THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
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CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

City to Purchase CCA Student Dorm for Affordable Housing

— By Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

With the receipt of a $10 million grant from the State of California's newly launched Homekey program, the City of Oakland is now primed to move ahead with the purchase of the former Clifton Hall dormitory from the California College of Arts (CCA) which is moving its campus to San Francisco. Located at the corner of Clifton and Broadway, the building received an architectural award in 2005, the year it was built.

Initially, the dormitory building was part of a housing redevelopment package for the entire CCA Oakland campus, including a 19-story

Clifton Hall Dorm, see page 4



Clifton Dorm will focus on transitional housing for families and housing for extremely low-income elderly.

RCPC Election Fills Board Positions

Rockridge residents cast their ballots in the Annual Meeting/Election for positions on its board of directors in September, the meeting had been rescheduled from April 2020 due to the pandemic. Candidate statements appeared in *The Rockridge News* and online at rockridge.org. Candidates better defined their goals and answered audience questions in a moderated Zoom Candidates' Forum.

Voting was conducted during the September 24 meeting in the BART parking lot at Shafter/Forest and continued on September 26 in the Rockridge Library parking lot.

RCPC Election, see page 3

Park District Looks Deeply into Temescal's Troubled Waters

— By Skip Fogarty

Lake Temescal is a crown jewel among our East Bay Regional Parks. One of the system's three original parks, which opened in 1936, Temescal provides recreational opportunities rarely found in an urban setting.

Generations have sunned themselves on the beach, learned to swim, trained as lifeguards, and fished for trout in Temescal's shimmering waters. But the lake, technically a reservoir, has fallen on hard times.

Blooms of blue-green algae, called cyanobacteria, have become a perennial event, forcing frequent closures of the beach area and swimming activities, and the Park District is now studying the feasibility of a comprehensive restoration effort.

The lake was first formed when

Lake Temescal, see page 14



This 19th-century painting shows Temescal Park in its pristine state. After the park was christened in 1936, the Works Progress Administration erected a stone beach house on the left bank. When the painting was made, the artist and his family were camping in a white tent seen in the background.

J.H.E. Partington, Lake Temescal, 1890. Oil on canvas, 20 x 30 in. Oakland Museum of California. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Logan.

Stay Tuned for the Community Grants Program

— By Robin McDonnell, RCPC Board Member

RCPC is preparing to solicit projects for the competitive Community Grants Program (renamed the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Grants Fund in March 2017). This program allows any resident of Rockridge the opportunity to propose a beautification project for the local neighborhood.

Participants are encouraged to partner with community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, or business groups. Projects can receive up to $750, all of which must be spent within a year of grant award. Additionally, they must supplement the grant with a funding match of at least 20 percent.

Interested? Reach out to neighbors and share your ideas — build pride in our community by working together on a project. Some examples might include programs to clean up litter; murals; or community gardens.

The RCPC will provide more information in the November issue of *The Rockridge News* and at the November Town Hall. Stay tuned. ■

Election 2020: District 1 City Council & School Board Candidate Forum

— By Casey Farmer, RCPC Co-Secretary

Don't miss your chance to hear from local candidates in the upcoming City Council and School Board races. Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will be co-hosting this forum along with The League of Women Voters of Oakland, and the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) on **Thursday, October 8, from 6pm to 8:10pm**.

The meeting will give voters a chance to learn more about each of the candidates before casting their vote, and will provide candidates an opportunity to present their views and answer questions on important issues. **The forum will be online** so attendees can enjoy the discussion from the comfort of their own homes.

This event is nonpartisan, free, and open to the public.


KALB


NGO


WALTON

6-7 pm – Oakland City Council

Candidates:
- Dan Kalb*
- Tri M. Ngo
- Stephanie J. Dominguez Walton

(*Incumbent)

7:10 - 8:10 pm – Oakland School Board

Candidates:
- Austin B. Dannhaus
- Benjamin "Sam" Davis
- Stacy Thomas

To register for the Zoom Forum, visit https://bit.ly/32Pw558. Questions may be submitted in advance to lwvocandidateforums@gmail.com or during the forum via the private chat box.

For more nonpartisan and objective information on local races in the 2020 general election, go to votersedge.org.

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News was founded March 1986 by Don Kinkead, and is published monthly (except August). It 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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Contact the board: chair@rockridge.org
For information: info@rockridge.org

Contacting The Rockridge News

Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in *The Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain? Want to write a letter to the Editor?

Articles and letters submitted for publication should be emailed to the editor. All submissions are limited to 600 words max, and must include the author's name, phone number, email address, and city or neighborhood of residence.

All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and brevity. To submit content, or for reprints of an article, contact: editor@rockridge.org.

Newsletter Subscriptions

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

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Deadline for November issue: **October 22, 2020**

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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.

RCPC Election Fills Board Positions *(continued from front page)*


Casey Farmer


Annette Floystrup


David Garcia


Robin McDonnell


Kirk Peterson


Leonora Sea

Social distancing and cleanliness protocols ensured a safe voting experience.

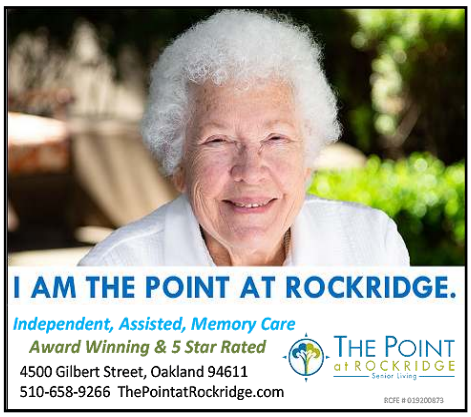
Six candidates were elected to two-year board terms, four of them incumbents and one a former board member. In all, 343 ballots were cast for 13 candidates in this contested election. Two ballots were disqualified for over-voting and seven ballots were provisional.

The final tallies were: Leonora Sea 258; Robin McDonnell 173; Kirk Peterson 165; Annette Floystrup 165; David Garcia 162; Casey Farmer 156; Jennifer McElrath 151; Ken Rich 150; Barbara Dunne 143; Brian Chadwick 115; Diana Mitchell-Chavez 108; Michael Rosen 62; Brett Moyer 56.

Sea was appointed to the RCPC board in 2015, first elected in 2016, and has served as Chair since 2018.

McDonnell, Garcia and Farmer, who have been serving as appointees on the board (2019-20), will be taking seats for the first time as elected directors. Floystrup was a member of the board from 1985 to 1992, and again from 2006 to 2012. Peterson is joining the board for the first time.

Congratulations to the new and returning board members! ■





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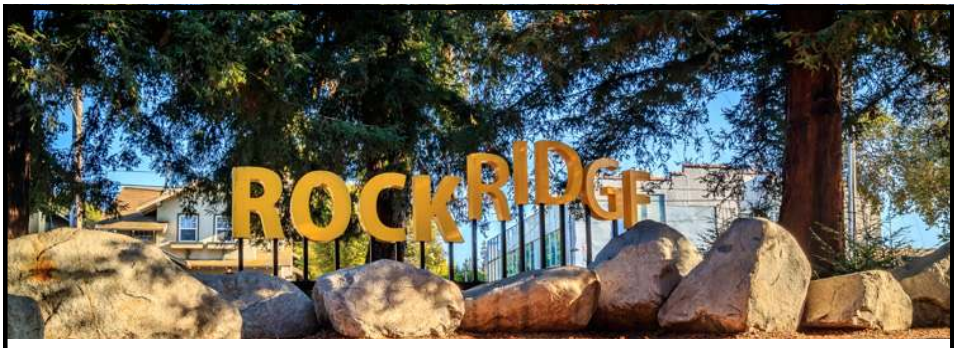
College Avenue to Be Repaved

The City's transportation department, OakDOT, will begin resurfacing College Avenue this October, also delivering on long-overdue pedestrian and bicycle saftey improvements. The process could take a month or longer.

For the portion south of the BART station, the current surface has to be ground down by several inches and the debris hauled away. Then a new asphalt surface will be laid down and packed firm by a steamroller. The portion north of the BART station will also be repaved, but the process will be less intensive because that section is in better shape.

The final step will be to paint the lane markings, including bicycle lanes. In parallel, various sidewalk and signal improvements will be made, including installing countdown lights and extending sidewalk areas with bulb-outs.

OakDOT received some neighborhood feedback in support of delaying the project or performing some work at night, but determined that neither was compatible with the available project funding. According to Sean Maher, OakDOT's transportation manager, grinding will take place during the daytime, with no block being impacted for more than two days. Additionally, City contractors will help local restaurants to disassemble, store, and reassemble parklets, at the City's expense. ■



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8/06/2020	4	3	6729 Manor Crst	$1,900,000	$1,900,000	0	$2,225,000
8/07/2020	3	1.5	5707 Ayala Ave	$1,098,000	$1,098,000	11	$1,375,000
8/10/2020	2	1	5715 Presley Way	$1,049,000	$1,049,000	21	$1,260,000
8/11/2020	2	1	5826 Colby St	$989,000	$989,000	13	$1,306,000
8/21/2020	3	1	395 63rd St	$1,395,000	$1,395,000	26	$1,475,000
8/21/2020	2	2	5243 Locksley Ave	$1,379,000	$1,379,000	11	$1,703,000
8/25/2020	2	2	5522 Taft Ave	$1,195,000	$1,195,000	6	$1,707,000

Homes sold in August closed 24% over the asking price on average.

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Clifton Hall Dorm, from front page

market-rate tower. The option to include the dormitory expired once the development team downsized the project, and the building was put on the market as a separate sale.

Councilmember Dan Kalb had pushed to have the dormitory used as affordable housing. He succeeded in persuading the City to put forward a serious offer for its purchase — an offer that CCA accepted. In addition to the Homekey grant, funding for the purchase and reuse of the building will include money from the City's own affordable housing funds.

The Homekey grant program, part of a $900 million program as part of Governor Newsom's recently enacted budget, provides funding for innovative publicly owned, affordable housing projects. The purchase price is $13 million — expensive, but still below the building's appraised value.

The building will need minor work to convert it to its new use, and is expected to open early next year. The 45,000 square foot building will include a total of 63 units. The first floor will be devoted to transitional housing, including supportive services, for 12 previously homeless families. The two upper floors will be used as permanent housing for extremely low-income elderly individuals or couples in what had been dormitory rooms. It is expected that there will be shared bathroom facilities for those rooms — as was the case when it was student housing.There likely will also be shared dining facilities.

The ground floor will hold offices for Family Front Door, which serves as the hub for the Coordinated Entry System for homeless families in northern Alameda County. The City is currently in the process of contracting with an experienced manager of affordable housing to provide day-to-day management of the permanent housing, which will also include appropriate services.

Councilmember Kalb said he was thrilled at the City's being able to provide the much-needed housing, which should help reduce Oakland's vulnerable homeless population. ■

Rockridge is Open for Business

From offering expanded hours and remote services, to indoor shopping by appointment and touchless in-store pickup, these Rockridge establishments want you to know that they are open for business. Call ahead to find out how you can support these local enterprises. More info can be found by visting the Rockridge District Association at: www.rockridgedistrict.com.

Atomic Garden
Blick Art Materials
Bella Vita
C2020 Optometry
Claremont Rug
Cole Hardware
East Bay Booksellers
Eddie's Drive-In Liquors
FUTURE Vanity
Garden Cleaners
Happy Trails Home
Moderne Eye Optometry
My Emergency Guy
Rockridge Dental
Rockridge Furniture and Design
Rockridge Royal Cleaners
Shoes on Solano
Stauder Automotive Service
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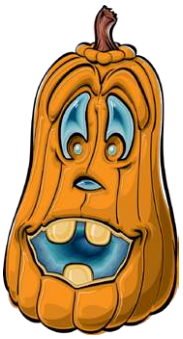
Rockridge is blessed with an assortment of delectable menus from various cultures and cuisines. Be sure to check out these local restaurants that are open for take out, delivery, and/or outdoor seating.

A Coté
A16
Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers
Becky's Chinese Restaurant
Beer Baron
Belotti Ristorante
Cactus Taqueria
Cole Coffee
Crepvine
Enoteca-Molinari
Filipo's
Holy Basil Pho
Hudson Bay Cafe
Jules Thin Crust
Khana Peena
Kitchen Story
Marica
Marin Sun Farms
Market Hall Bakery/Foods/Produce
Millennium
Momo Ramen
Noodle Theory
Oliveto Restaurant
Paul Marcus Wines
Philz Coffee
Ramen Shop
RareTea
Redfield Cider Bar & Bottle Shop
Rikyu Japanese Restaurant
Rockridge Cafe
Smitten Ice Cream
Soi 4
Southie's
The Burrito Shop
The Chocolate Dragon
The Golden Squirrel
Wood Tavern
Zachary's Chicago Pizza

When times are hard, change is inevitable.
Rockridge residents are sad to see these businesses close their doors:

1951 Coffee (Berkeley location is still open)
BICA Coffeehouse
Katrina Rozelle
La Boulangerie
Namaste Yoga
Porque No? (moved to downtown)
Rite-Way Shoe Repair (moved to Piedmont Ave.)
Warm Things

College Avenue's Halloween Parade Has Been Canceled



The COVID-19 pandemic has raised concerns about exposing children and their families to the virus, and the Center for Disease Control has recommended against any trick-or-treat activities this Halloween. As a result, the RCPC board has voted to cancel its participation in the annual College Avenue Halloween Parade.

Instead, RCPC will be planning and announcing a substitute online event. Families are invited to submit photos of their kids in costume for possible publication in the November issue of *The Rockridge News* (send photos to editor@rockridge.org). ■

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Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — Youth Alive!

— By Karen Ivy, Greater NCPC Secretary

On October 8, at 7pm, the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) will hold its bi-monthly community meeting. Due to the pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually, using Zoom.

The Oakland Police Community Resource Officers (CROs) will present their usual report on area crime over the last 60 days. Community members may present public safety issues of particular concern. The meeting will include a presentation from Youth Alive!, an Oakland-based nonprofit that runs violence prevention, intervention and healing programs.

Youth Alive! programs are partially supported by the Measure Z property tax fund and, with the current discussions within the city on alternate approaches to public safety, it will be good to hear from people who are running currently successful programs. ■

To join the conversation, use this Zoom meeting link:
https://zoom.us/j/93579456644

The NCPC sends the Zoom link to Rockridge Neighborhood Watch Network and RockridgeNCPC, both on groups.io

If you are not in either of these groups and want to be on the list for future meetings, send your email address to secretary@rockridgencpc.com

Happy Trails Lead to College Avenue

— By Jorja Siemons

A tarot card deck, Rosie the Riveter Band-Aids, and matching salt and pepper shakers — these are the nifty, vintage-inspired goods that can be found at Happy Trails Home, Rockridge's newest gift shop. While it only opened at 5854 College Avenue a few months ago, the store's presence in the Bay Area can be traced back to the late 90s.



Gretchen McMann opened her original store in Haight-Asbury. Gretchen lives in Alameda with her partner Julie and their 5 children.

"Happy Trails started as an American junk shop," says founder and owner Gretchen McMann, who opened the store's original location in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district in April 1994. Embracing her passion for going to garage sales and scavenging city streets, McMann curates Happy Trails to be an edgy, pop-culture mecca rooted in American nostalgia. With floor-to-ceiling assortments of original pieces such as vintage furniture and advertising signs, Happy Trails became a local destination. McMann went on to open three more locations of the store, gathering more and more traction as her business became popular.

Nevertheless, everything changed in 2009 when the economy fell hard. "I decided I would go into Corporate America, so I closed the stores and was recruited by Hot Topic," McMann says. The new job meant a big move to Los Angeles, something that made her and her family greatly miss the Bay Area.

Finally returning back home to Alameda in 2011, McMann spent the next eight years working locally in the product development side of the home décor industry, a path that has led her right back to her entrepreneurial start.

Happy Trails, *see next page*





Gretchen's three daughters, Emeline (pictured above), Harlee and Chloe, all work at the shop when they are home from college.

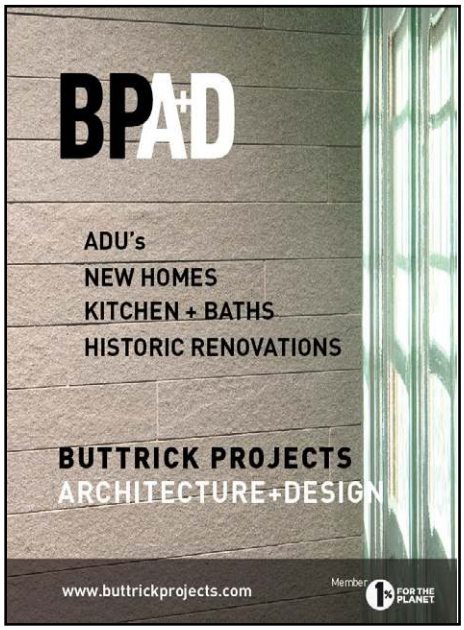
***Happy Trails,** from previous page*

"All I wanted was to get back to my roots," McMann says. This new drive motivated her to reconsider her role in the corporate world. McMann's final decision to open Happy Trails Home came out of a realization that she was ready for an enduring effort. "This is what I want to do for the rest of my life," she says.

The new College Avenue store may be a "reincarnation" of its predecessor, but it also functions as the more "grown-up" version in McMann's eyes. "The store is not based on pure American pop culture anymore," she says. Happy Trails Home still embraces tattoo culture and bohemian lifestyle, fixtures of the original store, but overall embraces a more modern, natural aesthetic. Within the home decor collections, McMann pulls inspiration from outdoor, rustic living. "I grew up in Bakersfield, California so I have that cowboy, cowgirl, western blood in me," McMann says.

When McMann signed the lease for the storefront back in February, she was completely unaware of how the world would soon drastically change. With strict shelter-in-place policies preventing a normal opening, McMann looked to selling goods online. "I had to hustle to get the website together," McMann says about the pressure she felt to establish a digital presence. "Luckily, I have three daughters who know social media."

Despite the unique challenges of Happy Trails Home's debut, McMann is determined and confident as a small business owner. When asked to advise other women who seek entrepreneurship, McMann emphasizes the importance of following one's passions and remaining authentic. "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it," she urges. ■



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Artist, Activist, and Organizer Brooke Levin Gets it Done

— By Judith Doner Berne

"I'm sorry there's so much information," Brooke Levin apologized, as I was descending her porch steps. We had been chatting on her front porch, masked and distanced, for two hours. Still, I only know — and can relate to you — the bare bones of what Levin has done and is still doing to serve Rockridge and the city of Oakland.

eyes on Rockridge

After growing up in numerous cities in the United States and abroad, Levin put down roots and raised her two sons, Leland and Zeal, now adults, in her vintage Craftsman house on a lively Rockridge street where she has lived for 34 years.

"The way I got involved in the neighborhood was seeing all these poles along the street" that were poised to hold street sweeping signage, Levin said. "I found out they had been put up without any process, any community input. So I raised hell."

After that, "I stirred up and got involved with City directors. I got engaged with the public works and worked on the 1991 mayoral campaign for Elihu Harris," she said. "He offered me a job." During the preceding years, she was a member of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) board of directors, serving as chair from 1990-91.

During her first year as a policy advisor to Mayor Harris, the 1991 Oakland Hills Firestorm hit, devastating the community. "I was the mayor's point person on the firestorm," Levin said. "I worked with the Oakland-Berkeley task force to create a lot of protocols." She created the One-Stop Disaster Center, now a national model for FEMA. And, as she fielded phone calls, "I listened to so many people vent, vent, vent. They were emotionally spent."

One night she had a dream. "I just had this vision to try and create a healing opportunity." That became the Firestorm Memorial Tile Wall covering three walls outside the Rockridge BART station composed of 2,000 hand-painted tiles honoring those who fought, and those who were lost.

As an artist, "she realized that an art project would help the children and their parents," said Rockridge resident and local historian Annalee Allen, who administered the project. "It was Brooke who made it all happen. Whatever she's involved in she gives 1,000 percent."



Brooke Levin has served under five mayors.

Levin went on to serve under five mayors. Working her way up the city ladder, in 2014, she became director of the Public Works Agency with a staff of 750, an operating budget of $199 million, and a capital budget of $40 million. Here's how she got there:

Named Oakland's first environmental service manager (1994-2004), Levin gathered the City's environmental programs under one roof. She's particularly proud of starting one of the nation's first curbside green-waste recycling programs. "We started with a little yellow bin," Levin recalled, forerunner to the large green bin most of us lug to the curb each week. And she instituted the Oakland "Creek to Bay Day," when volunteers clean up our waterways — and which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year.

As assistant director of public works (2004-2013), Levin's responsibilities included the environmental services department she had created, the newly reorganized

Brooke Levin, see next page

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Brooke Levin, from previous page

parks and trees division with over 400 employees, as well as the 304 Oakland-owned buildings. "That included everything from city hall to restrooms at the lake," she said. We can also thank her for creating the one-stop Public Works Call Center to easily report problems such as graffiti, potholes, illegal dumping or non-working traffic lights via 311 or the SeeClickFix website.

Public works, she says, is also responsible for the oversight and cleanup of public events from the planned Warriors' Parades to the unplanned Occupy Oakland and Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

"When there's a protest somewhere in the city, we wanted everything normal by first thing in the morning. It was a constant thing." President Barack Obama's 2012 visit to Oakland "was the most complicated," Levin said. "The Secret Service required 1,700 barricades set up in a particular pattern. We had to rent them. Cities have to pay for a President's visit and there was a lot of overtime."

Levin retired in 2017 "because I could. You are 24/7 dealing with budgets, dealing with crisis." But she continues to work to improve Oakland. She and Rockridge resident John Bliss co-chaired the recent Measure Q campaign that successfully raised funds for parks and recreation, homeless services, and water projects and will continue to monitor how it's used. "John and I are in it for the long haul. We have to make sure the spending is aligned with the intent of the measure."

And she is working with three different city council candidates to explain the budget process. "There's a lot less budget discretion than you would think." Levin also serves on the City Civil Service Board, the League of Women Voters' Action Council, and on a broader basis, the Voter Participation Center, a nation-wide effort to increase voter registration among young people, people of color and unmarried women.

A founding artist of Oakland's Autumn Lights Festival, her own work includes creating strings of energy bells. "I did a COVID series that featured turquoise, which is a healing stone and an evil eye for protection." A Yoga enthusiast, she practices "at least four times a week" and bemoans the permanent closure of Namaste on College Avenue. Until the COVID-19 groundings, "I did a lot of traveling. I was on a plane once to twice a month. Now I'm grateful that I have this front porch and can go around the block and see people I know."



"My bells are about healing," says Brooke Levin.

"Everybody is Brooke's neighbor," said Barbara Anderson, who preceded her as chair of the RCPC board, and who accompanies her through the streets and hillsides of Rockridge on their "Corona Walks."

"Brooke notices any changes, she picks up trash, she'll talk with anybody who will help us to be better. She's a connector. She cares about Rockridge. Her heart is just so great."

To comment or suggest topics for future columns, please email judyberne@att.net. ■

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Attention Rockridge Residents: Oakland Library is Open for Pickup

— By Erica Siskind, Rockridge Branch Children's Librarian


Erica Siskind does a song about sea creatures during storytime.

Sidewalk Service is now happening at most branches of the Oakland Public Library, with expanded hours and locations. Daily, around the City of Oakland, hundreds of people are picking up books placed on hold. The library offers wifi hotspots for online checkout, along with mobile printing service available at every location, as well.

Some library sites have a grab-&-go option — items on display that you can point to and check out immediately. At the moment, this is variable and it depends on the weather, staffing, and the physical layouts of the space. Please be patient as more efficient and effective ways of making library materials available are developed.

To reserve physical library books or find out more about online options, reach an OPL reference librarian by email at: eanswers@oaklandlibrary. or; by calling (510) 238-3134. Unfortunately, libraries are otherwise closed to the public until further notice.

Another option is to virtually visit the Friends of the Oakland Public Library bookstore (https://fopsl.org). For a variety of reasons, the Friends Bookstore is not currently accepting book donations.

For Children

The children's librarians at all the Oakland Public Libraries are disappointed that there are no in-person storytimes, and do not know when those will start up again; but meanwhile, librarians have been posting online storytime videos for children for the past few months. The entire playlist can be found at www.youtube.com/oaklandpubliclibrary.

Follow the Oakland Public Library on Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram to see new videos for children as they are posted.

For more information, instructions, and FAQs about visiting the Library's Sidewalk Service locations, go to www.oaklandlibrary.org/sidewalkservice. ■

North Oakland Locations:

Rockridge Branch
5366 College Avenue, 94618
(entrance behind building)
Monday-Saturday, 10am-3pm

Temescal Branch
5205 Telegraph Avenue, 94609
Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-1pm

November Election: No Neighborhood Polling Places

In the upcoming general election, instead of neighborhood polling places, there will be 100 Vote Centers and 66 ballot drop boxes in all of Alameda County. Any voter in the County can go to any of the Vote Centers or to the Registrar of Voters' Office at 1225 Fallon St., Oakland, to return a ballot or get help with voting.

The Vote Centers will have accessible voting equipment; offer language assistance; and handle late-voter registration. **Vote Centers will be open 9am to 5pm, Saturday, October 31 to November 2, and from 7am to 8pm on Election Day.** Return your ballot early, at least one week before Election Day, so your votes will be included in the Registrar of Voters' first reported election results at 8pm on Tuesday, November 3. Find Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations at https://www.acvote.org/community/partnerships 30 days before the election.

See LWVOakland.org for info. ■

Safer Rockridge "Meet and Greet"

Safer Rockridge will host a "Meet and Greet" for the public on Thursday October 22, in an open area in Temescal Park, at 6pm. This will be a great opportunity to meet the Safer Rockridge team, including the patrol service manager, and share your feedback and thoughts with them.

The meeting will be held outside following social distancing protocols. Hand sanitizers and refreshments will be available. The group will assemble on the grassy area located just through the parking lot on the Broadway side along Highway 24.

Free parking is available once you enter the park. Walk along the pathway that leads into the park from the lot, past the restrooms, and you will see the group gathering on the left. ■

Do You Remember? Five Million Americans Cannot.

— By Barbara Cullinane

Do you remember the faces of those you love, your milestones, and everyday joys? Five million Americans cannot. They are living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. You know them as family members and friends. You have seen their neurological losses affect memory, thinking, behavior, and the ability to function independently.

On Saturday, November 7, you can make a difference and do something to help create a world without Alzheimer's. Donate and/or join friends and neighbors walking in Rockridge as part of "the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's."

The Alzheimer's Association, "the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research," sponsors fundraising walks in more than 600 communities. In this pandemic year, supporters are encouraged to walk where they live, observing recommended safety protocols.

As a Rockridge resident, I will also be participating. I began walking 19 years ago to honor the memory of my mother Louise Heflin Bergsten and my father "Bergie," Mom's devoted caregiver for 18 years.

Louise was beloved as a mother, a daughter, sister, wife, grandmother, aunt, journalist, volunteer, and friend. Before her death, she remembered none of these, including her husband and her daughters. She looked at us without recognition.

My fellow walkers and I choose to make meaning from our losses. After raising more than $28,000 as an individual walker, this 20th year I am reaching out to invite the Rockridge community to join me in raising money and awareness.

We'll gather on November 7 at the Rockridge BART station, and walk along College Avenue. To donate or to sign up to be a walker, visit https://www.alz.org/ and help put an end to Alzheimer's.

For more details about joining the Rockridge walkers, contact Barbara at bb75c87@gmail.com. ■





A Love Story on Lawton

— By Myrna Walton

They met in kindergarten at Emerson Elementary in 1955. He was a skinny kid; she charmed with blond ringlets. They both lived on Lawton Avenue, down the street from the school. As friends, they progressed together through Emerson, Claremont Junior High, and Oakland Tech. She attended Laney College for one year, he earned a B.S. at Cal State Hayward (now Cal State East Bay). He never left Lawton Avenue. She was gone for just two years. Now they are celebrating their 25th anniversary, together, still on Lawton Avenue.

In their life stories, Claudia March and Dennis Moscrop personify the Rockridge that was, and the Rockridge that is now. It's the history of a working-class neighborhood around 1900, where his Italian-immigrant grandfather and a friend started a contracting business. They built three houses on Lawton, where Dennis has lived all his life (except for six months spent in the Marine Reserves).

"Grandpa and his partner, Mr. Cardoni, used to meet the trains that came in bringing women from Italy who were looking for husbands. There, they met and eventually married sisters. Aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins all lived on the same street. In those days, the neighborhood was called the Boondocks as opposed to the Hills. It was mostly a lower-to-middle income neighborhood. If you had money, you moved out to the suburbs or up to the Hills."

Claudia's family origins include at least five northern European countries; one branch traces back to 1621, coming to America in the ship that came right after the Mayflower. Her dad was a truck driver for a welding supply company; mom did childcare at home and took in ironing for extra cash.

Dennis's mom did the same. Before marriage, she had been a beautician, then a garment worker. For 28 years, his dad upholstered sleeping cars for the Pullman Company. He then worked as a custodian at UC Berkeley until retirement.

It was the kind of neighborhood where a cook in a local restaurant could raise four kids and buy a home, or even two. Many neighbors worked for the Italian-owned Oakland Scavengers, now known as Waste Management Company.

When employees retired, they passed down the job and sold their ownership shares to their first-born son. The modest houses, mostly Craftsman bungalows, sold for about $30,000 each back in the '70s. Neighbors sat out on their stoops, especially on summer evenings, while the kids played in the street. Some adult or other was always shouting at kids to stop hitting cars with errant baseballs.

She and Dennis had been friends for more than 38 years, but in 1994, "all that changed," and after a 15-month courtship, they married in 1995 on the Berkeley campus, both in tee shirts and jeans, though her tennis shoes sported lace and pearls.



Claudia and Dennis have been friends since attending Emerson Elementary School in 1955. They live in Rockridge in the house where Dennis grew up, which was built by Dennis's grandfather.

Lawton Avenue remained a sociable street where groups of neighbors enjoyed regular potlucks. The man next door set up glasses and a bottle of wine in the early evening and invited neighbors walking by to join in. Claudia would often stop by after work and chat for a while. "You know how it is when you get home after work, you just want some recovery time and Dennis used to complain that I had just spent an hour recovering with the neighbors."

Thereafter, a lot of young tech workers moved in, often remaining until their kids entered school. Then they would either move or send kids to private school. That seems to have changed, particularly as schools like Oakland Tech and Claremont are now schools of choice. "We just gasp at the prices for homes and rental apartments in Rockridge. We couldn't have afforded to buy here. We never had that kind of money."

They both still love the neighborhood for the same reasons — it's still walkable, beautiful, and human-scale, but the commercial areas have changed a great deal. "There used to be a Woolworth's five and dime on College, bowling alleys, appliance repair shops. "No one repairs anything

A Love Story, see next page

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A Love Story, from previous page

now; they just buy a new one," says Dennis. They remember a roller rink, and many mom-and-pop grocery stores — she can name five within a few blocks. "All gone after Safeway came," said Dennis. Some pharmacies had soda fountains. There was a Pee Wee golf course on Telegraph.

Both now look to the future. How will Rockridge change? They appreciate the need to build more housing. Claudia doesn't have a problem with four-plexes, as long as the architecture is in keeping with other houses. The existing ones fit in fine. Residents have always cared about the look of our neighborhood. If you were painting your house you might consult neighbors as to the color, "because they had to look at it. We even took a vote once." One neighbor volunteered to plant another neighbor's bare parking strip to beautify the street.

Parking is a problem. It bothers Claudia that people have multiple cars but don't use their garages or driveways. Dennis says "It's popular now to talk about building homes with little or no parking so people will have fewer cars. We don't see that happening without major improvements in public transit. We used to have a reliable streetcar network here. You could go downtown to shop or work in minutes." "At our age, we're not going to bike," adds Claudia, "and I don't like Lyft or Uber because they just add more congestion. If new housing is built without adequate parking, there will be big problems, even right next to BART."

They would like housing to be built on the CCA campus and next to the shopping center on Broadway. Though pleased that CCA is no longer proposing a tower, they want more of the units to be truly affordable to working and lower middle-class people. "There are plenty of folks who work nearby and it's good for everyone if people can live near where they work." They favor the proposal to house un-housed seniors and families at the former CCA dormitory on Broadway.

Dennis retired after 36 years as a custodian at UC Berkeley; Claudia after 32 years doing medical transcription at Providence Hospital. Unlike many retirees, they plan to age in place. "We are close to our doctors, hospitals, fire stations, shopping, restaurants. We might have to install a chair lift to get up to our front door, but that's OK."

To accommodate visiting friends and relatives, they are converting their garage into a tiny house of 330 square feet. "Maybe someday we will need a caregiver. The guest house will have air conditioning, something we would never have considered. So if we have more hot days, we can sleep there."

"The only thing that might drive us away is if we no longer felt safe here," Dennis says. Years ago, no one ever locked their doors, even when they weren't home; but the increase in petty crime, house and car break-ins, and porch piracy of mail and packages, has been disquieting. A gardener who was working across the street recently had his leaf blower stolen right in front of him.

It has been a wonderful journey together for these confirmed Rockridge residents — from kindergarten to their 25th anniversary this past May. As a result of the shelter-in-place mandate, they had to forgo an anniversary party, but take-out from Wood Tavern made for a lovely dinner at home.

Even with all the changes and challenges over the years, especially these days, they can't think of anywhere else they'd rather live. "Where would we move that's better than Rockridge?" ■



Claudia and Dennis are pictured above in their second grade class.

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Lake Temescal, from front page

Anthony Chabot dammed Temescal Creek in the 1860s to provide drinking water to Oakland settlers who previously relied on water drawn through wells.

In the beginning, water captured behind the dam was up to 80 feet deep. But over the years, the 2,000-acre watershed around the lake has deposited a steady stream of sediment into the lake, leaving the deepest point measuring only 14 feet.

"It's natural for reservoirs to fill with silt," explains the District's Environmental Services Manager Becky Tuden. "But human factors have accelerated the process. If we continue on this path the lake would completely fill in, the same way alpine meadows are formed."

Significant soil disruption and run-off is attributed to the mid-century construction of nearby highways. Residential development of the steep slopes around the lake is another contributor to erosion. Additionally, the lake is frequently polluted by sewage leaks from the city's aging infrastructure.

Sediment and pollutants flow in from two local tributaries. Caldecott and Temescal creeks deliver hundreds of cubic yards of eroded soils each year, along with algae-encouraging nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen. Finally, the diminished lake depth means the water is warmer, further encouraging the algae.

Several strategies have been employed to improve water quality, and capturing some of the sediment flowing in from the creeks with retention ponds has been the long-standing approach to slow the silting process.

In response to recent blooms, the District has infused the lake with liquid alum that coagulates suspended particles so they drop to the lake bottom. This is an expensive treatment that only improves water quality in the short run.

This year, the District installed three high-tech filters on the lake's edge. Tuden calls these machines "nano-bubblers." They draw water out of the lake and scrub out nitrogen. Then oxygen is injected and water is returned to the lake. It's an experimental process, and the District monitors the results carefully.

Dredging is the Solution

"Ultimately, the solution will be dredging the lake to remove the accumulated silt," says District Board Member Dee Rosario, who represents Oakland-area parks. "The plan we're considering also includes improvements to the retention ponds and installation of wetland features at the mouths of both creeks to better filter the incoming flows."

Geotechnical engineers and lake ecologists have established a goal of restoring the lake to a depth of 30 or 35 feet to allow more natural mixing and oxygenation, and greatly reduce occurrences of algal blooms. Removal of accumulated mud would take four or five months, along with a constant stream of trucks to haul away dredged material. Consultants estimate that dredging and other prescribed engineering will stabilize the lake's water condition for another 50 or 60 years. It will be an expensive undertaking. Rosario explains that environmental impact studies and government permitting might take a couple of years. When the project is deemed "shovel-ready," fundraising efforts will begin in earnest.

Such a comprehensive restoration is not unprecedented for the Park District. "We're working on a similar project at Jewel Lake in Tilden Park and we're day-lighting a culverted creek at the old McCosker Ranch adjacent to the Sibley Preserve," explains Rosario. "We've relied on many sources to help fund these projects — local, State and Federal. Also, Proposition 68 (approved by voters in 2018) allocated $4 billion in bond funds for improvements like this," Rosario says. Additionally, the Parks Foundation will pursue private grants and mount a public fundraising campaign.

"Unfortunately, wildfires and COVID closures have commanded our attention and resources this past year," says Rosario. "But I'm optimistic about restoring this beautiful and historic recreational destination for future generations."

For more about East Bay Regional Parks, visit www.ebparks.org. ■

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Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. The deadline for the November issue is October 22 – available on November 6, 2020. For more information, email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com.

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Claremont Middle School's annual auction fundraiser is taking place online only from **October 20-29**, and the entire community is invited to log in and bid on the items up for auction — products, services, food, beverages, gifts and more. If you're local (to Oakland), after the event we will deliver any items that you win. Live now!

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https://www.claremontms.org/pta/auction/

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