THE Rockridge News

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

New Season, New Goals for Soccer Coach

by Jorja Siemons



Photo © Nikki Elisa Constantino

Tracy Hamm is the Head Women's Soccer Coach at UC Davis.

Tracy Hamm first lived in Rockridge from 2002 to 2006 while attending U.C. Berkeley, where she was a member of the women's soccer team, and returned to live in Rockridge this past summer. Hamm has led female soccer teams throughout her career — from Santa Rosa Junior College to San Francisco State (with four consecutive winning seasons) to her current position at U.C. Davis.

***Soccer Coach,** see page 12*

After the unprecedented postponement of the 2020 Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Board of Directors election from April to September, we look forward to returning to a traditional election calendar in 2021, holding the Annual Meeting and election on April 15, 2021. This is possible because of work of last year's Election Officer, **Ronnie Spitzer**, who, with the excellent assistance of board members **Matt Levy** and **Eric Lombardo**, developed the template for accessible, pandemic-safe, outdoor voting, on a large scale.

Now is the time to think about whether you may be interested in running for a seat on the RCPC Board. In 2021, six seats are up for election, each for a two-year term. Board members are elected at-large, by the entire community. Board membership is an excellent way to gain a deep understanding of our neighborhood and our city. Much of the work of the Board occurs in standing committees and programs.

The Land Use Committee is at the forefront, working on issues of development, inclusion, and community enhancement. The Transportation Committee tackles traffic and transit, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. The Parks Committee looks after our precious green space: collaborating with the FROG

***RCPC Elections,** see next page*

Meet Oakland's Youth Poet Laureate

by Judith Doner Berne



Photo © Kristen Murakoshi

Greer says, 'You can tell more about the person I am from my poetry than my art.'

You may already know of her. Greer Nakadegawa-Lee, a junior at Oakland Technical High School, was named the 2020 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate last spring. Greer excels as an artist as well as a poet, and is considering art school after high school graduation.

eyes on Rockridge

"I've been writing since I was in elementary school," the 16-year-old said (she attended Peralta), taking it up more seriously while at Claremont Middle School. In both places, she was inspired by the poets she met through California Poets in the Schools, the largest literary artists-in-residence program in the nation. And all through her classes in

***Poet Laureate,** see page 8*

New Director Brings Community Organizing Perspective to OUSD

by Skip Fogarty



Sam Davis with his wife, Yael Falicov and their son, Rafael, in the portico at Oakland Tech.

Not long after Election Day in November, Sam Davis was actively transitioning into his new post as a director on the board of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Although he didn't take the District 1 seat until early this month, Davis is getting up to speed on the issues and reaching out to school communities.

"We have many big challenges before us. There's no time to waste," Davis says. "I'm confident and enthusiastic because I believe our new board roster and our amazing Superintendent, Dr. Kayla Johnson-Trammel, are strongly positioned to tackle these issues."

New Director, see page 14

RCPC Elections, *from front page*

Park Committee, and also working on pocket-parks like Ayala and small neighborhood parks like Colby Park. Through the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Grants Program, RCPC distributes small grants to groups and individual community members to carry out projects for the improvement of their immediate neighborhoods.

Membership on the RCPC Board involves a significant commitment of time and effort. Among the most basic activities are board meetings (held monthly), Town Hall meetings, and committee meetings. All meetings are currently held on Zoom. Board members are expected to participate in at least one committee, and in planning and organizing Town Halls and community events, including the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour fundraiser. For an individual Board member, the typical time commitment is about 10 to 12 hours per month, varying with circumstances. Candidates for the Board must meet the criteria for membership in RCPC: be 18 years of age or older, with a principal residence within RCPC boundaries.

For more information, contact RCPC at election@rockridge.org. Prosepective candidates must submit a statement of intent to run no later than ***Wednesday, February 24, 2021****, by email to chair@rockridge.org.* ■

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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.

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Deadline for February 2021 issue: **January 21**

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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 January Land Use Committee meeting will be held on **Monday, January 25th [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 — January 2021

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

The Land Use Committee held its December 2020 meeting via Zoom, with a quorum of members present.

Luum Robotic Eyelash Extensions

(5416 College Ave, former site of Namaste Yoga Studio)



False eyelashes have been around for many years. More recently, eyelash extensions have become a "thing," although their attachment by hand is labor-intensive. Luum, a tech start-up company, has developed machines that automate installation. Their office is planning to relocate to College Avenue, and will include a commercial set-up with two-thirds of the site for personal services where robots mechanically install the extensions, and the rest for the company's office space. The office space requires a use permit.

The Land Use Committee, after review, recommended strictly limiting uses so the site would remain consumer-oriented. As it turned out, Oakland had already granted the permit (apparently without public notice) and included most of what the Committee wanted to recommend. Nevertheless, the lack of public notice is disturbing.

Rockridge Housing Study

The committee discussed the recently released Rockridge Housing Study Report, which dims the prospects for adding large-scale housing in Rockridge, although minor additions (e.g. duplex conversions) might work. The committee considered incentives to increase housing feasibility, focusing on an extra-density bonus at selected "opportunity sites." Discussion and clarification will continue.

CCA Campus Redevelopment Project

Release of the Draft EIR for this large project is expected in the near future, followed by a 45-day public comment period. In preparation, RCPC's transportation consultant has completed a review of background information so that he can "hit the ground running" when the report is released.

2021 Legislative Session — New Land Use (Housing) Bills

The 2021 legislative session has begun. As with last session, Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins has submitted a package of five priority housing bills (designated SB 5 through SB 10) she hopes to have enacted, including three bills that didn't make it into the last session. SB 1120 [Atkins], changing all single-family zoning to allow up to four units (eight with ADUs) is now SB 9; SB 902 [Wiener], allowing rezoning to ten units per lot without CEQA review, is now SB 10; and SB 1385 [Caballero] allowing residential use on some office/commercial areas, is now SB 6. The package also includes a housing bond act (SB 5) and a placeholder bill by Nancy Skinner (SB 8) addressing State density bonus law. It promises to be another "hot" legislative session for housing.

Questions or comments? Email landuse@rockridge.org. ■

Five-Year Old Volunteer Distributor Retires

by Susan Montauk



Amory, age 5, will miss distributing *The Rockridge News* to his neighbors.

Many thanks to **Melissa Nuñez** and her 5-year-old son Amory for their stint as Block Captains for *The Rockridge News* delivery route on Cavour. Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. Melissa relates that her son Amory loved his job and hates to give it up, but the family is moving to Santa Rosa. We wish them well and appeal to the community, perhaps one of their neighbors, to step up and take on the job.

- Route 15A/Block Captain: Delivers newsletters along both sides of Cavour between Manila and Miles.

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

For more information, call (510) 547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer. ■

Llama Coloring Contest for Kids





It arrived before Christmas, and this six-foot Llama remains standing tall outside the Rockridge Café for kids to decorate and enjoy while getting free books to read. The artwork is currently posted on the café windows and prizes are being awarded to each participant. ■

Sidewalk Service Continues at the Rockridge Branch Library

Looking for that great read? Check out your local library. Some library sites have Grab-&-Go items on display that you can simply take home and return on the honor system. Some sites have Book Bundles or DVD Bundles — you point to them, and they check them out to you.

Children's librarians will continue to post online story-time videos for children, with multiple playlists to choose from. Follow the Oakland Public Library on Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram to see new videos for children as they are posted, as well as content for teens and adults. https://www.youtube.com/user/OaklandPublicLibrary/playlists

Winter Bingo has been delayed slightly due to COVID, but prizes will be given away at some point, so keep doing the activities you find on the Bingo Card (ask for it at the Sidewalk Pickup), or online through Beanstack.

To reserve books or find out more about online options, you can reach an OPL reference librarian by emailing eanswers@oaklandlibrary.org, by calling (510) 238-3134, or by using the online "Book Me" form. The library buildings will remain closed to the public until further notice. ■

www.oaklandlibrary.org/sidewalkservice

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WHO'S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

A Reminder To Observe Protocols When Recreating Outdoors

by Eric Lombardo, RCPC Parks Chair

Happy New Year, neighbors. This winter is a hard one, as we are all asked to follow the guidance of our public health experts and limit our activities. The latest stay-at-home order issued for Alameda County in December differs from the version issued this past spring regarding outdoor recreation.

I have spoken to friends and neighbors with questions about what is compliant, and what we are being asked to do by the County and State. The current order may be lifted sometime later this month, but regardless, these are wise recommendations while the pandemic continues to spread in our community.

If you want to recreate on outdoor trails, stay in the East Bay, where we are lucky to have a regional park system with dozens of open areas. Parks with fire trails are wide enough to easily distance yourself from others. For example, Sibley Preserve's wide roads are a much better choice than Huckleberry's narrow paths. Research ahead and use your common sense. Consider where you can access by walk, bike, or a short drive away.

Don't forget other considerations during the winter. Always check the forecast, bring warm layers, a flashlight, water, and tell someone where you are going.

Remember, national parks and wilderness areas will be here for countless seasons to come after this pandemic subsides. Now is the time to stay local and healthy so you can enjoy them with your loved ones in the future. And, until then, happy 2021 — be safe, and embrace nearby nature.

To check park status before you go, visit www.ebparks.org/news/covid_19_park_and_trail_updates.htm. ■

Neighboring Redwoods Abound

by Ben Friedman



Bob and Donna live on Eton Avenue and have a spectacular redwood in their front yard.

In this most strange year, I'd like to express gratitude for something that makes Rockridge special: Our Coast Redwoods. While we are in close proximity to world-class groves of these giants in the greater Bay Area, we are also blessed with some fantastic examples of *Sequoia sempervirens* in our own neighborhood.

Before revealing my personal "Top Three Rockridge Redwoods," let's recall some particulars about *Sequoia sempervirens*. Coast Redwoods are the tallest trees on Earth. They can live for 2,000 years and can grow to the height of a 35-story building. The holy and silent groves of old-growth stands in protected areas across coastal California represent only five percent of the historic range, most lost to logging.

***Rockridge Redwoods,** see next page*



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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

Homes sold in November closed 30% over the asking price on average.

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***Rockridge Redwoods,** from previous page*

Here are three particularly majestic trees, clustered in and around my own neighborhood of Fairview Park, that are worth visiting. Apologies in advance to the great trees I neglected to mention — especially those that reside south of Rockridge BART.

3120 Eton Avenue

My personal favorite stands in the yard of Bob Deutsch and Donna Terazawa. Their tree has an 8-foot diameter, a 25-foot circumference, and stands 145 feet tall. Bob, when asked about it, says with a laugh and a note of pride, "It's a pretty impressive tree. It's unusually big, and so sturdy," says Donna.

A nearby, tucked-away plaque commemorates the life of Gabriel Catalfo (1983-98), a teenager who lived in the neighborhood and loved this majestic tree and had a tight relationship with the previous owners.

Claremont Avenue at Hillcrest

Twin redwoods mark the entrance to Hillcrest Avenue on the East side of Claremont. They're both spectacular, but I'm partial to the northern individual, which unconditionally erupts out of the pavement. It has a rakish tilt to its habit as well, lending great attitude to the tree. Claremont Avenue was established in 1859, tracing an early telegraph line coming over the hills from Martinez. Given the size of the tree, it's easy to imagine someone planting the tree in the street's infancy.

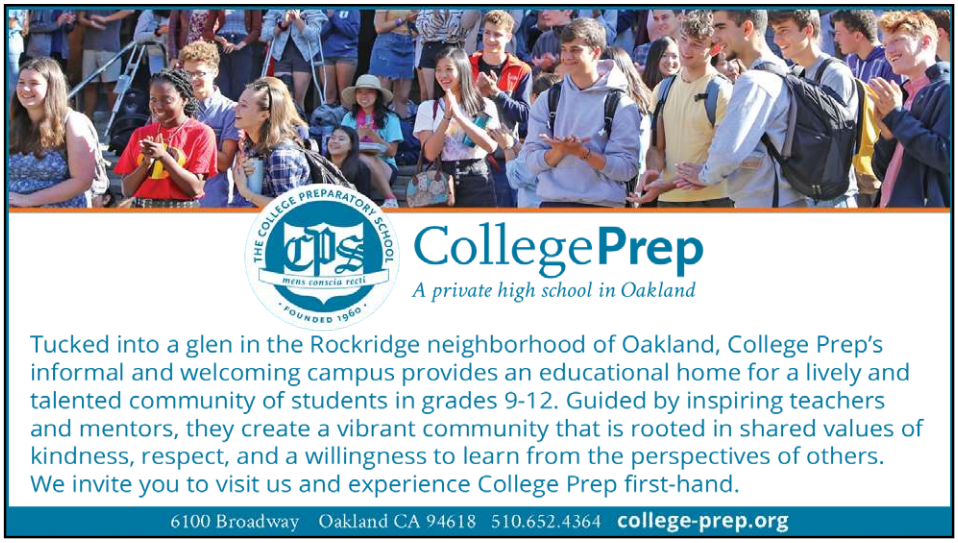
Ayala at Forest

What makes this tree special, besides its massive form, is that someone has rigged spotlights onto the trunk — currently in Christmas colors. At night, these lights illuminate the tree's base, and sheltered under its canopy one gets the feeling that woodland spirits could reside there.

All these three trees can be visited in an end-to-end walk of only one mile. A suggestion would be to start at Ayala, head to Eton, and finish at Claremont. You'll be a redwood cone's throw from Star Meats for a post-hike sandwich — one of the best in the whole Bay Area, in my opinion.

To discuss Rockridge's silvicultural history or share other exemplars of our redwoods, please email Ben at bfriedman86@gmail.com. ■





RCPC

RCPC Responds to CCA Design Process

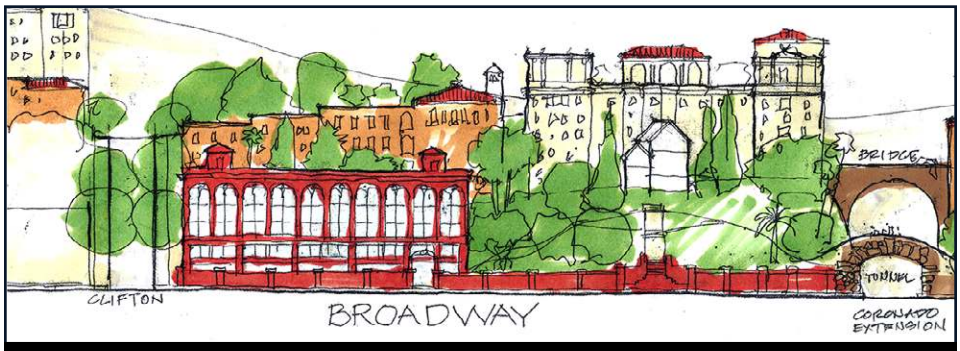
The article on the following page represents the views of its author and of Upper Broadway Advocates, but not necessarily those of the Rockridge Community Planning Council or its Board. RCPC does, however, support the dissemination of a wide range of community views about this and other development projects, and encourages article submissions that represent a range of views.

RCPC, under its bylaws, represents the entire Rockridge residential community. The various public meetings that RCPC has sponsored about the future of the CCA site have shown that there is currently no consensus within the community about what should happen on the CCA site. Accordingly, the RCPC Board has decided to wait for issuance of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the project, and gather further responses from the Rockridge community before taking a position on this very significant project. RCPC took a similar approach with respect to other major development projects in recent years, including the two Rockridge Safeway projects, the RadUrban project at Telegraph and 51st Street, and the "Baxter on Broadway" project.

To help assure that the proposed project for the CCA site is properly assessed, RCPC has submitted scoping questions, including comments on possible transportation impacts and project alternatives, for consideration by the City's consultants who are assembling the DEIR. The RCPC Board has also voted to hire its own transportation consultant to evaluate the transportation portion of the DEIR, once that becomes available. ■

What's Next? CCA Design Process Gets Underway

— by Myrna Walton, UBA Steering Committee Member



Architect Kirk Peterson's conceptual drawings were presented at the meeting.

Are you wondering what the massive reconstruction of the now vacant CCA site on Broadway and College might look like when it's completed? Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA) recently presented the developers with a slide show of suggested architectural and design elements that reflect the variety of architectural styles in Rockridge and the Arts and Crafts history of the site.

"We want to make sure the developers understand what we think most of the community will find attractive, as well as provide dense housing," said **Jennifer McElrath**, UBA Treasurer. The development team at the meeting included principals **Marc Babsin**, Emerald Fund; **John Clawson**, Equity Community Builders; and **Strachan Forgan**, SCB Architects.

An "Arts and Crafts Village" is just one of many possibilities, exhibiting a variety of architectural styles and interesting details. The artwork, conceived by **Kirk Peterson**, a Rockridge architect and member of UBA's Steering Committee, displays human-scale buildings of varying heights, seven stories or less, with a distinct Rockridge flavor. UBA encourages the inclusion of a "destination café" at the park that would connect the project and the community and encourage use of open space. If the adjacent Ridge site is ever developed, a beautiful pedestrian bridge could connect the two properties.

According to Equity Community Builders' **John Clawson**, "We have had a lot of internal conversations about these issues — breaking down the scale, articulating the base, the relationship to the street…we are chomping at the bit to take it to the next stage so we don't have to look at those incredibly ugly block-line diagrams that make it look like an ominous beast on Broadway."

The development team is eager to transform it into a beauty. However, they need guidance from the City concerning massing, height, density, and choice of historic structures to be preserved. Several planning commissioners have requested that a 19-story tower be once again considered as a project alternative. That might be included in the EIR as an alternative, although doing so may delay the EIR's release date.

Given the lengthy review process, the City Council might not make a final decision on approving a project until late 2022. Construction could begin in 2023, with completion in 2025, assuming financing is available and the project "pencils out" financially. That will depend on the state of market rents and the cost of construction — all unknowns at this point, according to the developers.

Marc Babsin is "confident we will get to a place where you are happy and we are happy about how the project looks and feels. We are not that far off." A video of this meeting is available at https://youtu.be/tn-gGMsn0oI (Note: the slide show begins at 7.35.)

What Can The Community Do Now?

"The CCA project has underlined the importance of a neighborhood plan that reflects community needs and desires," says **Jennifer McElrath** of UBA. "Without it, any developer can request a dramatic increase in the height of a building, as happened in the MacArthur BART project. In 2008, it was approved at eight stories which morphed into 24 several years later."

As a first step, a small group of local volunteers, led by **McElrath** and **Diana Mitchell-Chavez**, are surveying several typical Rockridge streets to illustrate the variety of existing housing types and development scenarios. In the meantime, the development process will continue to move forward.

To contribute to a community-produced development plan, or share photos of local architectural details, contact UBAOakland@gmail.org. ■

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PLA033-1 TX

Poet Laureate, from front page

the Oakland Unified School District, "I've had really great teachers who are passionate about what they do."

"I write every day now," she said. "It's mostly about my personal life and I don't share that." What she does share are poems that reference current events, including the political, social, and pandemic upheavals that have changed our lives. Her first book, titled *A Heart Full of Hallways*, was published earlier this year by Nomadic Press.

"I don't rhyme," she explained, "although I admire people who can." Her style is free verse and her subjects are immediate as evidenced in excerpts from the following poem that references the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the pandemic, and failed leadership:

2020
We reach out to each other like shipwreck survivors grasping for lifeboats.
Hoping to find something solid in all this crisis,
but with every touch you feel the anxiety of contagion,
a million grasping hands,
a million voices joined together in the same refrain,
I need you more than ever-
but you have to stay away.

And its final lines:

and it's true
we cannot crowd close.
We cannot take each other's hands,
but I swear we can still fight as one.
Until every single one of us has the freedom to exist comfortably in our own skin,
to live without fear,
to breathe.

Greer is the ninth person to be chosen by the Oakland Public Library to be its Youth Poet Laureate, a position that is open to Oakland writers aged 13 to 18 and comes with a $5,000 college scholarship. "It was kind of unexpected because I knew who had come before me and they have a presence. It's humbling.

"Being the Youth Poet Laureate is like someone saying to me, 'your poetry can change the world' and then being given the opportunity to prove that," she said. In a normal year, she would be representing Oakland through live poetry, media, and public appearances. But now these are virtual events, such as the December Friends of the Oakland Public Library Holiday Mixer, at which she generally reads some of her work and takes questions.

"Greer has been my poetry student since she was 13," Sophia Dahlin explained. Before Covid, she was part of a small class Dahlin taught in the basement of the Temescal Library.

"When I met Greer, I was astonished at the beauty and mastery of her poems. She has an ear for the line that must be inborn. She can write with great tenderness and great ferocity.

"Much of her poetry is overtly political: pro-immigrant, anti-racist, pro-environment, and fiercely feminist. Her work has empathic wisdom and gravitas unusual in a younger writer, not that she in any way disowns youth or childishness. Her poetry is grounded in its honesty and sense of responsibility to the world around her, enlightened by its sense of wonder and mutability."

"Greer is a force in the Bay Area," said arts organizer **Lauren Ito**. "When I think about the path ahead of her, all I can say is she's going places — far, far beyond our corner of California. We are lucky to get to enjoy her work while she's still here.

"What I love most about Greer's work is it forces us to reckon and radically reimagine. She's taking off at lightning speed — and it's an honor and a joy to be a part of her journey."

In terms of her art, Greer describes herself as an illustrator. Her work is done in pen and ink, then scanned and colored digitally. "I've always been interested in graphic novels and comics. I like the fantasy influence. I draw a lot of couples. I'm about to start taking commissions" (which she

Poet Laureate, see next page

NCPC MEETING

The Greater Rockridge NCPC will not meet in January. The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 11, at 7pm, and will take place on Zoom.

The link will be announced closer to the meeting date. Visit https://rockridgencpc.com for more details.

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Greer Nakadegawa-Lee doesn't title her artwork.

Photo © Nakadegawa-Lee

***Poet Laureate,** from previous page*

plans to donate to the Native American Rights Fund).

Enrolled in Oakland Tech's Fashion, Art and Design Academy, distance learning has affected her just as it has her fellow students. "For me, it seems like less schoolwork. Socially, it's not great. I feel bad for anyone who's a senior." She empathizes with teachers since students are not required to show their faces on Zoom. "It's hard to teach a class to an empty screen."

Greer comes from an arts-oriented family. Her mom, Stephanie Lee, a psychologist, "always drew with me and my siblings when we were younger and still does a lot of crafts," Greer said. Her dad, Tadashi Nakadegawa, is the Director of Facilities and Construction for the Oakland Unified School District. "He went to school for architecture so he can draw."

Her brother Nathan is a saxophonist enrolled in the New School's jazz program in New York City. Her twin sister, Scarlet, is a multi-faceted artist "who can paint, draw and animate digitally, and has her own YouTube channel for her animations. It's difficult to describe what she does because there's so much to say."

Whatever the future holds, Greer hopes to combine art with writing. "When quarantining is over, I could start a poetry workshop for teens," she said. "I want to do something that involves other people. It seems like the right thing to do. When I think about having a career that doesn't use my creative skills, it just makes me itch."

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

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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.

Ahh…**Marica**. I have fond memories of romantic, candlelit dinners at Marica where the service is discreet and the food is perfect in this wonderful, busy, noisy bistro. With a good wine list, wonderful seafood, and friendly, knowledgeable staff who magically know when water glasses need to be filled and wine glasses are empty, who could ask for more? This small family-run restaurant has been providing outstanding dining at 5301 College Avenue since 2000.

I miss the attention and will carry on with the takeout. The Seafood Stew ($26) is a standout. It is a rich and somewhat creamy version of a Bouillabaisse with plenty of fresh seafood. They are now selling a prepare-at-home version of this dish as a "stew kit" which has revealed their two power ingredients — butter and a 20-hour lobster/shrimp broth. Yummy.

If you are famished, the dish to order is the Salmon ($27 prix fixe). This meal includes a mixed green salad, roasted organic sustainably farmed Canadian salmon filet, tapenade, vegetable orzo, and a *crème brûlée*. I have eaten many *brûlées* in my time and, in my experience, this is the finest. The custard is perfect and goes wonderfully with the caramelized sugar top and blueberries.

There is a very funny scene in Netflix's "Emily in Paris" where a disappointed fashion designer orders a tray of crèmes brûlées (24 of them) — not to eat, but simply for the satisfying feel of breaking the brittle top of melted sugar with the back of a spoon. Don't miss this dessert ($6 à la carte).

The home page for Marica's website says, "Please help us by ordering directly. Delivery platforms take 20 to 40 percent from small businesses." It seems that many small restaurants are stuck between using delivery companies that add on service charges (in addition to a delivery fee) and being able to operate at all. I suggest you call them with your order.

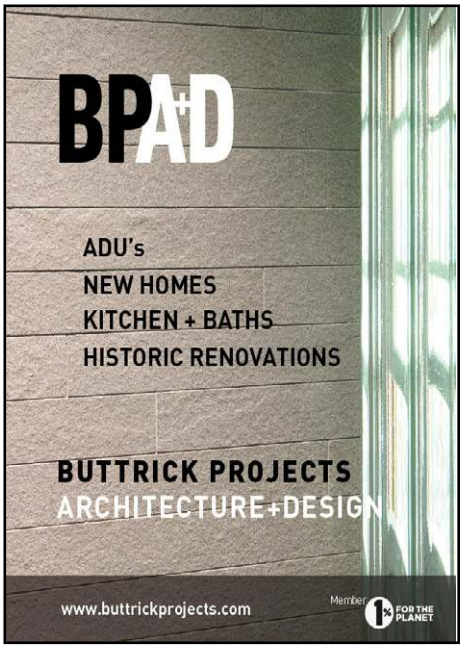
The online menu does not provide the information that those on special diets require. When you call, however, they are quite helpful. They will make the salmon gluten-free by replacing the orzo with roasted potatoes, and although the crème brûlée has dairy, it is entirely gluten-free (rare for a dessert…I had to settle for sorbet at Thanksgiving).

Marica's takeout came in a paper bag, and the salmon and salad came in cardboard boxes. The stew came in a cardboard cup with a plastic lid. The *crème brûlée* was in an aluminum (recyclable) solo pie plate with plastic wrap over it. It is wonderful that the stew container was not Styrofoam, which can break down in the environment and emit benzene, a carcinogen. However, the paper soup containers may have an interior

The Dish, *see next page*







Rockridge is Open for Business

Rockridge is blessed with restaurants offering delectable menus from various cuisines. Contact these local restaurants when ordering takeout.

A Coté
A16
Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers
Becky's Chinese Restaurant
Beer Baron
Belotti Ristorante
Cactus Taqueria
Cole Coffee
Crepevine
Enoteca Molinari
Filippo's
Flavors of India
Great Wall Chinese
High Peaks Kitchen
Holy Basil Pho
Hudson Bay Cafe
Ike's Love & Sandwiches
Khana Peena
Kitchen Story
La Farine
Marica
Millennium
Mitama
Momo Ramen
Noodle Theory
Oliveto Restaurant
Philz Coffee
Ramen Shop
RareTea
Redfield Cider Bar & Bottle Shop
Rikyu Japanese Restaurant
Rockridge Cafe
Smitten Ice Cream
Soi 4 Bangkok Eatery
Southie
Sukho Thai
The Burrito Shop
The Chocolate Dragon
The Golden Squirrel
Uzen
Wood Tavern
Yimm
Zachary's Chicago Pizza



Cactus Taqueria's Turkey Black Mole Tamales come wrapped in banana leaves with mole, crema and salsa delivered in small containers — and warm tortillas on the side.

The Dish, from previous page

coating of plastic which would make the container neither compostable nor recyclable. You can tell if it has this by checking the inside, and, if it is shiny, it is questionable, so put it in the landfill.

What a great location for **Cactus Taqueria Oakland**. I especially love that the old Chimes sign is still proudly displayed. Cactus provides solid and reasonably priced Mexican food and promotes their family-friendly atmosphere.

The online menu for Cactus is good and predictable. I appreciate their Bocaditos section where you can order something small if you just want a bite. You have to check their Daily Specials page to see what else they are serving — these take more time and planning, and are always a treat. I am looking forward to the Chicken Chile Verde with Anaheim Chiles. Sadly, they don't have any labeling for those of us on special diets but they are always happy to ask the chef.

I ordered the Turkey Black Mole Tamales wrapped in banana leaves (two for $7.95; three for $9.95). We also had the Chicken Plato with black beans that includes rice and salad ($10.95) and also ordered some refried beans ($2.25) on the side.

The tamales were tasty. They were delivered with most of the mole in a single 1-ounce portion container, and also included a 1-ounce serving of crema. Also included was a 2-ounce portion of medium salsa. The Chicken Plato was excellent, and it gets green points for being entirely delivered in compostable or recyclable material. The entire dish was in a box, with the exception of the corn tortillas that were wrapped in aluminum foil (thank you, Cactus). The Cactus website was helpful but lacked special diet or price information.

If you are a cook and love mole and have no *abuela* (granny) to teach you how to make mole magic, try the Oaktown Spice Shop's mole blend. It is easy to use and perfect for lazy chefs like me.

For more details on these reviews, point your browser to thegreenceliac.wordpress.com. ■

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Soccer Coach, from front page

When the Covid pandemic forced U.C. Davis to close its doors and subsequently cancel the women's soccer season, the team's dedication was sorely tested. Disappointed, but not discouraged, Head Coach Tracy Hamm proceeded to train the team virtually. Gathering over Zoom, they analyzed old college games and discussed articles relating to soccer. "We treated it as an academic class," she said.

"College can be an escape for a lot of students," she said. "Having to go back into their home environment wasn't necessarily a positive for everybody," said Hamm.

As the pandemic dragged on, Hamm seized the opportunity to stress the importance of endurance to her athletes. "I focus a lot on building resilience, building perseverance, and having a passion for what you are doing," Hamm said, adding that even under normal circumstances, "college soccer is not easy."

Fortunately, the athletes were able to resume in-person training this past September, allowing Hamm to prepare the team for the fall 2021 season. Though the team was initially required to socially distance, eventually, and with access to U.C. Davis's Covid-testing resources, the team engaged in full-contact training.

Hamm's coaching experience has taught her that personal development is critically important for female college athletes when they are "in the most malleable stage in their lives," and this is even more important now. Understanding how coaches bear immense responsibility to help build self-confidence, she regularly checks in with her players about their mental health, particularly while campus is closed. She also learned that female athletes stand out not only in their ability to succeed, but also in their desire to support each other. "Our athletes are smart and caring," Hamm says, "I really try to take a very holistic approach to the way that I coach."

Hamm brings her valuable skill set to the U.C. Davis team as one of only two American women holding the United European Football Association "A" Coaching License — one of the highest coaching certifications available for soccer. Nearly 50,000 coaches possess the license, but a mere 1 percent of them are women.

To obtain the license, Hamm spent two years (2017-19) completing over 400 hours of training. She even traveled to Wales for workshops where she gained expertise in team management. Her pursuit of the license was the subject of the 2019 documentary "Coach," which was selected to show at the Fort Myers Film Festival (https://www.coachthemovie.com/). "It's the best thing I have ever done for myself from a professional and personal standpoint," she said about the experience.

The training environment was male-dominated and intimidating, but Hamm said she would remind herself that she knew just as much as her male peers. "As women, we tend to not afford ourselves opportunities because we feel like we're not experienced enough or prepared enough," she said. "It's okay to not know everything."

Hamm often shares this sentiment with her team as a way to teach the importance of embracing challenges because, as the future remains uncertain during the pandemic, this will continue to stay relevant. "The fear of failing doesn't allow you to even start," Hamm said, "The hardest part is showing up." ■



Political Conservatives Wanted for Living Room Conversations

by Myrna Walton

If you consider yourself a political conservative and would like to connect with people of a different persuasion, you are in high demand. Rockridge resident **Jean Rains** is hosting an online political discussion group, and recently noted on Nextdoor that she would like to connect with more politically conservative folks to keep her group balanced, because "I have a lot of liberal friends who would like to break out of their silos."

For her group, Rains uses a discussion guide developed by Living Room Conversations, an organization co-founded by Berkeley resident **Joan Blades** (who was also a co-founder of MoveOn.org). The backbone of a Living Room Conversation is a model developed by dialogue experts to facilitate connections between people, despite their differences, and to identify areas of common ground and shared understanding.

The model helps "steer conversations away from debating, arguing or trying to convince others that your view is right, and instead, toward sharing stories and values," said Rains. "The discussions are fun, stimulating, and give you a chance to connect with the humanity of others." They offer a platform for connecting with others who have different views on race, religion, age, gender, politics, ethnicity — virtually any topic of interest.

So, conservatives of Rockridge, now is the time to make your presence known.

If you would like to start such a conversation group using the discussion guide, go to livingroomconversations.org, or contact Jean at jeanmrains@comcast.net. ■

Happy New Year,
from The Rockridge News!

Slow Streets Are Fun Streets

by Bill Kaufner



Oakland has 74 miles of Slow Street Corridors and 15 Slow Street Essential Places. These designated areas on specific neighborhood streets limit access to local residents, emergency vehicles, and service and delivery vehicles. The City is encouraging drivers to avoid these streets unless they are needed to reach their final destination.

As stated on the City of Oakland website, the Slow Streets Program was launched in April 2020 as part of Oakland's Covid-19 response. It is intended to support safe physical activity and alleviate overcrowding in parks and on trails by encouraging outdoor use of local streets. Many were placed on existing bicycle routes.

Recently, I cycled from The Market Hall to Emeryville, all on the designated "Slow Streets." On the way, I passed by walkers, runners, baby strollers, and even a Zumba class. I saw numerous colorful street drawings, Black Lives Matter signs, and basketball hoops in play. Few, if any, cars went by while I negotiated traffic circles and car barriers.

Good walking or cycling routes for Rockridge residents include: Shafter from the Market Hall to MacArthur Boulevard; 42nd Street from Broadway to Adeline in Emeryville; Forest going north of Claremont Ave; Ayala from Forest and Howell; and Colby from Claremont Avenue to Berkeley's Elmwood.

However you move, get out and use these urban parkways for health and sanity. ■

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New Director, from page 2

A native of Queens, New York, Davis has been in the education field for two decades. He came west to attend Cal as a math major, "but I was always interested in education," he says. He started his career in adult education before settling in Oakland in 2003, where he got an assignment at the Manzanita campus in the Fruitvale district teaching English as a second language.

"I fell in love with the Manzanita community. Their innovative Even Start program combined an adult literacy course alongside a pre-school program for their kids," Davis explains. But the budget for adult education was severely cut during the recession a few years later. So Davis took on a new role at the school as a family outreach coordinator.

On one campus, Manzanita offers three instructional tracks: dual immersion Spanish/English, English-only, and bilingual. When their son Rafael was ready for kindergarten, Davis and his wife decided to enroll him at Manzanita. The venerable Oakland Community Organization (OCO) was working with Manzanita parents to fight budget cuts when Davis arrived.

He describes OCO as "the classic community-organizing model, built upon congregations identifying what their communities need and taking action." Initiatives like the small school movement and the Cease Fire Anti-Violence Program bear the imprint of OCO. Davis ended up serving on the board for OCO, now known as Faith in Action.

Davis's wife, **Yael Falicov**, is also deeply intertwined in the East Oakland community as development director for Mujeres Unidas & Activas, a women's empowerment program centered around political education and leadership development.

Asked about the priorities for the incoming school board, Davis listed several key issues.

"Of course, re-opening our schools is the top concern at this moment," Davis emphasizes. "It's a complicated set of issues and the obstacles are many." The process will include negotiations with the teachers union; compliance with City and State government directives; facilities upgrades; and social equity concerns. "When New York City re-opened their schools, there were big disparities in which families took the open seats, and those who chose not to attend," he says. "We have to address that in our planning."

Restoring faith in the school board's financial management will be another hurdle for Davis and his new colleagues. He explained that too often funding that is allocated for specific programs and facilities is diverted and intended progress gets sidetracked. "We need much more transparency and accountability when it comes to managing our money."

As an example, Davis recounts when his son started at Claremont Middle School, incoming families were told that the cafeteria would quickly be restored following a 2015 fire. The cafeteria has yet to be repaired. Davis reports that recently allocated funds from Measure Y mean the cafeteria will be back soon. "It's wonderful to see families support better, safer schools in Oakland, and Measure Y is a big step in that direction. We need to be sure the board uses that money wisely and not wastefully."

"It's wonderful to see families support better, safer schools in Oakland, and Measure Y is a big step in that direction."

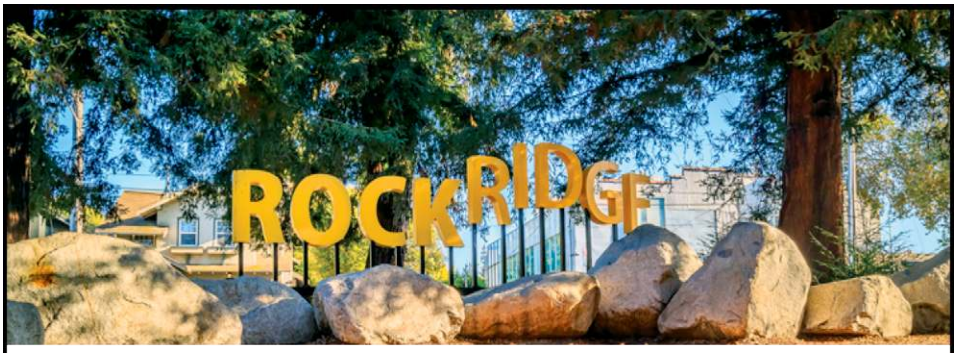
Personal engagement with school communities is also high on Davis's to-do list. He envisions coalitions of students, faculty, and parents addressing important issues, including restorative justice practices, which will be especially important in the wake of the recent board decision to remove the school district's police force from schools. Davis explains that most of the existing school security staff will be retrained to lead social equity and sustainability initiatives.

"We have a lot of work to do, but I believe this board is prepared to face it head-on," Davis says. "I see this as a full-time job and a wonderful learning opportunity."

His son Rafael is now a freshman at Oakland Tech where, not surprisingly, Davis serves on the PTA. "This year's been really hard on him because he's only been on campus a couple of times," Davis says. To somewhat compensate, father and son volunteered to distribute textbooks on campus, and Davis organizes monthly Zoom meetings for freshman families.

"We're all looking forward to getting our kids back in school. But we're going to be sure it's safe."

Contact our school board representative at sam.davis@ousd.org. To receive his newsletter, visit www.samdavisforoaklandschools.org/subscribe. ■



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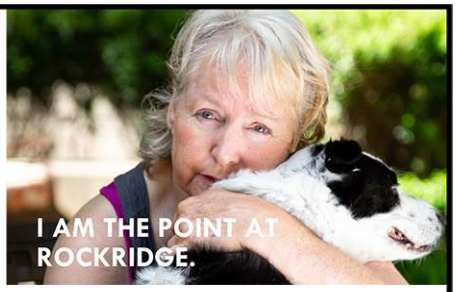
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Happy New Year - Welcome 2021! Bye 2020!



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