THE Rockridge News
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Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

RCPC

Message From The Chair

Looking Back — Moving Forward

by Leonora Sea, RCPC Board Chair

Last December, I contributed a couple of paragraphs to a longer article by **Judy Berne** for the January 2020 *Rockridge News* about the challenges I foresaw facing Rockridge in the 2020s, and my hopes for the neighborhood.

When I wrote my first paragraph about how resilient the neighborhood already is, and how we could improve on that, I was thinking of earthquakes, wildfires, and power outages. We kind of know what to expect from those, and what will be needed to take care of ourselves and each other — first aid training and kits, go-bags, emergency contact lists, etc.

I did not foresee a pandemic, but here we are, 10 months into one. Covid-19 has changed so much about how we work, shop, recreate, and relate to our neighbors. It is a disaster, but an ongoing one — as if an earthquake lasted from March to December. Rockridge, along with the rest of the world, is figuring it out on the fly. Nevertheless, neighbors are still helping neighbors all over Rockridge.

While we're fortunate that the 94618 zip code, which encompasses most of Rockridge, has one of the lowest rates of infection in Alameda County, Covid-19 hasn't left us unscathed.

In a January 2020 *Rockridge News*

Message From the Chair, see next page

Meet Our Local Beekeepers

by Skip Fogarty

Monitoring the hotline at the Alameda County Beekeepers Association, **Elinor Levine** had no idea she'd be adopting a new colony of bees later that day. She answered a call from the maintenance department at Alta Bates Hospital reporting bees coming and going from an underground utility box in an adjacent playground. Levine, who lives nearby in lower Rockridge, sprang into action.

"When I got there, I thought it was something I could handle, so I went home and got my beekeeping gear," Levine recalls. When she opened the box, she discovered a small colony using the box as their hive. The bees had formed vertical combs that were hanging from under the box's cover.



Carla Haimowitz and Hal Helfand's garage showcases a mural by artist Pete Lee — there are about a dozen beehives on top of it.

"This rescue was pretty easy," she said. "I just took the lid home with the comb right on it and plopped them it an empty box." Levine has been nursing the small colony with sugar syrup and extra pollen. She hopes they'll start to produce harvestable amounts of honey next year, alongside her larger hive.



Maryly Snow turned her property into a haven for honey bees.

A Landscape Rich in Bee Food

Our neighborhood provides plentiful pollen and nectar sources for honey bees. Street trees like Brazilian Pepper, Bottlebrush, and Crepe Myrtles are prevalent and good nutritional sources. Urban gardeners also cultivate a variety of pollinator plants. Surprisingly, Eucalyptus trees, which blossom in December, give hungry bees a winter boost.

Artist and retired UC librarian **Maryly Snow** bought her Chabot Canyon home in 2012 and turned her property into a wonderful habitat for her three colonies of honey bees.

On a recent afternoon visit to Snow's garden, she and neighbor **Charlie Carlson** were inspecting her horizontal Langstroth-style hive (one of many hive configurations) to make sure the queen was present

Beekeepers, see page 14

Message From the Chair, from front page

article by Judy Berne, **Jody London**, then president of the OUSD Board, wrote of her hope to expand quality education to include every child in Oakland. Now, Oakland schools have had to pivot to try to reach every child through distance learning — and Chabot, Peralta, and Claremont Middle Schools are eerily quiet.

In that same column from last January, **Chris Jackson**, Operations Manager of the Rockridge District Association, noted College Avenue's low storefront vacancy rate and his hope that it would continue. While many stores and restaurants have been able to adapt, some beloved businesses have closed or moved away. In addition, the long-overdue College Avenue repaving project has been delayed from March 2020 to sometime in early 2021.

Unsurprisingly, Covid-19 has presented challenges to the RCPC Board and *The Rockridge News*. A major objective was balancing a competitive board election with the need for distancing and safety procedures. Another was how to produce and publicize an online-only newsletter until it could be safely bundled and delivered. Thanks to a lot of brainstorming, creativity, Zooming, and plain hard work, the board election came off admirably, and *The Rockridge News* is now available online and in print.

My hopes for 2021 are that a safe, effective, and affordable Covid vaccine will be available to everyone, and that people will take it. Second, that despite "pandemic fatigue" Rockridge residents will continue to look out for each other and for our neighborhood businesses and institutions. And, finally, that as a community, we will continue to assist people who need our help, including those who live outside the RCPC boundaries. ■

Remember RCPC in Your Year-End Giving

Planning your end-of-year charitable giving? Even a small donation can have a large impact on improving our Rockridge neighborhood. For example, 24 residents donating $10 each per month will fund the RCPC Community Grants Program for a full year; five residents donating $10 each month will fund the Halloween Parade (let's do it in 2021!) or provide funds for hosting services for the rockridge.org website. And the list goes on.

It's easy to donate: Make your yearly contribution in 12 monthly installments or as a one-time donation in full via PayPal (see rockridge.org), or send check to 4900 Shattuck Ave, PO. Box 22504, Oakland, CA, 94609). This allows us to enhance and strengthen our community, bring neighborhood concerns to City Hall, and keep residents connected to each other and to our city representatives.

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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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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 submitted for consideration should be emailed to the editor. All submissions are limited to 600 words max (300 words for letters), and must include the author's name, 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 Jan 2021 issue: **December 17, 2020**

Advertising rates are $28/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (after noon), or email joellis1@hotmail.com. Email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com for information regarding classified ads.

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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 Rockridge Community Planning Council — Land Use Committee

The December Land Use Committee meeting will be held on **Monday, December 21 [NOTE DATE CHANGE], at 7:30pm**, via Zoom. Please check the RCPC Facebook page the week before for details. The meeting is open to the public. Send an email to landuse@rockridge.org or call (510) 652-5373 to receive a link/phone number to attend.

RCPC Land Use Committee Update — December 2020

— By Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

Rockridge Housing Study

The Committee, with help from local resident and housing consultant **Daren Smith**, has been evaluating options for adding housing in Rockridge. A preliminary report is available at https://rockridge.org.* RCPC will hold a Town Hall to present and discuss the study's results, as well as other housing-related issues, early in 2021.

The report reaches several conclusions. Most surprising is that replacing a single-family Rockridge home with multifamily housing on the same site doesn't pencil out, at least under present conditions. That means "upzoning" Rockridge would not likely make more housing available. New multifamily housing is unlikely, even for larger lots within Rockridge, or by combining single-family lots to "assemble" a larger lot. It is possible housing would work at either the vacant "Shops at the Ridge" site or the former California College of the Arts campus, but each site has unique additional problems.

The study doesn't rule out adding accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on existing lots or subdividing a single-family home into multiple units. Work is in progress to look at whether providing additional incentives would change the results, but at the moment, the pricing of both Rockridge residential and commercial properties appears to rule out adding new large-scale housing.

** Note: **The RCPC website is temporarily down due** to technical problems. We hope it will be restored soon. In the meantime, the full report can be accessed at https://bit.ly/3nDwG1w.*

CCA Campus Redevelopment Project

Earlier this year, the RCPC Board retained a traffic consultant to critique the transportation analysis in the EIR for the CCA Redevelopment Project. Changes to the project put that work on hold, but with a new project design in place, the committee recommended, and the Board has approved, to have the consultant review existing traffic studies of the area to prepare for release of the draft EIR in the next month or so.

College Ave Safeway Project Settlement Fund Use

Safeway allotted $400,000 of settlement money to address impacts from its College Avenue project. The settling groups, including RCPC, identified bicycle/pedestrian safety improvements. RCPC received preliminary pricing estimates from OakDOT for the improvements. The groups hope to nail down costs enough to present a formal proposal to Safeway around the end of the year.

Red Cross use of The Levant Building

The Red Cross wants to move its blood donor center to the former site of The Levant on College Avenue *(see separate article in the November 2020 issue)*. However, a City use permit would be required. At the committee's recommendation, the Board has asked the Red Cross and the property owner to present their plans for the building at the Board's December meeting. After review of those plans, RCPC will decide whether or not to oppose the proposal during the City's use permit process.

Please send comments on any topic to landuse@rockridge.org. ■

Will There Be A 2021 Rockridge Kitchen Tour?

by Leonora Sea, RCPC Board Chair

Right about now is the time that the call for Rockridge Kitchen Tour participants goes out to homeowners, architects, contractors, and real estate brokers throughout the neighborhood. The Kitchen Tour, which takes place every other year, has been the Rockridge Community Planning Council's major fundraiser and has always received wide community support and enthusiasm. There are always many kitchens submitted for consideration from which to select the usual nine on the Tour.

But, like everything else right now, preparation for the 2021 Kitchen Tour is going to be different. The big question is: "Will it even be possible and safe to have an in-person Kitchen Tour?" The event is traditionally held on the last weekend of September or the first in October, so it's hard to predict what the pandemic will be like nearly a year from now.

Another question is: "If it is safe to have an in-person Tour, will homeowners be willing to open up their kitchens to guests, and will people want to come to an event in which distancing may be difficult in some places?"

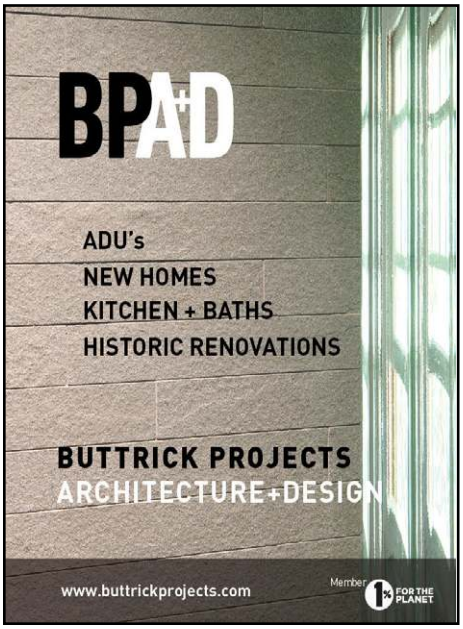
A virtual Kitchen Tour is a potential option. RCPC Board member **Annette Floystrup**, longtime Kitchen Tour Brochure writer, is investigating how this could be pulled off. She is in contact with other organizations that moved their house or garden tour fundraisers online to find out how they made them work. The Board will then discuss and evaluate the feasibility here in Rockridge.

So will there be a 2021 Rockridge Kitchen Tour? The answer, for now, is: "It's under consideration."

We want to hear from you. To contribute to the conversation, please submit your questions, comments, or ideas, to kitchen@rockridge.org. ■







ROCKRIDGE COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL — COMMITTEE UPDATES

RCPC Community Grant Applications Now Being Accepted

by Robin McDonnell, RCPC Vice Chair

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) is pleased to announce that applications are being accepted for the Kevin Faughnan Community Grant Program. Now is the time to put your creative side to work and improve your neighborhood. The program will provide up to $750 per project and is designed to accommodate block/neighborhood needs.

Examples of past projects include median plantings, community gardens, trash cleanup, murals, and street painting. Brainstorm with your neighbors to come up with something special for your street. Working on a local project is a good way to interact safely outdoors with neighbors while at the same time doing a little good for the neighborhood.

The application process is fairly simple, and we encourage applications from all corners of Rockridge to help reinforce a sense of community and pride.

Applications are being accepted now through January 4, 2021. Contact us at info@rockridge.org for information. ■

Volunteer For Rockridge Parks

by Eric Lombardo, RCPC Parks Chair

I've had the pleasure of serving on the RCPC board for about a year now, and I am currently working to revitalize our Parks Committee to celebrate open space in our neighborhood. I walk in the footsteps of many volunteers who have come before me in creating, improving, and cleaning up our parks, and I plan to build off of these efforts to grow our community's outdoor opportunities.

Whether you enjoy daily strolls through FROG Park, take your kids to Colby Park, or soak up sun on the Rockridge Park green, we have all appreciated the nature around us a little extra this year.

I look forward to seeing Rockridge neighbors outside this winter — and please remember to wear a face coverings and stay physically distanced while enjoying the outdoors.

Do you have an idea or a desire to volunteer? Please reach out to me at eric@ericlombardo.com for information on future opportunities. ■



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11/3/2019	3	1	6553 Chabot Rd	$1,279,000	$1,279,000	11	$1,350,000
11/3/2019	3	3	5328 Locksley Ave	$1,495,000	$1,495,000	10	$2,350,000
11/6/2019	2	2	5290 Broadway Ter	$599,000	$599,000	12	$650,000
11/6/2019	3	2	5440 Manila Ave	$1,249,000	$1,249,000	4	$1,500,000
11/9/2019	2	1	5373 Shafter Ave	$948,000	$948,000	13	$1,151,000
11/12/2019	3	2	5830 Clover Dr	$1,295,000	$1,295,000	14	$1,900,000
11/12/2019	4	2.5	446 65th St	$1,595,000	$1,595,000	12	$2,050,000
11/13/2019	4	1.5	444 59th St	$1,175,000	$1,175,000	14	$1,475,000

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Shop Local and "Keep Oakland Alive"

by Anna L. Marks

Rockridge resident's often cite easy "walkability" to nearby stores and restaurants as a major reason why they love it here, yet the pandemic has kept many folks at home, opting to shop online instead. The safety, combined with convenience, is hard to compete with in these days of Covid, and, as a result, many Oakland stores now suffer from lost sales — and the City, in turn, from a loss of tax revenues these sales generate.

Problems often create opportunities, and **Brett Rounsaville** is determined to keep it all local with his brand new website "Keep Oakland Alive." After testing the waters, the site launched a short while ago featuring 17 shops and more than 20,000 items from five neighborhoods.

Rounsaville told *The Rockridge News*, "I hated the feeling of shopping on Amazon during lockdown for things I knew I could get locally while my favorite neighborhood shops are closed or are starving for business. My parents owned an upholstery shop for 33 years and I know how hard it is to keep a small business going, even in the best of times. Pandemic or not, there's no reason why it should be more convenient to shop from an online behemoth in another state than it is to shop from places down the street."

The website lists all available products and participating shops in an easily navigated website where one can search individual stores (and get a profile of the purveyor) or by individual products. You can even purchase gift cards. Currently, three Rockridge businesses are participating, including **Nathan & Co.**, **GoldenBug** and **Bella Vita**.

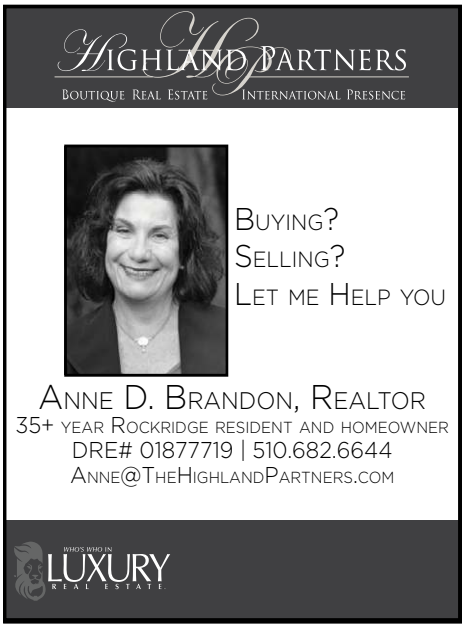
"Being able to do local deliveries from the shops relieves them of a huge burden, and being able to take that burden off lots of shops means that we have economies of scale that the individual shops wouldn't have on their own.

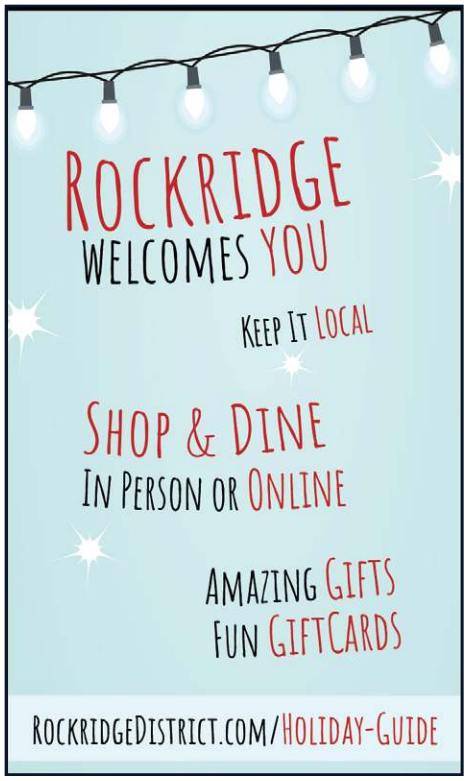
Will you pay more to use their website? The answer is "no," and delivery is free.

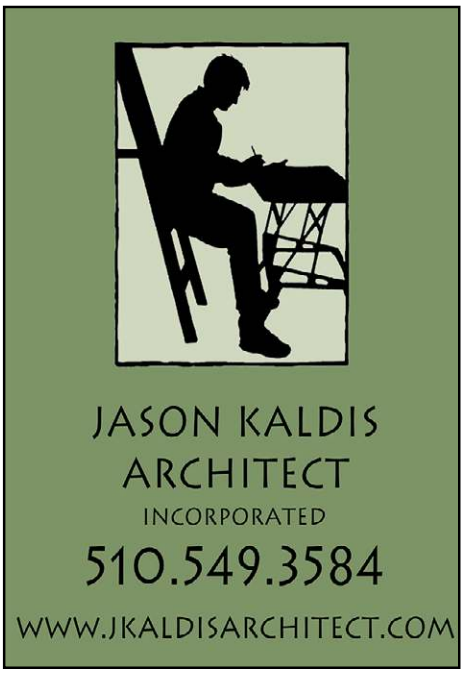
"We pick up many orders from many different shops, consolidate them as we go, and drop them all off at a customer's door while only running one delivery route. The shop owners still set all the prices, but we do take a very small percentage of every sale to offset the delivery costs."

Keep Oakland Alive is still getting up to speed, they and want to expand. Have a store in mind that you'd like included? Brett would love to hear from you. Email brett@keepoaklandalive.com; and visit keepoaklandalive.com for more information. ■









Audubon Christmas & Backyard Bird Counts

by Annette Floystrup

Birding is a fun outdoor activity for adults and kids alike. My personal backyard list is now up to 32 species — all seen from my home's windows. They run the gamut from a Great Blue Heron, attracted by my back fence neighbor's koi pond, to an Anna's hummingbird at my feeder.

Every December and February, there are two excellent opportunities to participate in crowd-sourced science projects that provide researchers with essential information on the effects of climate and habitat change on all bird species.

Climate change has altered the normal territorial areas of many bird species, and habitat change has significantly reduced the number of birds throughout the world. Knowing where and how birds are impacted helps us formulate science-based policies for our environment to help these descendents of dinosaurs continue to fly and give us joy with their beauty and songs.

The Audubon Society's 121st annual Christmas Bird Count takes place from Monday, December 14, 2020, through Tuesday, January 5, 2021. Local participation is organized by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, and the Oakland count will take place on Sunday, December 20, 2020.



Anna's hummingbirds nest at the front door of Rockridge resident Stu Flashman.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile-wide diameter circle, and volunteers follow specified routes through the circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. All birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. Beginning birders will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

You must be signed up to participate and special COVID rules apply. For more information, go to https://goldengateaudubon.org/.

In February, you can participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) which takes place President's Day weekend each February. You can count the birds for as little as 15 minutes in your backyard or community and then enter the results online. For more information on the GBBC, visit the Audubon GBBC page.

To learn more about birds, pick up a "Field Guide to Western Birds" at one of our local bookstores or go online to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Color pictures, maps and recorded bird songs make the site lively and interactive — and Cornell offers a free birding app for all platforms called Merlin, available at https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/. ■

Celebrate Urban Birds

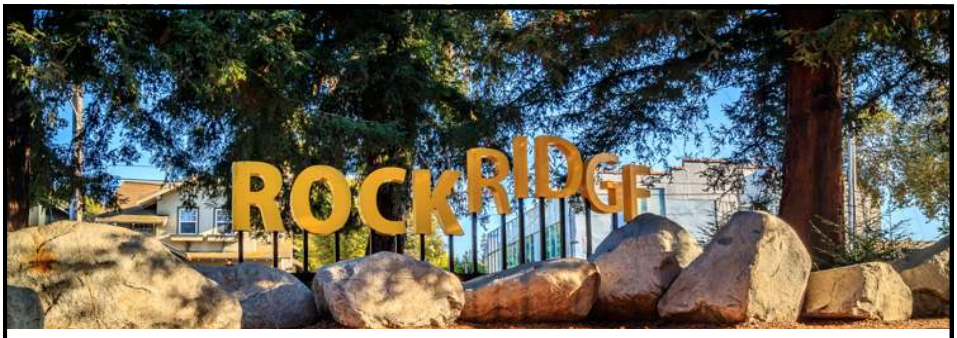
Become a citizen-scientist by observing birds in your neighborhood and sending the data to scientists at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, NY. Sign up and they'll send you a free Celebrate Urban Birds kit. Or, download materials directly from the website: https://celebrateurbanbirds.org/explore/idea/distribute-celebrate-urban-birds-kits/.

It contains everything you need including two beautiful color posters, data sheet, sticker, and seed packet. By participating, you assist studies on the effects of climate change and global warming: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/.

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Italy is Worlds Away, and Right Around the Corner

— by Jorja Siemons

For Enoteca Molinari's owner **Joe Madison**, nothing is more important than the dinner table. Growing up, the world orbited his grandparents' dining room where the family would gather every Sunday to eat homemade pasta.

Madison's great-grandparents immigrated to San Francisco from Italy in the early 1890s, establishing "deep roots" in the Bay Area. Nevertheless, that did not stop his grandfather from traveling back to Italy multiple times. "The story was that my great grandparents couldn't find good coffee here," Madison said.

Madison has a deep connection to cooking. As a teenager, he decided to work with his brother at the Rockridge French restaurant La Crème de la Crème — and thus began his career. He went on to work in various local restaurants, however, Madison believes it was visiting his extended family's home of Liguria, Italy, throughout the years, that solidified his vocation. "Right after high school, I started traveling back and forth to visit cousins in Italy," Madison said. "That's when I got the real bug."

In 2010, Madison opened Enoteca Molinari at 5474 College Avenue (at Taft) to provide the local community with freshly made Italian food and the close-knit community he felt growing up. The menu takes advantage of local and seasonal ingredients, but always includes house-made pasta. Some dishes include pork tenderloin with prosciutto and sage, Gnocchi with basil-pine nut pesto, and baked cauliflower with mozzarella and peperoncino.

Madison treasures Enoteca Molinari's atmosphere because, he says, there is something for everyone. Angelo Verde, the restaurant's executive chef since 2012, is from Naples, and often speaks Italian with patrons. Madison, with his family's deep roots in Rockridge, helps bolster the "neighborhood feel." "We're small," Madison said. "We're family-oriented."



Enoteca owner Joe Madison (right) with Chef Angelo Verde (left) serve up homemade pasta and other fine Italian creations.

During the current pandemic, Enoteca Molinari has continued to provide takeout options for residents, and recently Madison and his team have worked to provide outdoor dining that remains suitable for social distancing. Though the city is moving towards allowing indoor dining once again, he remains hesitant and wants to make sure he continues to put health and safety first. "I'm going to wait and see how it goes," he said.

Though Madison has witnessed changes in Rockridge over the years as a result of a new influx of young people, he believes the community has remained constant. In his parents' neighborhood, six blocks away from the restaurant, Madison has noticed an emphasis on inclusivity and warmth. "They are very community-oriented." Even if conditions are different than he anticipated, this makes Madison confident about the future of Enoteca Molinari.

"We can't be the same as we were before, but there's a great number of regulars," he said. "It's been really nice to reopen and have all these people who have been coming for years come back and reconnect." ■

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East Bay Men's Circle Fosters Intimacy, Growth

by Judith Doner Berne

"We are a special community in which men come together in a safe place to share and be supported in their struggles, engage together in community service, celebrate their victories, and grow in all aspects of their lives."

— East Bay Circle of Men

When Jeff Randall returned to his Rockridge home in 2012 after living for nearly 20 years in Israel, he was missing male companionship. Although he met and had married Miriam while there, and happily gained five stepchildren, he felt like "I was the outsider in Israel. It was hard to connect with men who had the same values as I did."

So Randall, who trained and worked as both a teacher and family therapist, turned to the Internet where he saw an ad for the East Bay Circle of Men (EBCOM or "The Circle"). He attended one of their monthly Saturday morning meetings, "held rain or shine," near the marina at Lake Chabot Regional Park. "I knew within five minutes that these were my people."

One of them joined us for this interview. Garner McAleer, an Oakland resident who formerly lived in Rockridge, provided some historical background. The owner of an Oakland-based design and construction company, he was an early member of the self-run men's support and community service organization formed in 1991 and open to adult men of all races, religions and sexual orientations. Billed as "non-political, non-religious and non-spiritual," it began with a dozen men and over the years has grown to more than 100.

eyes on Rockridge

"We took what really worked (from a previous iteration)," McAleer said, and expanded upon it. What resulted is a monthly business meeting followed by a Sacred Circle in which men can share and be heard in a confidential setting. That breaks down into teams of four to eight men who generally meet weekly to develop even deeper connections and support for one another.

Each team, with names like, The Nuts and The Journeymen, takes its turn at steering the meetings and providing breakfast, as well as taking part in charity work and EBCOM's special events.

What Happens Within The Circle Stays Within The Circle

The groups go well beyond the stereotypical bonding of men on the golf links or watching sports. "Most men have learned to protect themselves. They have this armor," Randall said. "The Circle is a new way for men to be with each other."

Because meetings are for members only, I had to turn to their monthly newsletter for insight into the intimacy and growth the organization aims to foster. In the August edition, filled with essays on the pandemic-induced theme "The Masks That We Wear," here's a snippet of what members had to say: "One of the biggest masks that I wear is 'the people pleaser.'" "Some time ago, I learned that I don't just wear a mask, I don a complete costume for the role I wish to play for my own benefit." "Can I change my mask of a quiet mellow guy to another mask I am becoming?" "Probably the biggest mask in my life right now is the mask of heterosexuality."

In the July issue, a number of men tackled "What Does Black Lives Matter Have To Do With Me?" Here are some excerpts: "I feel a bit like a toddler bumping into stories that have been around me my whole life and discovering them for the first time…" "Never mind that I have some Black acquaintances, brought some Black members into our Circle, work with some trusted men of color…and have dear non-white friends, racism lives in me." "Throughout my entire life, I've considered myself one of the least racist and sexist (thanks, Dad) white men that I know, yet I am still racist and a sexist."

"Diversity, that's an issue for us," Randall, the group's membership chairman, acknowledged. "We're mostly white guys." Just nine of EBCOM's 102 members are African American, Latino or Asian. And, with an average age of about 63, the Circle is focused on bringing in younger members. "We have one team in which the oldest member is 35. Our vision is to reflect the community of Oakland. It's a process."

EBCOM's marquee event is an annual three-day fall retreat open to all members. "What happens is in

Circle of Men, see next page

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'What we have created has come to fruition in the time of Covid,' said Rockridge resident Jeff Randall.

Circle of Men, from previous page

confidence," McAleer said. "It's a lot of fun combined with a lot of deep work. It's also a great training ground for learning and practicing leadership skills." A summer Community Campout brings the men and their families together for a themed weekend. Last year the event revolved around music, including workshops, group singing, a talent show and dance jams.

Although Covid-19 has meant virtual group and team meetings and cancellation of their retreat and campout, Thanksgiving brought community service as usual. A thousand turkeys and fixings were purchased, bagged, and distributed to needy families and homeless shelters in conjunction with the East Oakland Boxing Association. They have also created a Covid Relief Fund for Circle members who need financial help. "So far no one has applied," Randall said. "But it's there."

"What we've created has come to fruition in this time of Covid," he said. "How we are really there for everyone." Discussions include not only the burden of the pandemic but also the bright spots such as added time with the family, starting a new hobby or more hours to volunteer. "We call it 'finding the gold' — what you have learned about yourself that's beautiful and useful for you."

It all works, Randall said, because "I'm very intimate with my team. I feel safe. No one's out to get me. We learn and grow from each other." For McAleer, "We want one another to win. These men are so much family. I can't imagine my life without this level of intimacy with men. It's about becoming whole."

For additional information on the East Bay Circle of Men, call (510) 898-8475, email info@eastbaycircleofmen.org or visit them at www.eastbaycircleofmen.org.

To comment on this column or suggest ideas for future columns, email judyberne@att.net. ■

NCPC MEETING

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council will have its regular bi-monthly meeting on December 10, 2020, at 7pm.

To join the Zoom meeting, go to: https://zoom.us/j/96226418819?pwd=UkRGWDBhKzRCNkd1UENjdDVkNGtodz09

Meeting ID: 962 2641 8819
Passcode: 12102020

Mobile and other access available online at: https://rockridgencpc.com.

Join us and hear your Community Resource Officers report on neighborhood crime and NCPC priorities, discuss your own neighborhood issues. There is no speaker scheduled this week.

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The Dish On Takeout Food in Rockridge

by Terre Beynart
(a.k.a. "The Green Celiac")

The Green Celiac reviews Rockridge eateries that offer takeout with a focus on ease of ordering; clarity of the menu for those on special diets; and a critique of the sustainability of takeout packaging.



Ramen Shop's Veggie Curry Plus Ramen is reasonably priced at $12.50.

I was thrilled when **Ramen Shop** finally opened at 5812 College Avenue for takeout. PC (pre-COVID) they served a dish on weekends that was out of this world — their very own interpretation of Oakland's classic Chicken and Waffles. This gluten-free dish has rice flour-based waffles that are laced with seaweed and umami flavor. The chicken is reminiscent of Chicken Karaage. I get a little shaky remembering my near orgasmic reaction to eating this memorable bit of heaven.

Generally, I think of the Ramen Shop as an expensive eatery, but the current takeout menu has some pretty good deals on it. The Japanese Veggie Curry is $12, which I find very reasonable. My eating partner almost always gets the ramen. Pretty expensive for a bowl of noodles, but what an excellent bowl of noodles!

He also ordered the Miso Ramen with housemade noodles, pork chashu, cabbage, onions, Blue Heron Farms blanched bok choy, shoyu marinated egg, and shungiku ($20) with added mushrooms (+$5). He liked it, but prefers the broth on the Hot Classic Shoyu Ramen ($20 for the base dish and you can spend a lot more if you add additional ingredients).

I ordered the Veggie Fried Rice ($17) a few weeks back and felt it was not up to their usual quality. This time, the Japanese Veggie Curry ($12) was delicious and featured sturdy, not nuclear, but nearly nuclear spice. The vegetables were soft, as they should be in a curry, and the garnishes complemented the curry nicely.

The takeout menu is available at Ramenshoptogo.com and they require credit card payment before they prepare your order. The online menu is uneven in its labeling for special diets. One dish was labeled "vegan," but it seemed like there were other items that were also likely vegan (like the fried tofu, for example.) They will take questions about the menu via phone. The website ordering process was glitch-free.

Ramen Shop takeout was delivered in a paper bag, and the curry and non-broth parts of the ramen both came in cardboard. Understandably, they use plastic for the hot broth container so the broth will remain hot when delivered. However, I would prefer they not use plastic and simply alert customers ahead that they will need to re-heat the soup at home. Additionally, cylindrical cardboard soup containers are often not accepted for recycling. An even better option is to prepare ahead and bring your own container for the broth. They do, however, get a point for not including cutlery. A restaurant that asks ahead of time if you need cutlery is doing a good deed for the planet.

Yimm (6048 College Avenue) is a relatively new addition to the local restaurant scene. The previous

The Dish, see *next page*

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The Dish, from previous page

occupant at this location was Osmanthus, and long-timers will recall it as the home of the beloved Nan Yang. Yimm serves innovative and inexpensive Thai food.

My favorite go-to dish is the Green Avocado Curry ($15 with choice of chicken, pork, beef, tofu, veggie, shrimp (add $3) or seafood (add $3).) Who knew that avocado could go so perfectly well with curry? My dining partner loves the Lord's Noodles ($14) and the Fresh Rolls ($8); you get three of them with each order.

The online menu at yimmoakland.com has good identifiers for vegetarian and spice levels. You need to call ahead if you have any other dietary restrictions. They will take your order over the phone and let you pay when you pick it up. If you order online, there is a mechanism to write special requests/instructions to the chef for each menu item, which is very helpful.

The food was placed in a paper bag for pickup. The Lord's noodles and the Fresh Rolls both came in cardboard. The curry was in a plastic bowl. They get dinged on that as well as for the plastic wrap around the Fresh Rolls and the plastic portion cups for the peanut sauce and other condiments. Those single-sized portion cups pose a serious problem for the environment, and I see no solution to that on the near horizon. They did not include cutlery, so they get a point for that.

Happy eating!

For more detailed reviews and information, see https:\\thegreenceliac.wordpress.com. ■

Message From Dan Kalb, District One City Councilmember

To say that this has been quite a year is an understatement. As we all know, the Covid-19 pandemic is a public health crisis unmatched within the last 100 years. And the economic consequences of the pandemic — including dramatic increases in unemployment — have impacted so many people.

As you are aware, most of the state has seen a recent increase in cases. Please stay safe and help keep others safe during the holiday season by respecting the advice (*https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/health-safety/holiday-recommendations-2020.11.09.pdf*) from our local public health officials.

With ballots counted and the November election behind us, we are looking ahead to the realities we will face in 2021. My staff and I are preparing for the new year and working diligently to address the most critical issues facing our district and the city overall, including housing affordability and homelessness, violence prevention and public safety, and of course the Covid-related economic impacts facing Oakland. We take our responsibility to serve District 1 and the entire city with seriousness, focus, and pride.

I am looking forward to working with our newly elected city council members Carroll Fife and Treva Reid, along with my colleagues continuing on as council members, and with Mayor Schaaf to address our serious challenges including important decisions on our FYs 2021-23 budget.

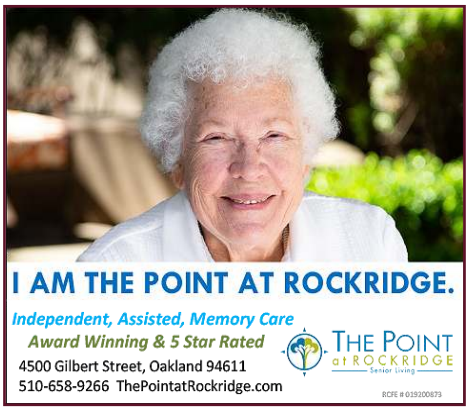
There will also be some Rockridge-specific matters to work on next year. For example, BART is in the very early stages of planning for the development of housing on part of the Rockridge BART's west parking lot.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and offer my thanks to D-1 candidates Upper Rockridge resident Stephanie Walton and Longfellow resident Tri Ngo, each of whom ran passionate campaigns to serve the people of Oakland. They put themselves out there, shared their thoughts and ideas, and kept me on my toes.

Finally, I am thrilled our country has elected a new President and Vice-President. With the pandemic still in full force, we need all the assistance we can get from the federal government.

To receive my newsletters directly, visit https://www.oaklandca.gov/officials/councilmember-dan-kalb, or email me at dkalb@oaklandca.gov. ■

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Reflections from Outgoing School Board Director

by Jody London

I first became involved with OUSD when my older daughter was in kindergarten at Chabot Elementary (she's now a senior in college). At the time, 16 of the 22 classrooms on the campus were portables, with nine of them dating back to the 1940s. It became clear the only way to replace the portables was to help the District pass the Measure B bond in 2006, so I co-chaired that campaign.

After the bond passed, I joined the District's Bond Oversight Committee and went back to Chabot to help the school and the District work together on the new building. That project in 2009 was the first in California to receive matching State grants for following green-building guidelines.

When Kerry Hamill asked me to run for her seat on the School Board in 2008, I did, even though the District was in State receivership. I had seen I could make a difference, even under State control, and didn't want to be asking myself "what if."

I served twice as Vice-President and then President of the Board, in 2011-2012 and again in 2019-2020. Under my leadership this year, the School Board unanimously extended the contract of Superintendent Dr. Kyla Johnson-Tramell through 2023. This will bring her service as Superintendent to six years, making her the longest-serving Superintendent in 60 years. This stable leadership is crucial to the long-term success of our District.



Outgoing District 1 Oakland School Director, Jody London, served for 12 years.

In October, I led the School Board in declaring a climate emergency and outlined what the District is doing, and will do, to develop a comprehensive plan to increase the District's environmental sustainability. The Board passed a resolution establishing a goal of transitioning the school district to 100 percent clean energy by 2030, and completely off of fossil fuels for heating and transportation by 2040. It also laid the groundwork for a more holistic and comprehensive ecological sustainability policy, and its implementation.

The resolution is rooted in OUSD's values of equity and justice, and highlights the need to keep the concerns of Black, Indigenous and People of Color central in the implementation of its goals. This effort was supported by a coalition of students, families, teachers, and district staff in collaboration with Sierra Club's Climate Parents program.

With the Board passing the resolution, OUSD joins other school districts across the country, including Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, which have committed to 100 percent clean energy and other aspects of sustainability.

I'm planning now to focus on my job as the Sustainability Coordinator for Contra Costa County where I lead the County's work on climate issues. Thank you for the honor and adventure to represent District 1 on the Oakland School Board for the past 12 years. ■

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A Tree for The Neighborhood

by Rachel Hollowgrass



Friends and neighbors Vladimir (left) and Evan (right) planted trees on Dana St.

How does a street become a neighborhood? For many, the answer includes trees.

Rockridge resident and Fairview Park neighbor **Vladimir Novak** had lived with his wife **Martina Novak** on Dana Street for just two years when the pandemic hit. Under the strict lockdown, he used his weekends to investigate ways to improve his community. Martina and Vladimir looked at their concrete-and-stone verge, chiseled it away, and planted flowers. That was not enough. Soon, they planted a beautiful six-year-old, male (non-stinky) Ginkgo Biloba.

Next door, **Evan Bradfield** had been concerned about his dying plum tree. He asked Vladimir if he could help. Together, they removed the hollowed-out plum tree and planted two trees in Evan's verge: a flowering ornamental pear and another Ginkgo. Through the process, the neighbors became friends.

Seeing new life growing around them, other neighbors spoke up, wanting more trees. Vladimir and Evan were ready to help. In three months, eight new trees lined Dana.

At the end of the street, a tree had failed to thrive. Using the City of Oakland's tree list, Vladimir found a hearty, quick-growing maple. He approached the landowner, St. Augustine's Church, where the priest formally gave his blessing to the project.

Over a dozen neighbors stepped up to donate time, soil, water, electricity, money, and the use of two trucks. A month later, Fairview Park had a new tree for the neighborhood.

Vladimir says, "It's a triple win: Carbon dioxide is absorbed, oxygen for two people is produced, and the street will look much nicer." Vladimir and Evan will continue to help make Fairview Park ever greener, and hope they inspire other neighbors to make their own natural environmental enhancements. ■

Congratulations to Sgt. Josiah Ladd, who covers the Greater Rockridge NCPC Beat 12Y/13X.

Best wishes on his new promotion ot OPD. May this success lead to greater achievements in the years to come.

May you always be safe... today, tomorrow and forever.



Sergeant Josiah Ladd

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Beekeepers, from front page

and healthy. She was spotted quickly, identified by a painted blue dot on her back, and she looked good.

"I learned from another keeper that my yard was well situated for hives, and I wanted to support our threatened bee population," Snow said. She now maintains a healthy and productive group of hives and shares her eponymously branded "Snow Honey" with friends and neighbors alike.

She explains how different neighborhoods produce a wide range of flavors. The discerning taster also notices a "seasonality." Sampling her spring harvest, one notices a distinctive herbaceous flavor with a hint of Eucalyptus.

Elmwood resident **Jim Veitch** agrees that a healthy hive can be very productive. "Once I learned how to keep my bees healthy, I've been getting about 75 pounds from each box annually."

Veitch also found his bees made him more aware of environmental issues. "My bees mean improved pollination for everyone around. In my own yard, I now get avocados from trees that I first planted in the late '80s. I'm also more attuned to pesticides, flowers, and pollinators."

Environmental Threats

Beekeepers are ever vigilant for a variety of threats to their colonies. In the 1980s, American beekeeping took a dark turn. That's when a dreaded parasite known as the Varroa mite, an Asian native, started to appear in the U.S. Mites attach themselves to larval and young adult bees, weakening the bees and shortening their life span.

Also lurking is a dangerous virus known as American Foul Brood. There is no effective medication, so affected hives and all equipment must be destroyed to control spread. Also, colonies are often stressed by the effects of climate change, severe weather, drought, and the over-use of garden pesticides.

"As much as we need to support our bee populations, having too many hives in a constrained urban environment is another stress factor," explains Rockridge resident **Sue Donahue**, Secretary for the Alameda County Beekeepers Association.

Donahue got started with bees after a beekeeping friend gave her some honey. "I'm a chef by trade and I was blown away by the flavor," she said. "It's a completely different experience than commercial products. I got hooked."

Donahue says the association "supports beekeeping, not bee-having." Carelessness in tending bees can lead to problems for neighboring colonies. "When one colony is stressed, at a certain point it creates problems for everyone." Hungry bees invade nearby hives for pollen and honey, bringing pests and disease with them.

"When one colony is stressed, at a certain point it creates problems for everyone."

How to Get Involved

There are many ways to get involved with bees, with or without the hard work of establishing and maintaining your own hives.

On Manila Avenue, **Carla Haimowitz** and **Hal Helfand's** garage door is somewhat of a landmark, graced with colorful multicultural imagery by local muralist Pete Lee. Less visible to the street, on top of the garage, the couple hosts about a dozen hives.

"We've worked with a series of beekeepers over the years," said Helfand. "Currently we're working with **Khaled Almaghafi** who lives nearby and operates the Bee Healthy store on Telegraph Avenue." He nurtures the rooftop colonies and harvests the bees' production to supply his honey business. "Khaled does all the work, we feel good about helping our local environment, and of course we get some honey in the deal. We're like an Airbnb for bees!"

Megan Smith, a psychotherapist who lives off of Broadway Terrace, discovered Bee Healthy honey at the Montclair farmers' market. It's there she met Khaled, whose family has been beekeeping in Yemen for four generations. He eventually helped her set up her first bee box and provided the original swarm.

"I've been doing this for ten years now. It's a wonderful connection to nature," Smith says.

When you encounter bee people, you recognize they form a familial connection with their colonies. Which makes sense, because tending to these complicated insects is an enduring and endearing commitment. ■

Want to Learn More?

The Alameda County Beekeepers Association (alamedabees.org) offers classes (presently online), mentorship, and swarm removal services. $10 annual membership.

Biodiesel Oasis, 1441 Ashby Avenue, (biofueloasis.com) also offers classes and sells a full array of beekeeping equipment and supplies, including starter colonies.

Bee Healthy, 2950 Telegraph Avenue, (beehealthyhoneyshop.com) offers a variety of products including wax candles, diverse varieties of honey, edible combs, and more.

What You Can Do to Support Our Local Bees

Buy honey from local suppliers at the farmers' market.

Maintain year-round flowers and other pollinator plants.

Stop or reduce use of pesticide. If you must use it, apply it at night when bees are dormant.

Buy organically raised plants. Some outlets pre-treat their nursery stock with pesticides.

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Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. The deadline for the Jan 2020 issue is December 26 – available on Jan 8, 2021. For more information, email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com.

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Each year at this time, the **Annual Oakland Tech Christmas Tree Fundraiser** supports and serves our community with both baseball and softball programs for the youth. Due to Covid-19, the fundraiser will not be happening this year, and as a result, the school is reaching out directly to the community. To make an online donation, please visit them at: https://oaklandfieldofdreams.org/product/donation/.

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