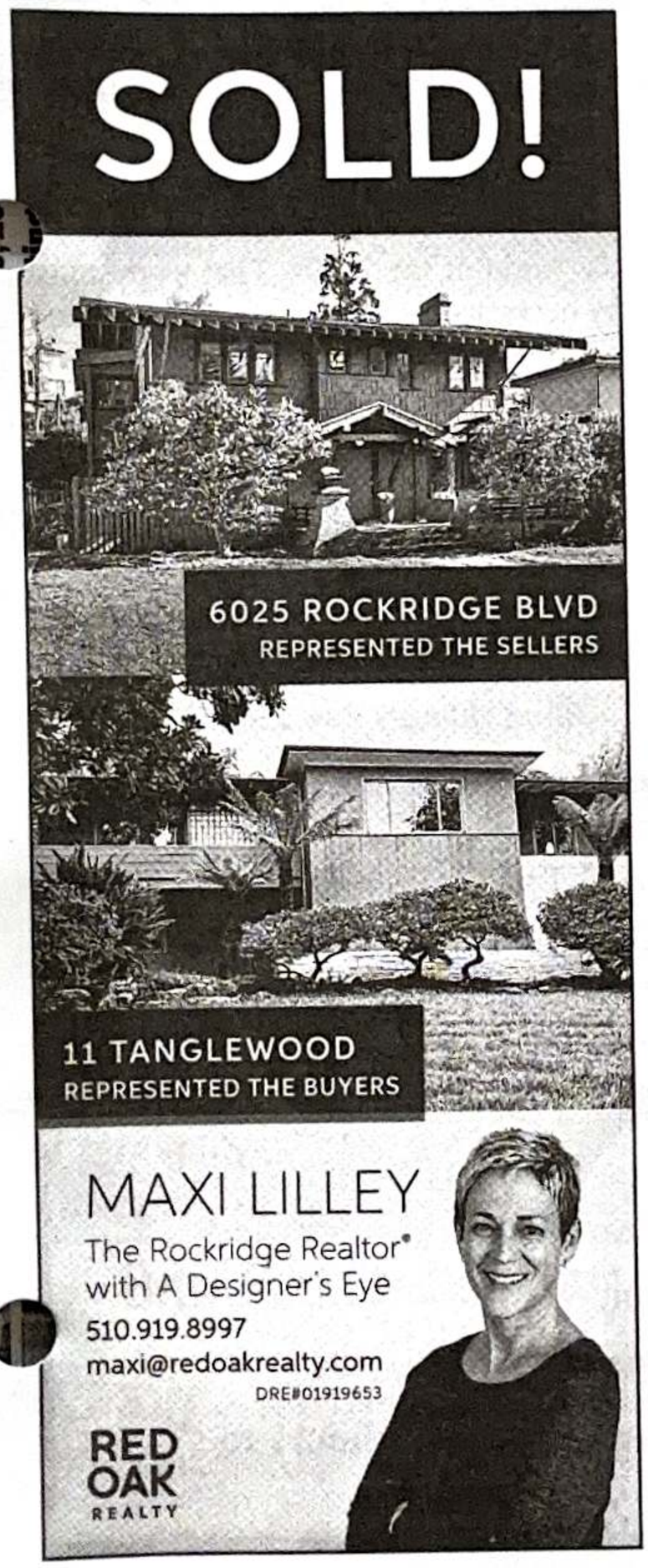
The city put the project out to bid in early March and requested expedited responses for bid proposals. Two contractors were identified (one for equipment installation and the other for the new poured-in-place rubber surfacing); negotiations ensued and approved contract agreements are now in place.

The City notified Hardy/FROG Park neighbors that construction would begin and provided start date, and contacts.

This project has been a long haul, and we are excited to announce it's happening. Feel free to email chair@frogpark.org or visit frogpark.org if you have questions.

— Carol Behr, FROG Chair
(Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt) carol@urbehr.com

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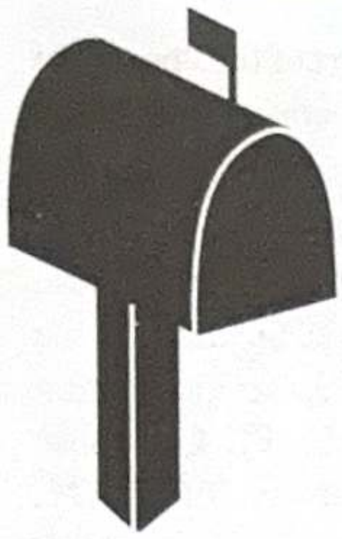
Competition Drives Price in May

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
5/14/2019	4	2.5	6025 Rockridge Blvd	$2,395,000	$2,395,000	19	$2,372,500
5/14/2019	1	1	475 Mcauley St	$550,000	$550,000	21	$550,000
5/16/2019	3	3	465 57Th St	$995,000	$995,000	16	$1,450,000
5/16/2019	3	2.5	6602 Chabot Rd	$1,649,000	$1,649,000	16	$2,200,000
5/17/2019	3	2	5833 Ayala Ave	$979,000	$979,000	7	$1,325,000
5/21/2019	3	1	5427 Boyd Ave	$1,095,000	$1,095,000	12	$1,707,000

Homes sold in May closed 25% over the asking price on average.

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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.

Note: Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity at the editor's discretion, and without notice to the writer. Views expressed in any letter are the writer's own, and may not necessarily be shared by the editor or by RCPC.

SB50 Article Frustrating, Disappointing

Editor:

I read Mr. Gabel's article about SB50 in the May 2019 issue of The Rockridge News with disappointment and frustration. The article is written from a place of concern for Rockridge, but also from the context of fearing change. It's this sense of fear that makes me disappointed and frustrated.

We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Ample statistics show how severe the crisis is. The canary in the coal mine is the fact that population growth in California has virtually stopped. I know many younger people who have left California because of the lack of affordable housing. We need a younger generation staying in California to have any hope of continuing the dream that makes this state and the Bay Area incredible places to live.

The answer to a shortage is to increase supply. A smart component to increasing our housing supply is to build near transportation centers. We need to work together to solve this crisis, not pan solutions that increase housing as change that will destroy neighborhoods. Rockridge will change, as it must. Keeping it a neighborhood of predominantly single-family homes is not tenable nor is it the only way for a neighborhood to thrive. We are privileged to live in an urban area, near transit, minutes from downtown Oakland, San Francisco and the East Bay parks. It's shortsighted thinking to want to limit this privilege to the chosen few lucky enough to live here now.

The Bay Area has been good to me the 39 years I have lived here. I want the next generation to benefit from the quality of life Rockridge and the greater Bay Area offer. Let's stop fighting change and embrace it, roll up our sleeves and make it the change that transforms Rockridge and other neighborhoods like ours into thriving, affordable urban centers.

— Gary Barg

SB50: An Alternate Perspective

Editor:

The May 2019 Issue of The Rockridge News featured criticism of California Senate Bill 50. I would like to offer an alternate perspective, and voice my support for it as a 25-year resident of Rockridge.

Rockridge is, by design, a lovely community. But the city has grown up around us. The population of California has doubl[illegible] since the 1970s, and due to the economi[illegible] engine of the Bay Area, will continue to grow. Housing must be built for young people and migrants to our community, and it is clear that the California model of not building enough, and only building single family homes in ever more distant suburban rings, has run its course. The author cites many great benefits of our low-rise lifestyle. While I would love to retain all these existing amenities, I think it is necessary for all Bay Area residents and Californians to do their part to help address this housing crisis. The consequences of decades of NIMBY under-building are now staring us in the face. It is not livable for young people to pay $3,000 and up for one-bedroom apartments; this condition exists because California has been building housing at a pace well below population growth for a long time.

Fighting to protect a community plan from 40 years ago, developed for a different era, is a mistake. Rockridge needs to look forward, with a plan to create a contemporary community of character that fi[illegible] the world of the 2020s. That world must, by necessity, house more people, and do it near transit. By supporting statewide reform, we can ensure similar communities share in the burden of changing with the times.

There is no other promising effort in progress for fixing California's broken housing policy. The NIMBY trick of espousing a desire for progress while opposing any concrete change that would impact your

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Letters

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neighborhood is played out. I will support SB50. I would be proud to see Rockridge change to reflect the changing landscape of California. I would love to be part of a community that, instead of holding onto the past, set a new vision and plan for the future.

— Josh Hannah

SB50 is Emblematic of State Power Grab Efforts

Editor:

SB50 has been shelved, but Sen. Scott Wiener promises to bring it back in January 2020; it's definitely not over. Consider basic issues arising as a result of SB50; it is the most recent (and the boldest) in a series of increasingly bold power grabs emanating from Sacramento to entirely negate local neighborhood planning power and to destroy single family home neighborhoods in urban centers. Powerful real estate, union and housing advocacy groups successfully negate neighborhood groups by lobbying the State to enact these central planning schemes.

The secondary units fiasco of a few years ago is an example. The State mandates one-size-fits-all local performance standards for housing with laws supposedly required to respond to the State's own projections of an ever-increasing California population. This has led to the ever-increasing loss of local environmental planning control, thereby encroaching on our individual rights to live in an environment with a quality of life of our choosing.

Shall citizens be required by Sacramento to accommodate – on the State's terms – a population of, say, 60 million? Since most citizens live at the local level, quality of life criteria rightfully belong at the local level. Do Scott Wiener and Nancy Skinner truly represent us in these matters? Rember, housing central planning advocates (especially including state senators) are insulated by money and power from personally experiencing the results of their schemes, thus they proceed with impunity.

We must not let this one pass.

— J. W. Yager

Newsletter Topic Stimulated Conversation

Editor:

The May 2019 issue of The Rockridge News stimulated animated conversations among my Rockridge-dwelling friends, and I feel compelled to add our perspective on SB50 – the More Homes Act – because I want our community to know there are residents who support more homes and welcome more members to our beloved neighborhood.

Rockridge faces a common scenario for desirable neighborhoods: the only people who can afford to live here are those rooted in their homes for decades, and new families at the upper spectrum of the income bracket. This means:

- Empty nesters have no smaller options in which to downsize
- New graduates have no starter apartments to stay local
- Service workers, teachers, and others have no "missing middle" housing.

Not by intent, but as a result of limited, homogenous housing, the neighborhood becomes a wealthy, exclusive community.

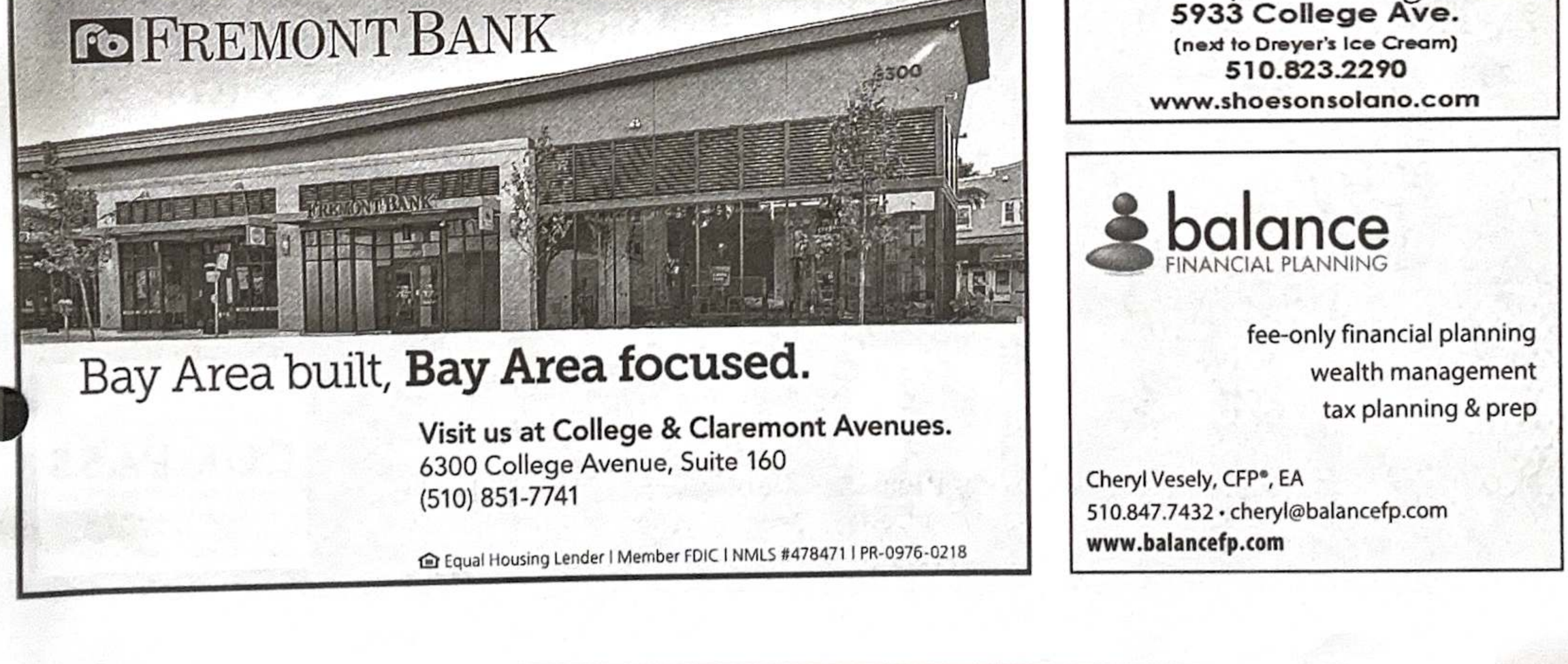
While Rockridge is "mature" in that it has a well-established community and sense of place, that does not mean it is "full." College Avenue illustrates this point:

- Most buildings are single-story, single-use with room to grow
- Existing 35-to-40-foot buildings, such as Market Hall and the Masonic Temple, demonstrate heights are beneficial—not detrimental—to the look and feel of the district.
- Empty storefronts indicate that foot-traffic (correlated to density) is too low
- Numerous "help wanted" signs highlight the lack of worker housing.

I would like to imagine a Rockridge community that welcomes more people, recognizing that more participants bring more energy, ideas, and resorces to aupport the who.eto share.

Yes, growth means change and complication: construction inconvenience; torn-down buildings; unfamiliar faces. I do not relish these growing pains but

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Eyes on Rockridge

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Tales From the Casual Carpool ...

by Judith Doner Berne

'It's just a warm and fuzzy neighborhood thing."

She could have been referring to block parties, seeing the same 90-something woman on her morning walk from the nearby senior apartments, attending the annual pancake breakfast to benefit Claremont Middle School.

But in this case, Rockridge resident Stephanie Bianco was expressing her feelings about the casual carpool, a way of commuting from the East Bay to San Francisco across the Bay Bridge during the morning rush hour – approximately 6-10 a.m.

It gives license to what would have been a single driver and the passengers he or she picks up to take the HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lane. Drive times vary, but the carpool lane can get you from Rockridge to the City in as few as 20-plus minutes. Drop off is generally at Fremont Street near Mission. Most passengers find their way home via mass transit.

Bianco was a regular passenger when she was working in San Francisco as an assistant electronics buyer and still uses it once in a while. The Rockridge stop under the freeway ramp on Hudson Street at Claremont Avenue – marked by a Casual Carpool sign – is a 10-minute walk from her Locksley Avenue house. And if occasionally the line is long or the cars infrequent, the express bus stop and BART station are backups within easy reach. Another pickup spot is on the north side of Claremont, east of College Avenue. Others, listed on various websites by googling "Casual Carpool," can be found throughout Oakland and neighboring towns.

I've heard and read several descriptions, but I like the one that Mina Kim used to introduce a discussion on the casual carpool on a February KQED Forum program: "Casual carpool, a cross between hitchhiking and carpooling, has been moving Bay Area commuters since the 1970s. The phenomenon, which is particularly popular in the East Bay, has no official rules or guidebook so passengers and drivers negotiate things like radio stations and bridge tolls among themselves."

Laurie Dornbrand, who has been picking up passengers at one or the other of the Rockridge stops for years, told me that the first incarnation of the casual carpool began during the AC Transit strike in the early 1970s. "People would pull up to bus stops and ask if the people waiting there needed a ride. It was very altruistic."

"I've always been the driver," said Dornbrand, who at one time was going to her gynecological practice in San Francisco three times a week. "I still do it whenever I go into the city. Over the years, maybe three times I didn't do it."

"I talk to my riders," Dornbrand said. That's how she learned of two married couples who met through the casual car pool. In one instance, a woman was new to the carpool, and the other passenger suggested lunch together to further explain how it works. In the second instance, one of her passengers told her: "This is how I met my husband. He picked me up."

"You meet people you wouldn't meet in your regular life," said Suzan Ormandy, who frequented the same Hudson/Claremont stop as a driver for the 25 years she lived in Rockridge. "People were pleasant and nice and had a good spirit about it. I found it kind of rollicking and fun."

But Ormandy, who was driving to her San Francisco teaching job in her two-door 1968 Volkswagen Beetle at the time, did experience that "some people had a bit of snobbishness about the cars. The protocol is that the car drives up and the next one or more in line (depending on the car size) gets in. There were definitely regulars. A lot of people didn't want to be in my car. There was a pretty stout, older woman. Sometimes she would get stuck."

From what I was told and if you look up casual carpool etiquette on line, most riders follow the driver's lead as to whether to engage in conversation. Generally, the radio is tuned to an NPR station. Some passengers offer $1 to defray the current $3 Bay Bridge carpool lane toll (it used to be

Casual Carpool, page 9

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Casual Carpool

from page 8

free); others don't.

To verify that, I stood in the casual carpool queue for the first time shortly before 9 a.m. on a windy April morning. After a short wait, Ledid Ago pulled up, and Maria Morales and I hopped into his car – also my first time in a Tesla. Both were happy to talk about their casual carpool experiences.

Ago, who lives in Montclair and works in the tech industry, regularly picks up passengers after dropping his son off at a Rockridge pre-school. "At the Lakeshore stop, everyone does it," he said, addressing any monetary exchange between passenger and driver. "But in Rockridge, no." He enjoys that: "You meet a lot of people who come from different backgrounds. The Bay Area is so mixed."

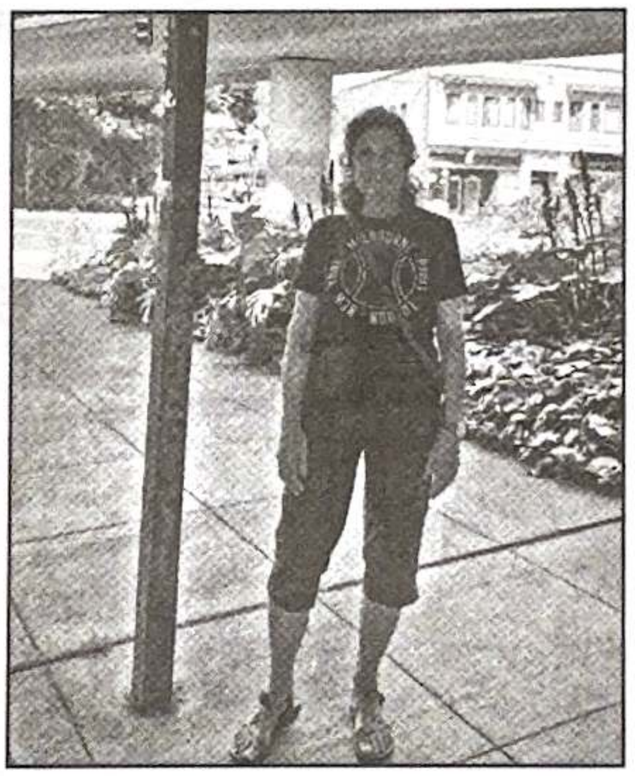
Morales relies on the casual car pool to reach the financial district every weekday except Friday when she works from home. "I love it," she told us. "When I tell my friends from other cities, they can't believe 'You get into a car with a stranger.' I tell them, we all do. We're the lucky ones."

But back to Bianco, who suggested this story. "What I love about it," she said, "is you're doing your best to cut down on traffic and the exhilaration of speeding past the other cars. Once, I had a bad driver, and once the inside of the car was yucky (dog hair is a complaint)." And once, in 2013, three hooded thieves targeted people waiting in the Hudson/Claremont car pool line – and were quickly caught. Still, Bianco said, "Even standing there I really feel safe."



Above: Casual Carpool riders join their driver-to-be for the morning trip to San Francisco.

As did I. And all the positives I had been told held true, with one exception. Just after Ago pronounced: "There's no traffic today," sadly, a fatal accident occurred on the bridge. All lanes came to a stop, more often than a crawl. Instead of the 20 minutes that had been heralded to reach San Francisco, it took an hour and a half. "This hasn't happened in years," Ago said and Morales confirmed. Both missed their 9:30 a.m. meetings.



"I love the feeling once you get through the merge and you just fly by the other cars 99 percent of the time," says Rockridge resident Stephanie Bianco, left, about the casual car pool.

(If you have comments on this column or have a story idea about your Rockridge neighbor, neighborhood – or yourself – please email judyberne@att.net.)

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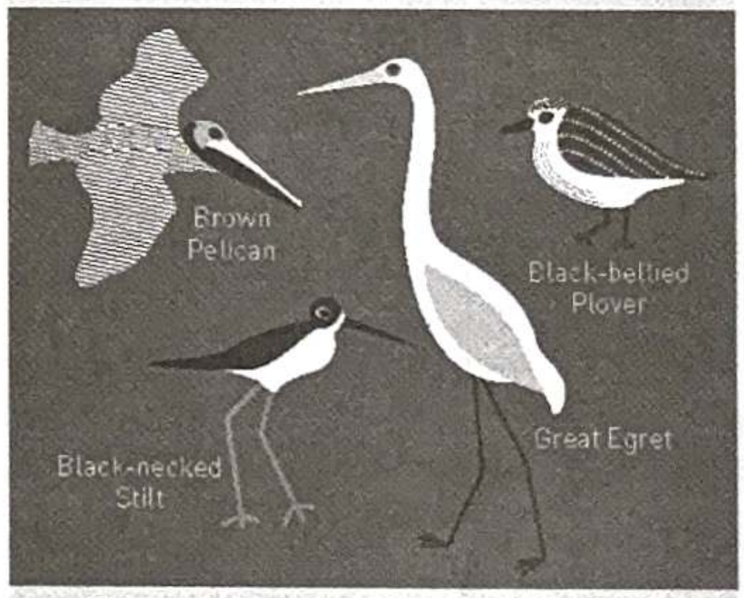
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No Summer Break for The Rockridge News Until August

We still have an essential route on Broadway Terrace to offer to a Rockridge volunteer who lives nearby. We also have a new route on the lovely street of Locksley. Many thanks to Morgan Rouquette who has been delivering The Rockridge News to her Locksley block since 2016. She is stepping down and we need someone to replace her. Will that be you?

- **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 18E: Block Captain** needed to deliver to 5300 Locksley between Hudson and Clifton.

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 and your bundle will be delivered to your doorstep. Call 510/547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer

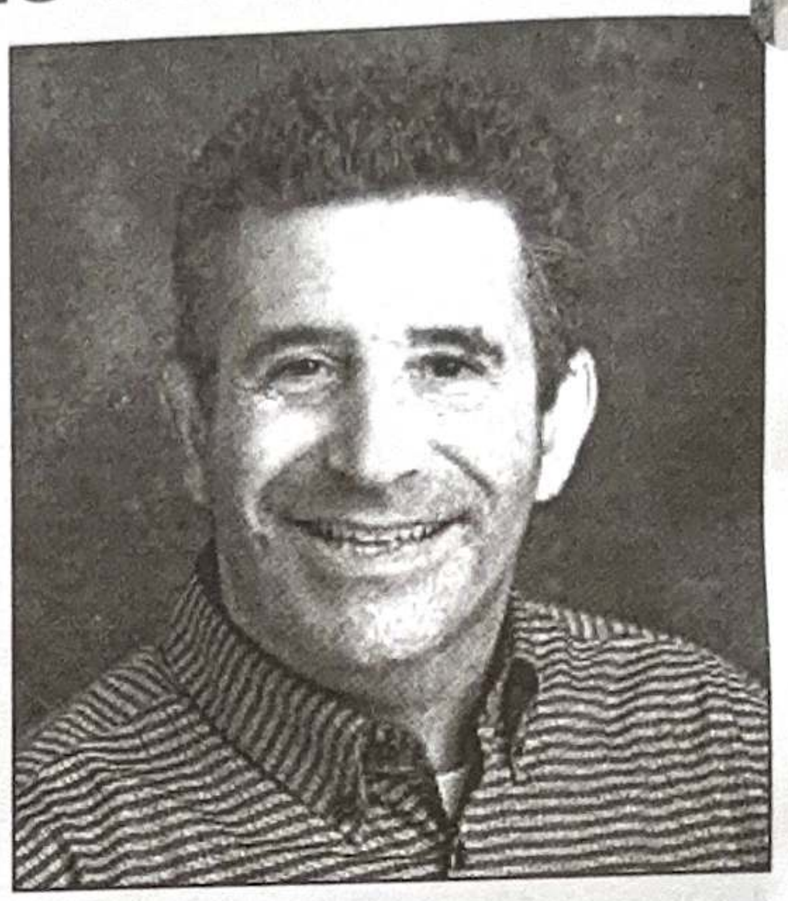
Claremont Middle School News

OUSD Names Principal Mayer Middle School Principal of The Year

Claremont Middle School principal Jonathan Mayer has been recognized at an event held by the Oakland Unified School District as Middle School Principal of the Year.

"I would like to thank Claremont parents, guardians and all of the community for the support you have shown me over the past five years," Principal Mayer said. "I couldn't do this without you – the PTA's financial and organizational support; the great parents and guardians volunteering with field trips, in the library and in classrooms; and the support of the community. You have been there with me every step of the way.

"I'd like to give a shout out to our incredible staff," he said. "Fortunately, the majority will be back next school year so we can continue to build on our success."



Thank you Principal Mayer for all of your hard work. We know you put your heart and soul into Claremont. Go Knights!™

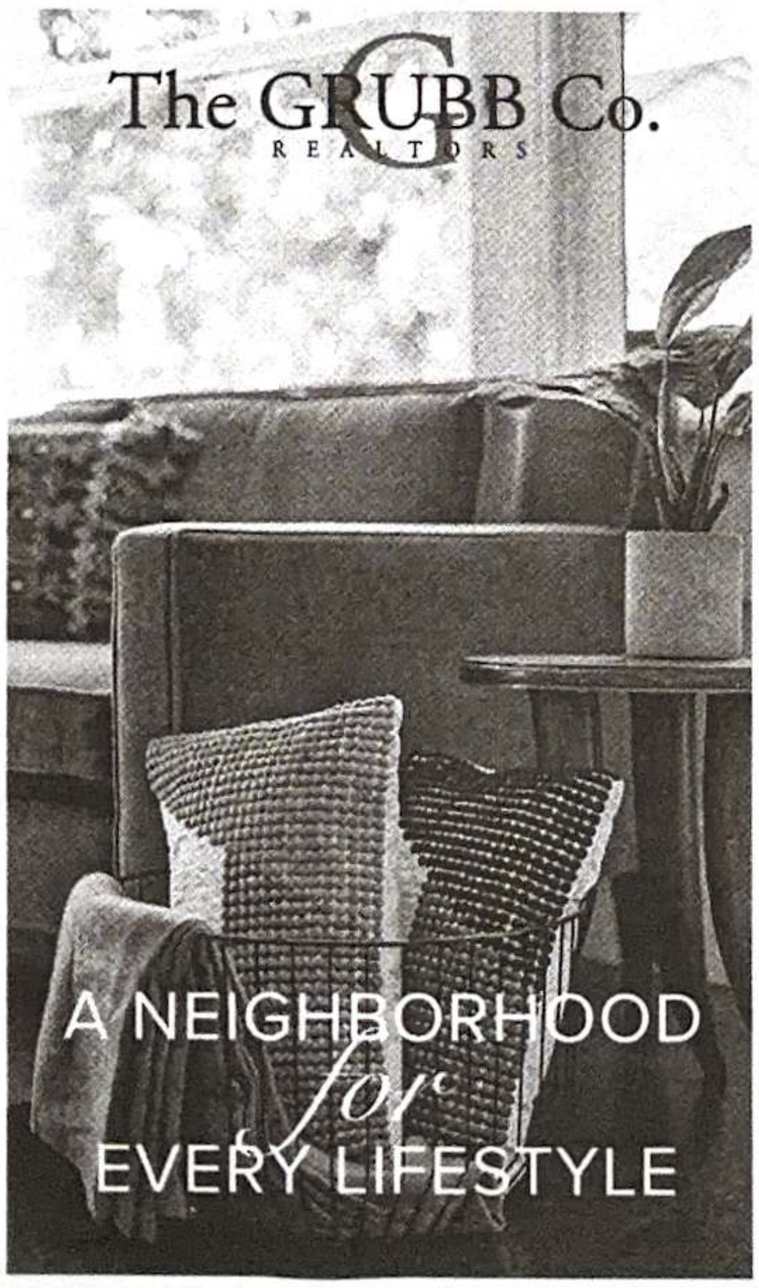
Find more news about Claremont and its programs at: https://www.claremontms.org

Unsure whether you can retire? Let's talk.



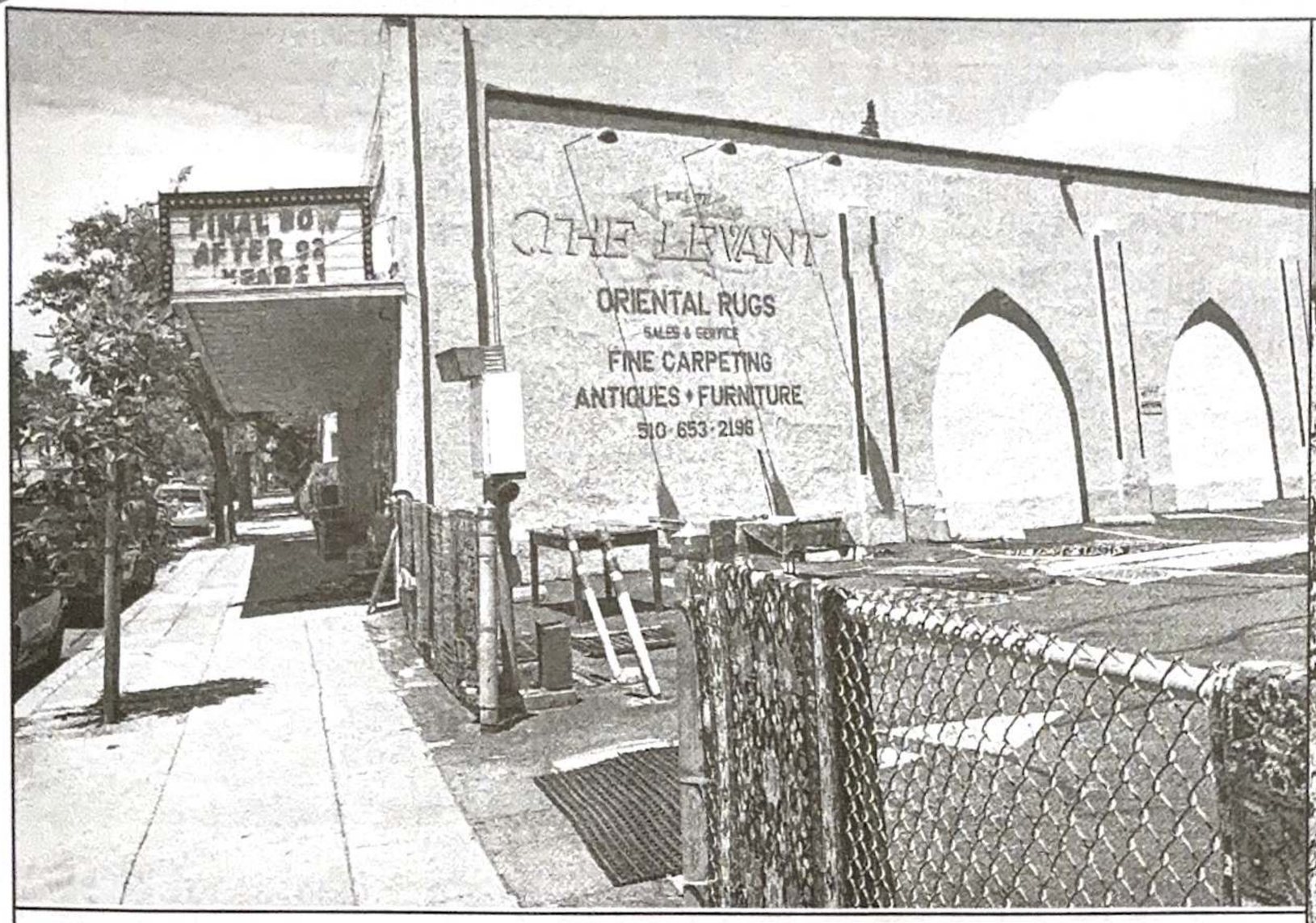
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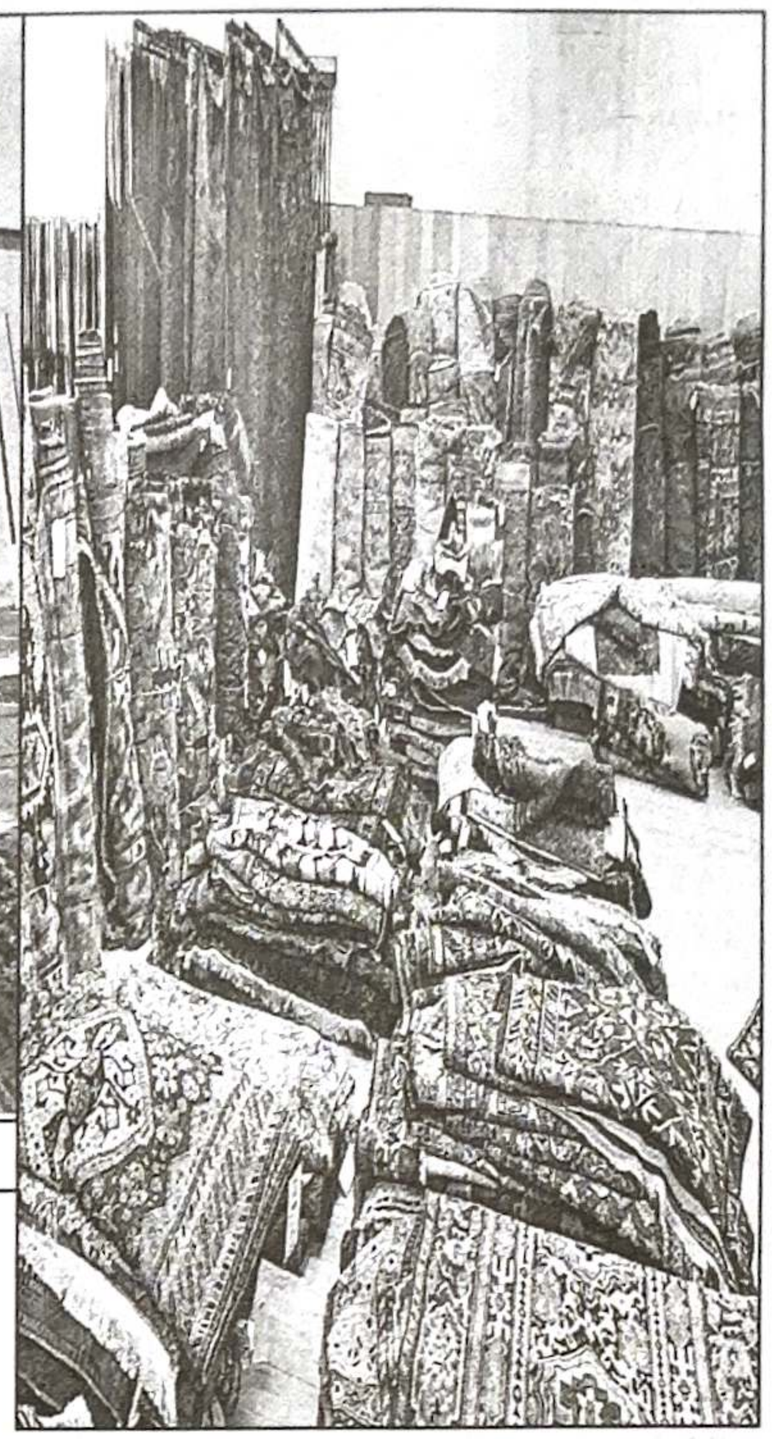
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Levant Company Rug Sales Precede Ultimate Site Changes





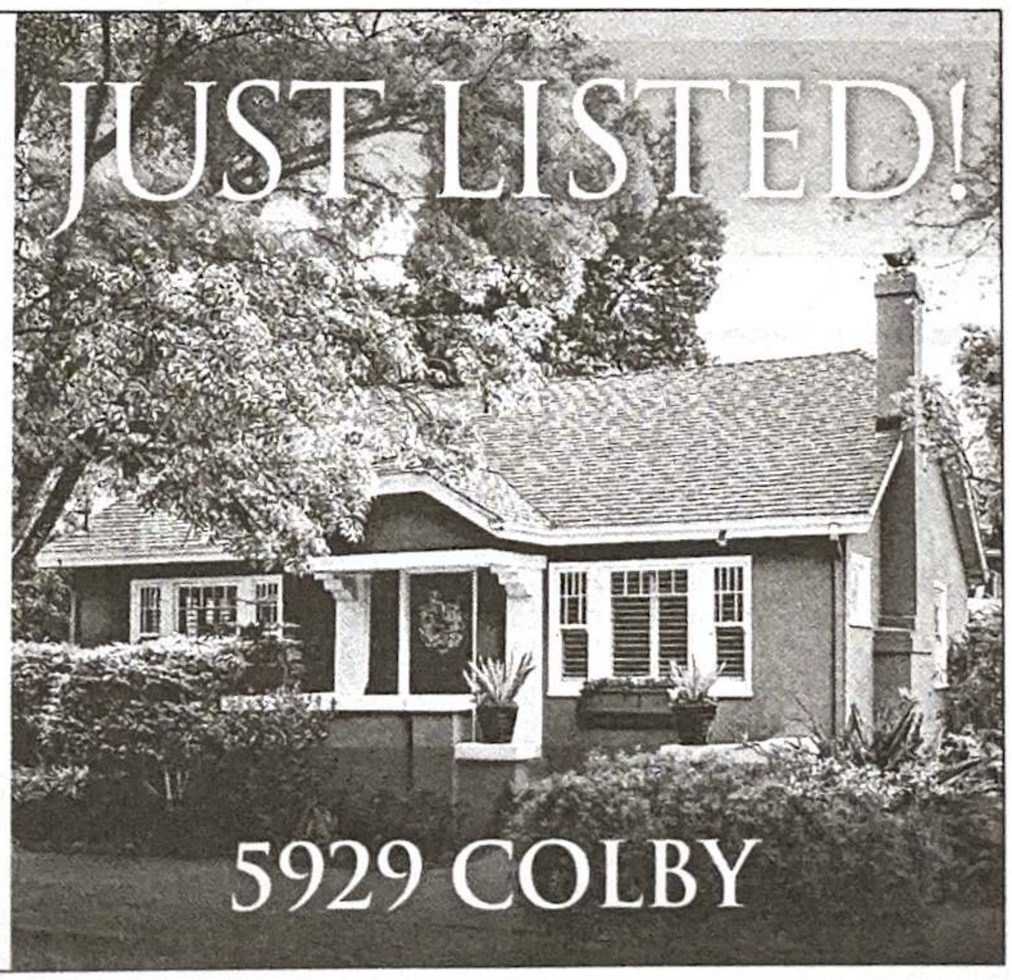
In approximately two years, the venerable Levant Oriental Rug Company and its adjacent parking lot will be razed and re-fashioned into apartments or condos. Until then, its doors at 5450 College Avenue have re-opened, and the 1,500 carpets and rugs that Peter Pap purchased from the estate of the late owner Albert Keshishian, who died in 2018 at the age of 91, are up for sale. "We have sold to 150 different individuals in a month-and-a-half," Pap, a specialist in antique rugs who can be seen on the PBS Antiques Road Show, said. "That is extraordinary." Watch for a more complete story in a future Rockridge News.

/Judith Doner Berne/story and photos.

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Walking in Rockridge

from page 2

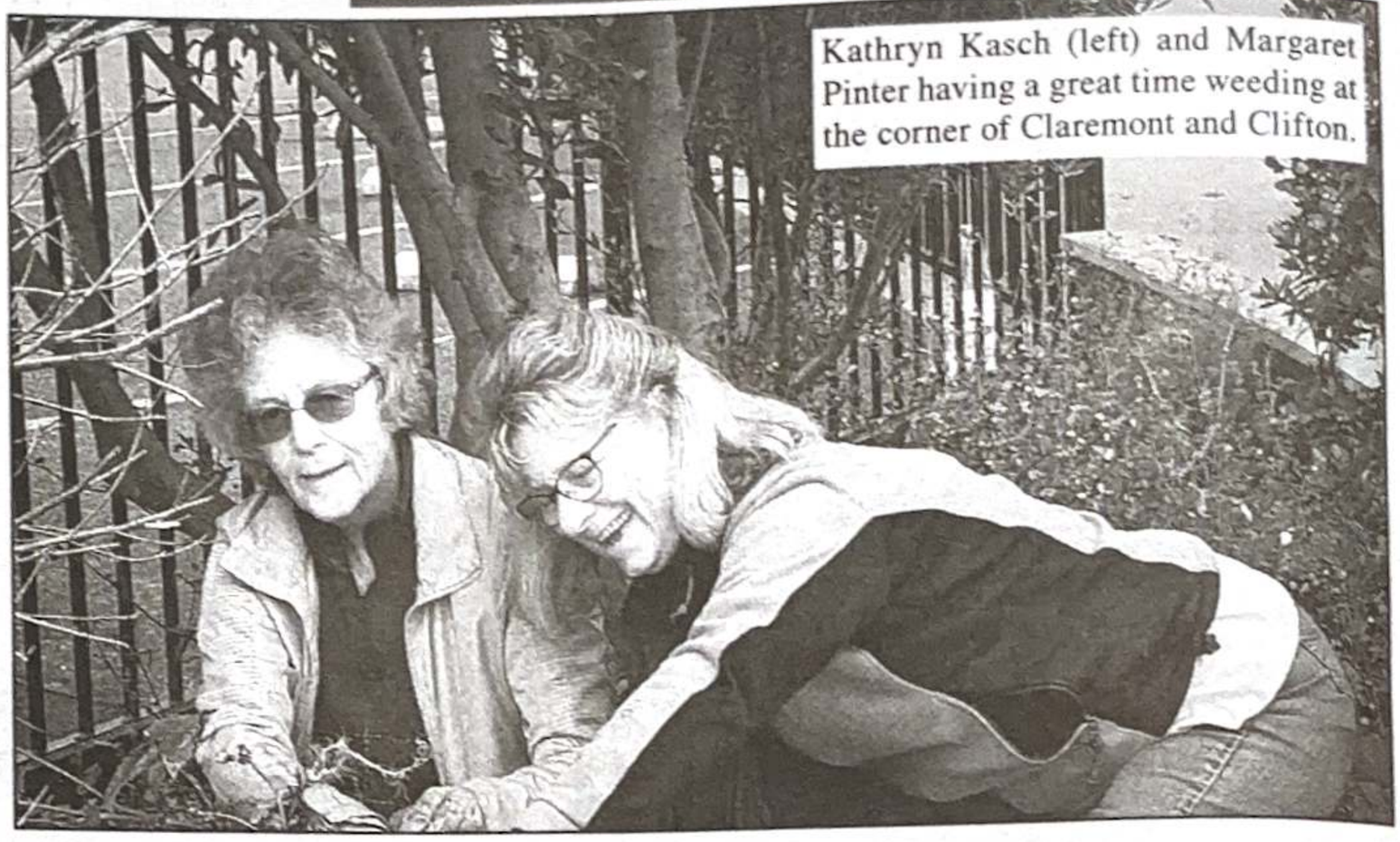
coast through stop signs, and when searching for a parking place on or near College Avenue can tend to be distracted and less attentive to walkers.

Another not-so-good factor is the condition of many of the sidewalks. The street trees are beautiful and add graciousness to the neighborhood, but tree roots and sidewalks can be a hazardous combination. In recent years, expanding the tree wells has helped, but the work hasn't reached every tree yet. In some places, the sidewalks are very old, with dates on contractors' stamps as early as 1908, and many of them are beginning to break apart. Tripping hazards abound, and one needs to be cautious when walking around parts of Rockridge.

On balance, though, this is a community that deserves those high Walk Scores. It is very possible to live here and drive only sparingly.

Although this article has focused on how well Rockridge ticks the Walk Score boxes, there are many more intangible benefits: exercise, meeting neighbors, supporting local businesses, and yes, contributing fewer greenhouse gases to the warming of the planet.

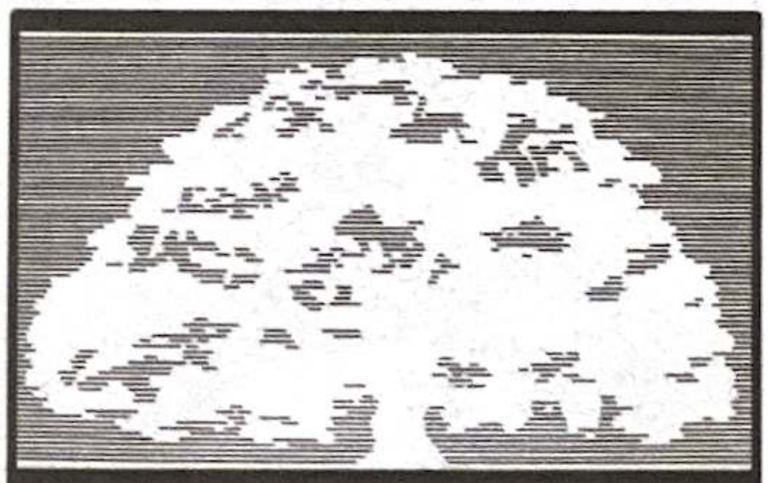
Scenic Streets of Oakland



Kathryn Kasch (left) and Margaret Pinter having a great time weeding at the corner of Claremont and Clifton.

Scenic Streets Weeding Event Rained Out

With heavy rains predicted, it was necessary to cancel the Scenic Streets of Oakland's morning weeding event on Saturday May 18. Despite the cancelation, when the rain failed to materialize, a few people showed up and were able to get some weeding done. Our thanks to Margaret, Kathryn, and Sallie for wrestling with the weeds encroaching on the street plantings along Claremont Avenue. Weeping weeders compliant with the cancel edict will be able to find solace by participating when we reschedule the event for later this summer. If you want to be sure to be notified, please send an email to lee.scenicstreetsoakland@gmail.com. / ***Robert Firehock, article and photo.***



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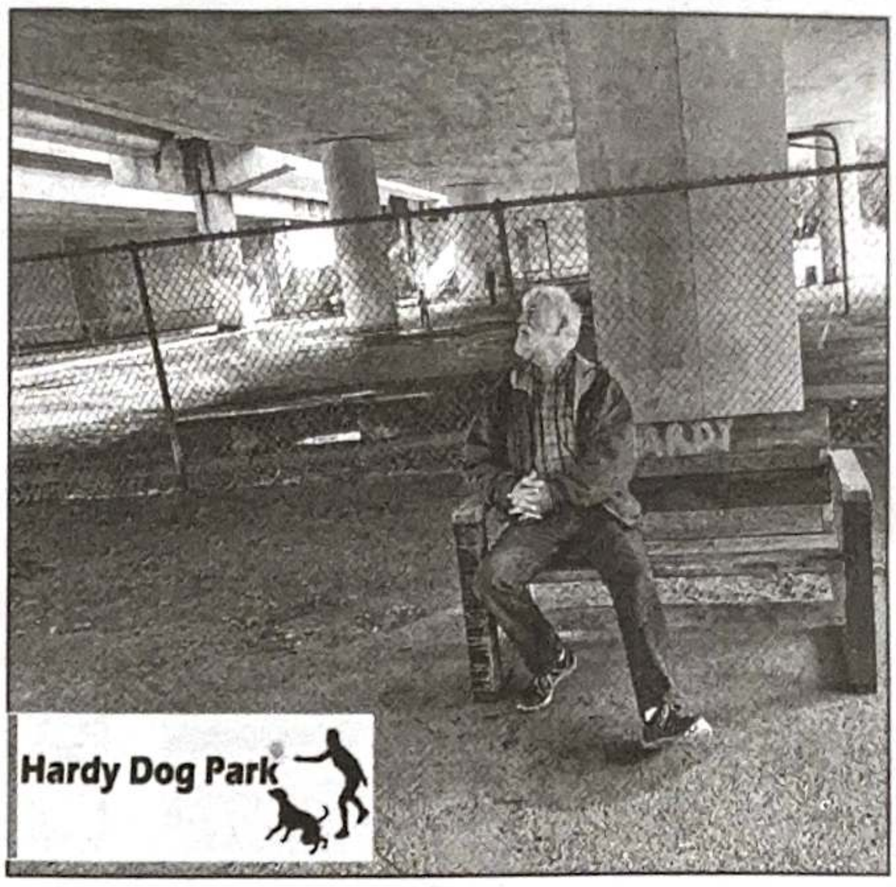
Hardy Dog Park Seeks Volunteers

The Hardy Dog Park group has had a busy spring building and installing two new benches, maintaining the water station, and keeping the park clean. We need volunteers to join us for monthly clean-ups the first Saturday of every month from 9-10:30. Just come on by to pitch in. If you can't join on Saturday mornings, help keep our park looking great by refilling the bag dispensers or picking up trash or dog poop. The park is maintained solely by our awesome volunteers. The City of Oakland does no maintenance on our little park.

We also need volunteers to help with park renovation plans. Come on by and see how you can help.

Newspaper bag donations and tennis ball donations are always welcome in the bins at each entrance to the park at the corner of Hudson and Claremont.

Come check out our comfortable new benches, shown at right being use-tested by a Hardy Dog Park Volunteer, on your next visit. (On line: HardyDogPark@yahoo.com)



Kitchen Tour Support

from page 1

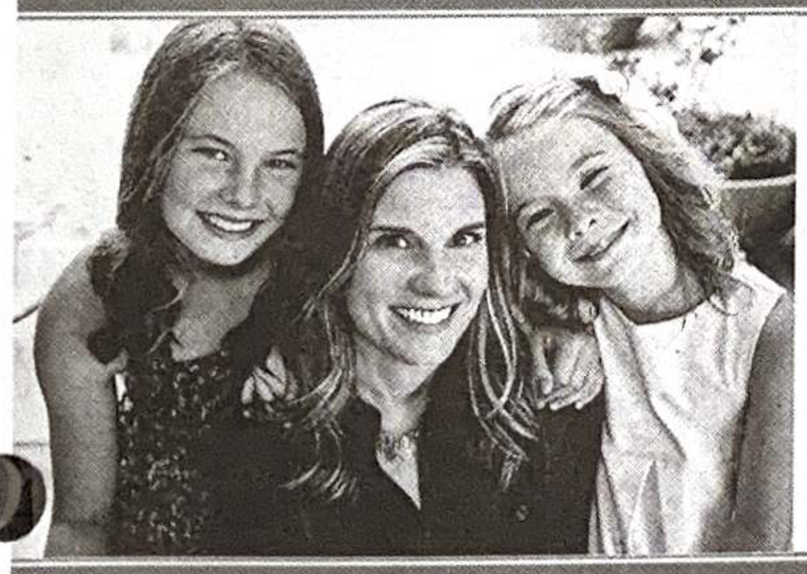
should probably take no more than 2-3 hours per week for about 5 weeks. (Starting in mid-July, we reach out to publications with long-lead calendars and submission dates, and most of the media PR is done by the end of August.) There is plenty of collateral from previous Tours, so much can be adapted for 2019.

Docents: These are the volunteers who make the Tour the enjoyable experience that it is. Docents at each Tour house guide guests to the kitchen and answer questions, give directions to other houses, and generally keep everything running smoothly. Docents get tours of several of the houses during orientation ahead of September 22, and on the event day get free entry to the other Tour houses when not on their scheduled shift.

To volunteer, please get in touch with **the Tour Committee** at kitchentour@rockridge.org.



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Letters

from page 7

they are complications that residents have faced every decade as Rockridge has evolved. I believe we can overcome them and continue to grow and improve, as every dynamic place does.

— Julie Witherspoon

Correction to "Stop SB50" Published in the May, 2019 Issue of Rockridge News

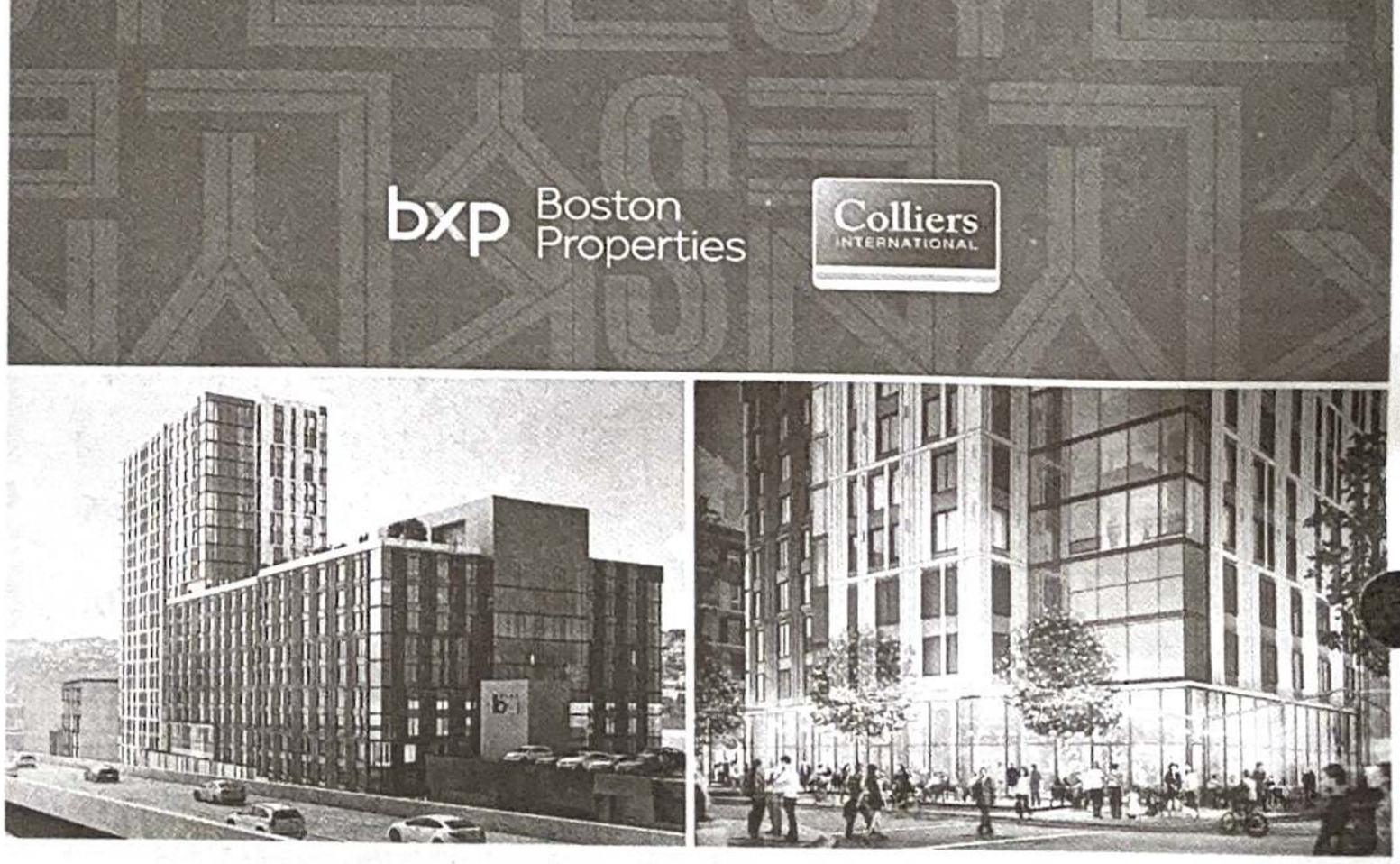
by Jon Gabel, past RCPC Board member, April, 2008 – April, 2012

I am the author of "Stop SB50" published in the May, 2019 issue of The Rockridge News. I was not informed until after it was printed that the editor made changes to the piece without my knowledge or permission – but with my name still on the byline. This was a serious breach of journalistic ethics. It had the effect of weakening my message about the seriousness of the threat of SB50; and it falsely represented my position on this issue. The original wording of the changed material follows:

1) *(Paragraph 1 of original):* "SB50 would destroy Rockridge…with 3-4 story apartment houses almost fully covering each lot". 2) *(Paragraph 4 of original):* A quote from Housinghumanright.org should have read: "A Housing Is A Human Right investigation has found that the real estate industry, including the California Apartment Association and notorious landlord Russell Flynn, have shelled out $153,816 to California State Senator Scott Wiener's 2020 re-election campaign, according to state records. Wiener is the key sponsor of SB50".

3) The length of time I have lived in Rockridge was changed from 44 years to 43 years.

I hope that those who read the original piece know that I am strongly opposed to SB50. I hope RCPC will move quickly both to organize this community in opposition and to work with other like-minded municipalities in the future to defeat this bill.



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 SUMMER EVENTS: all ages welcome.

****Summer Reading Program on now: pick up free A's Tickets**, Reading Log and calendar of events; or sign up online at oaklandLibrary.org/summer. Finish by August 3rd to get all prizes for reading.

- **Chess Club:** learn the basics; Instruction and chess sets provided. Best for ages 8 to 12. Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30pm in June and July.
- **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 Thurs, 3:30-4:30pm in June, July and August.
- **Build, Make, Play, Crafts & Projects:** Every Thursday, 3:30-4:30pm. June 6 to August 1. (Crafts list posted in the library, includes activities for ages 5 to 12.)
- **Emily Butterfly**: Stories & songs (best for ages 0 to 6). Thurs, June 27, 10:30am.

TUESDAY EVENINGS at 6:30pm:

- **Moonshine Puppet Theater**: June 11. Classic humorous stories.
- **Soul Soup with Amber Hines**: June 18. Drumming, dancing, singing, playing.
- **Mike the Magician:** June 25. Astonishing & silly magic show.
- **Bubble Lady**: July 9. Experience every imaginable bubble.

FOR TEENS

*****Sign up for 2019 Summer Reading (for ages 12-19):** Get a free TeenZone notebook. Collect stamps to get a free TeenZone backpack, raffle tickets, and more. Or register online at oaklandlibrary.org/services/cards-and-visiting/summer-opl/teen-summer-passport.

*****Teen Volunteers ages 11-16:** to help with the Summer Reading Program and other routine library tasks. Email Erica at esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org, or stop by the Children's Reference Desk to sign up for an orientation.

- **Terrarium:** June 4th, 4pm: Work with an artist from the Oakland-based Rock Paper Scissors Collective.
- **Emoji Pouch**: June 26th, 3pm: Make a no-sew felt emoji pouch to hold your cash or other treasures.

FOR ADULTS

*****Adult Summer Reading Program: on now**. Read or complete activities to win prizes. Play online or at the library.

- **Adult Craft Series**; Felt flower pins: learn to hand-sew gorgeous felt orchid pins. All materials & instruction provided. Sat., 6/22, 2 – 4pm. Sign-up in advance at library or call 597-5017.
- **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.

UPSTAIRS ART GALLERY:

June: **Oakland Art Association**: Small format paintings, photos, prints, etchings/more.

July: **Aparna Ewing:** Quilts

LOBBY DISPLAY CASE:

June: **Pride Month**

LIBRARY HOURS:

Tues, Wed: 12:30 to 8pm.

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

Fri, 12 to 5:30pm.

Closed: Sun; also, Thurs, July 4.

Be a Volunteer Story Reader in Oakland Preschools

Want to foster a life-long love of reading in Oakland's children? Volunteers with Oakland Public Library's Books for Wider Horizons program do weekly storytimes in Oakland preschools. **Plan now: Training for volunteers will take place at Rockridge Library in September**. For more information, go to www.oaklandlibrary.org/bwh.

East Bay Booksellers Book/ Poetry Readings

FREE and open to the public.

- Sat, 6/15, 7pm. **Susan Slusser** and **Ken Korach**: *If These Walls Could Talk: Stories from the Oakland A's Dugout, Locker Room and Press Box.*

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

Wisteria Ways House Concert

MaMuse and the **Fula Brothers**: Sat, July 6, 3pm (house opens 2:30pm). The union of two bands; music of West Africa and American folk and gospel traditions. **Sarah Nutting, Karisha Longaker, Walter Strauss, Mamadou Sidibe** and **Colin Douglas**. Hear examples at **www.fulabrothers.com** and http://www.mamuse.org/music. **Outside venue; 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 510-698-2458.

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.

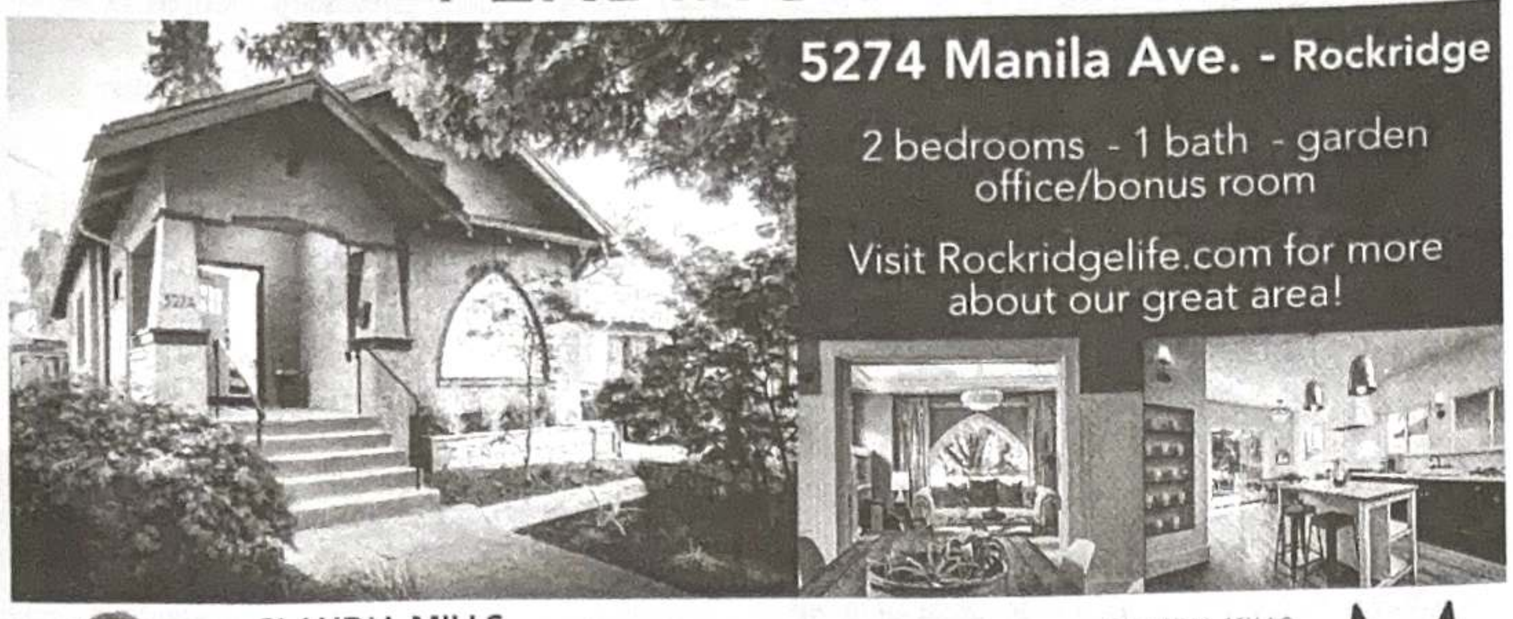
- **Trip to Alameda County Fair:** Food & tastings, crafts, wine & brew garden, rides, animal exhibits & petting zoo, the famous All-Alaskan Racing Pigs and more. Friday, June 21; 10am departure, return 3:30pm. $5.00. Call 597-5085 for more information. **Make reservations early: advance reservation required.**

Seniors age 55+ join for $12 annual dues. Provides discounts, other benefits, and a subscription to "The North Oakland Senior Times" with 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.

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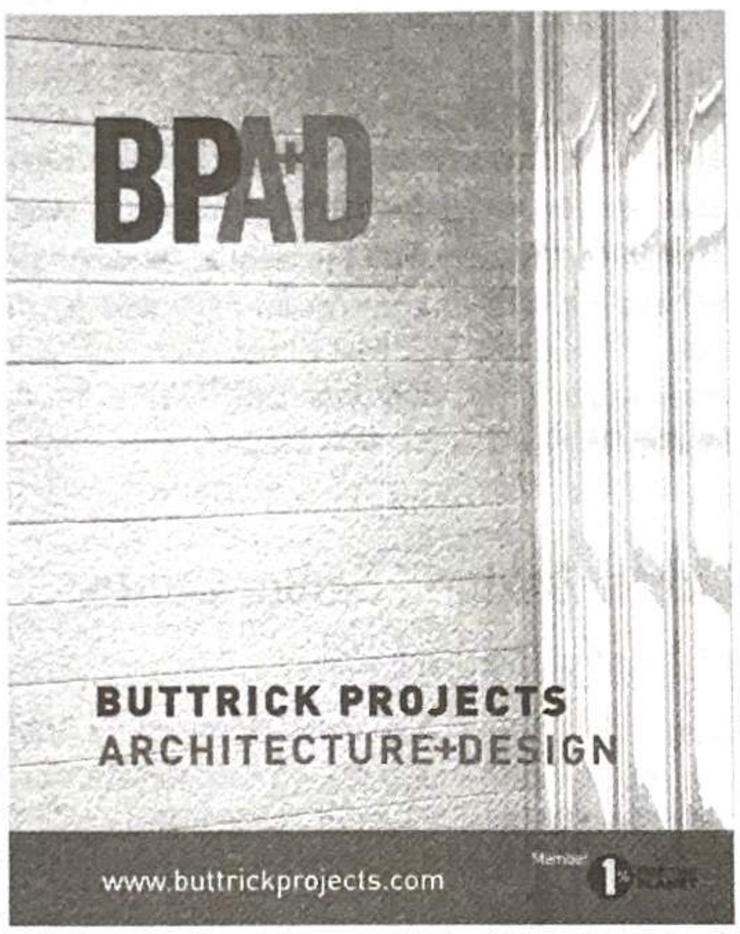
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