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

Push Back, or Have We Lost Enough?

— by Annette Floystrup, RCPC Board Member

This is the second article in a series focusing on the history of the RCPC.

When the Grove-Shafter freeway opened in 1970, Rockridge neighbors began to organize to restore and revitalize the neighborhood they saw as "devastated" by six long years of construction disruption. What was it that pushed Rockridge neighbors to organize and formulate new plans for the neighborhood in the early '70s? For that, we must examine how the freeway came to Rockridge and go back in time more than a few decades to see what was lost.

Historian William Rorabaugh, in his book *Berkeley at War*, describes a Berkeley radically different from the Berkeley we know today. Conservative and professional elites ran the city. As an example, Berkeley voters rejected every single bond measure aimed at funding schools except one between 1924 and 1959, and it wasn't until the mid-'60s that the combined effects of school desegregation, campus unrest, and rising radicalization caused them to move out and liberals to begin moving in.



This 1967 aerial photo shows the excavation for the Grove-Shafter freeway and the impact it had on the Rockridge neighborhood.

Russ Reed, untitled, 1967. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches. *The Oakland Tribune* Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, gift of ANG Newspapers. ©The Oakland Museum of California

Those Berkeley conservatives had political clout on the state level. While they were very pleased when Ashby Avenue was designated a part of the State highway system in 1935, they did not welcome California Department of Transportation plans to build a

***RCPC History,** see page 14*

RCPC & NCPC Joint Town Hall Meeting

— by Robin McDonnell, Vice Chair RCPC, and Karen Ivy, Secretary Greater Rockridge NCPC

The Rockridge Community Planning Council and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council will hold their annual joint Town Hall this year on **Thursday, August 19, at 7pm**. In light of this year's predicted fire season and the constant danger of earthquakes, the Oakland Firesafe Council will present an hour-long workshop on disaster preparedness. The NCPC will also have the Community Resource Officers for beats 12Y and 13X present current crime statistics.

Oakland Firesafe Council will describe their Oakland Community Preparedness & Response program, and recommended procedures for preparing for, surviving, and recovering from disasters. They may also discuss their two-way radio communication program for use if cell service is unavailable. Contact info@rockridge.org for more information. We hope to hold the meeting in person, but, if not, pre-registration will be required to receive the Zoom link. ■

RCPC Clifton Hall Fundraiser Surpasses Goal

— by Casey Farmer, RCPC Secretary

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) led and completed a successful fundraising effort to purchase kitchen supplies for our new neighbors at Clifton Hall. Formerly a dormitory for students attending California College of the Arts, the building was purchased under the State of California's Homekey grant program, and is being converted into affordable housing for families and seniors. New residents will be moving in this summer.

Thanks to our generous community, our original fundraising goal was surpassed. In total, 34 donors raised $2,135. As promised in our original announcement of the fundraiser, RCPC will be contributing another $600 toward the welcome gift.

At the request of Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (SAHA), the nonprofit which will provide property and case management services to the residents, the donated funds will be used to outfit the two shared kitchens as well as provide each resident with

***Fundraiser,** see page 2*

Fundraiser, from front page

a set of dishes for their individual rooms (SAHA is equipping each room with a microwave).

Grand Lake ACE Hardware will be providing the items at cost and contributing an additional $500 gift. As a result of their generosity (and our above-goal fundraising), we will be able to purchase additional useful items for the two kitchens: coffee pots, mixing bowls, spatulas, pots, pans, cutting boards, dish towels, and toasters. Special shout-out to Store Manager **Shaun Braga** for facilitating this large contribution and for being great to work with in procuring all of the items needed.

"We are deeply grateful to RCPC and the donors for being so generous to our new residents here at Clifton Hall," said Leigh Ann Brenneke, Regional Services Director at SAHA. "This is a very warm welcome from the entire neighborhood."

In addition to the donation from RCPC, Upper Broadway Advocates, which distributed 20 gift bags to the temporary families this past January, has prepared gift bags with small useful items for the tenants for when they arrive later this summer. ■

Grand Lake ACE Hardware
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**Note, this is a partial list as many donors asked to remain anonymous.*

New Rockridge Branch Library Hours & OPL Summer Reading Program

The Oakland Public Library (OPL) has expanded service at all 18 locations as of Tuesday, June 15, 2021, to match the hours that were in effect before the Covid pandemic began in March 2020. All visitors will be expected to follow current health orders, and services will be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the current protocols.

People of all ages can participate in the Summer Reading Program. For children up to 14-years-old, there will be a book prize and a raffle for every person who reads over the summer. Come and enjoy crafts, science experiments, and games every Thursday at 4pm on Zoom; and online programs every Saturday at 10:30am including Zoom dance parties. Please register in advance.

If you would like to send and receive mail from kids and teens in other countries, please ask at your local library for more information about the Pen Pal program for children ages 6 to 16.

Rockridge Library New Hours:

Monday: 10am to 5:30pm
Tuesday: 10am to 8pm
Wednesday: 10am to 8pm
Thursday: 10am to 5:30pm
Friday: 12pm to 5:30pm
Saturday: 10am to 5:30pm
Sunday: Closed ■

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News was founded March 1986 by Don Kinkead, and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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Contacting The Rockridge News

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

Articles 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.

Mail payment to:
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Display Advertising
Deadline for the Sept. 2021 issue is: Aug. 17

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.

The Rockridge News reserves the right to refuse any articles, display ads, or classified ads.

Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

Rockridge Community Planning Council —
Land Use Committee Update

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

RCPC Land Use Committee Update: July 2021

— by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

The Land Use Committee held its June meeting on June 21 via Zoom without a quorum.

Rockridge Housing Study

The subcommittee working on affordability incentives was not present. No report.

Current Housing Legislation Affecting Rockridge

An article appears on page 6 of this issue of *The Rockridge News* sketching out three bills with the potential to affect Rockridge. It appears all three may be heading towards passage.

Due to lack of a quorum, the remainder of the Land Use Committee meeting was spent discussing land use-related questions, including the cost of housing in Rockridge, availability of housing sites, and what might help to make new housing more feasible. *(A Video of the meeting will be posted on RCPC's YouTube channel.)* ■



Soup Night restarted on the 5300 block of Boyd Avenue when neighbors got together on June 6 at the home of Candy Vernetti (a *Rockridge News* delivery volunteer) to share food and reconnect after many months of isolation. The block plans to continue getting together the first Sunday of every month.

Fur and Florals: Art Show at Rockridge Café

Fur and Florals; Comfort during Quarantine is a series of pastel and acrylic paintings by artist **Rachel Perls**. "People turned to pets and gardens for comfort, a sense of stability, and happiness. This series is in appreciation for the fur babies and florals that enrich our lives."

A Rockridge resident for 12 years, Perls art will be on display 7/21 through 9/1 at the Rockridge Café, 5492 College Avenue. ■



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Safeway Settlement Funds — UPDATE

— by Matt Levy, RCPC Board Member

In early April, RCPC sent Safeway/Albertsons a letter telling them how we wish to use the $400,000 settlement fee to calm traffic along streets just west of the market. We recently received a formal response essentially denying our request, claiming that no traffic impacts would have occured if Safeway had been allowed to add a left-turn lane and arrow at the College/Alcatraz intersection.

Albertson's argument makes no sense as our original request (posted on Rockridge.org with Albertsons' response) explained how the new store brought a 50 percent increase in traffic in both directions along Hillegass between Claremont and the Berkeley border. There was also increased traffic on Alcatraz west of College. Clearly, this increased traffic is due to cars going to and from the new Safeway, which would be unaffected by a left turn lane and light.

RCPC's board of directors will be meeting in early July to discuss a strategy, per our settlement agreement, and submit our request to Oakland's Planning and Zoning Director who has the authority to override Safeway's objections and approve the project. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Affordable Housing Requires Subsidies

Many thanks for the informative affordable housing article by Annette Floystrup *(The Question of Affordable Housing, May 2021).* We think she makes a good case for the need for public and/or private subsidies to build truly affordable housing. In a previous *Rockridge News*, we'd read the article on building and financing an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The article stated that the approximate cost of $185,000 of the ADU could be financed for about $800/month, but the homeowner could expect to get much more in rent — 2k to 3k is a good guess.

The May 2021 issue of the right-leaning *Apartment Owners Association News* also has a piece promoting ADUs which considers the "never ending stream of additional income and permanent increase in overall value of property," not to mention the likely exemption from rent control. We've often wondered how this additional housing might help house some of the people living in Frog Park and in tents along the Hwy. 24 freeway exit *ad infinitum*.

Ms Floystrup's article makes clear it won't.

Alfred Crofts and Robert Brokl

Affordable Housing, Or Market Rate?

Ken Rich's article in the June, 2021 *Rockridge News*, "Housing in Rockridge: Affordable Only or Market Rate Too?" promotes "trickle-down" housing theory. Building more market-rate housing does not produce more affordable housing. Studies show that it can result in gentrification and higher rents in existing buildings *(see my website www.PreserveRockridge.com and click on "Who Benefits?").*

The example cited by Mr. Rich, The Logan at 51st and Telegraph, has 17 "affordable" units out of a total of 204 (8 percent). Those 17 units are for families earning less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income, which is a rather high figure to be considered truly affordable. Also, comparing rental costs at The Logan to Rockridge mortgage costs is comparing apples to oranges. Rents and home purchase prices have historically been lower in Temescal than in Rockridge.

Mr. Rich ran for the RCPC Board on a slate of four candidates who were endorsed by Mayor Libby Schaaf, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks. Those three officials received large campaign contributions from real estate interests, and, unsurprisingly, all three support bills such as the failed SB50, which would have overridden R-1 zoning statewide — including in Rockridge.

RCPC is a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation, which is prohibited under law from engaging in political activity. Does it bother anyone else besides me that board elections for our small neighborhood organization are now being subjected to influence by the same officials who want Rockridge up-zoned for development?

Jon Gabel,
former RCPC Board Member

The opinions represented in the Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Rockridge News, the Rockridge Community Planning Council, or the RCPC Board of Directors.

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July is Awareness Month for > The Great Outdoors, Pride, Safety, Alzheimer's Awareness



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In Memoriam

Jean Chung

— by Jenny Chung Mejia & Kevin Chung

Our mom was a dynamo. As a first-generation immigrant to the United States, she along with our dad went on to pioneer a vibrant restaurant scene on College Avenue as co-owner of Rockridge Cafe for nearly 50 years. She learned and navigated American systems with grit and grace to support our family.

She never expected to call Oakland home. After growing up in Indonesia and graduating from school in Taiwan, she wanted to travel and visit her nine siblings around the world. However, a chance encounter with our dad led to a permanent move to the Bay Area in 1978.

Mom spoke little English when she arrived, often describing how unfamiliar and foreign everything felt and wondering how to provide the best opportunities for us, her children. However, as she met welcoming neighbors, customers, parents at Chabot Elementary and East Bay Chinese School, and the broader Rockridge community, Oakland became home.



Jean and Bill ran the Rockridge Cafe together for over 40 years.

In the early days, our parents rented a home on Manila Ave where they'd walk to work and serve up warm breakfasts to customers at the Rockridge Cafe during the day, and fresh pizzas in the evenings at Pizzeria Guglielmo. Some of her favorite memories were being pregnant and tossing pizza dough at Pizzeria Guglielmo late into the night, going shopping at the old Payless shopping center on Broadway, and driving our friends to the swimming pool in the back of the '89 Volvo station wagon. Our mom loved a competitive tennis match with her teammates at the Oakland Hills Tennis Club, a good game of mahjong, her morning latte, and rooting for the Warriors.

She gave so much to her family and friends and greatly appreciated being part of the Rockridge community. In the words of our dad, "Jean is an amazingly kind person, partner, and mother that we will miss dearly."

Mom passed on May 6, 2021, after battling pancreatic cancer. To celebrate her life, we request that anyone who wishes to leave comments or support causes our mom believed in, please visit our tribute page at https://tinyurl.com/jeanchung.

We love you, mom! ■

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Housing Bills That Might Affect Rockridge

— by Stu Flashman, RCPC Board Member

As has been true in recent legislative sessions, the Legislature began this year with a stack of bills to change State housing policy — this in response to California's much-reported housing crisis, but that crisis is complicated. There's no question that California has fallen far short on building enough affordable housing, but there's disagreement even within the RCPC Board over whether Oakland is meeting its state-mandated goals for market-rate housing (more on that in a future article). At any rate, most people agree that affordability is important.

Many of the bills have already died — either withdrawn by the authors, voted down in committee, or failing to pass out of their house of origin (Assembly or Senate) by the deadline of early June. The remainder moved on into the other house and will be considered in committee over the next few weeks. Those that survive will then go to a "floor vote" — a vote of the full house — and then potentially on to the Governor for his signature or veto.

Some of the surviving bills would not affect Rockridge, although they might affect other cities. This article focuses only on those with the greatest potential impact on Rockridge.

• **SB9 [Atkins/Wiener/Wicks]** Trumpeted by both supporters and opponents as ending single-family zoning throughout California, this is a complicated bill. SB9 requires municipalities to approve a lot-split (i.e., making one lot into two) for any parcel currently zoned for one single-family house, and also to allow two units (i.e., a duplex) on any lot zoned for single-family housing. In essence, it would allow, by right, four housing units where two (one home and one ADU) were previously allowed. While the bill appears to exempt hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., high fire risk, high earthquake risk, or wetlands), it would still apply.

Many pro-housing groups and the cities of Oakland and San Diego support the bill. Many other cities, local community groups, and the League of California Cities oppose the bill as interfering with local control of land use. It could also be problematic for emergency evacuation in areas with narrow streets, like the Oakland/Berkeley Hills.

• **SB10 [Wiener/Atkins/Skinner]** Unlike SB9, this bill is permissive rather than mandatory. It also has now been limited to apply only through 2029. It would let any municipality adopt zoning allowing up to ten housing units per parcel if the area involved is either urban infill or in a "transit-rich" area – i.e., within a half-mile of a major transit stop or along a "high quality" bus route (e.g., AC Transit 51A or B line). The bill could apply to almost anywhere in Oakland, including all of Rockridge.

The bill exempts any such rezoning from environmental review under CEQA and overrides any local law restricting zoning (e.g., permanently designating an area as open space), including local initiatives. Once the zoning has been enacted, projects to construct more than ten housing units (not including ADUs) would still require CEQA review. Smaller projects would not. It also has an "anti-backsliding" provision; the rezoning, once enacted, could not later be undone.

SB10 is supported by many pro-housing groups (it was put forward by California YIMBY) including the California League of Women Voters, and the City of Oakland. It is opposed by numerous cities, local neighborhood groups, and the Sierra Club.

SB9 and SB10 both passed in the Assembly Housing Committee.

• **AB1401 [Friedman/Wiener/Skinner]** This bill more directly concerns off-street parking requirements than housing. However, providing off-street parking, especially in a parking structure, is a major cost for new housing, as well as other types of developments. This bill would prohibit placing any off-street parking requirement on a new development located within a transit-rich area (same definition as in SB10). It would continue to allow off-street parking requirements for electric vehicles or the disabled. Significantly, the bill has no exception for high-fire hazard areas, meaning no off-street parking could be required in new projects in those parts of Upper Rockridge within a half-mile of the Rockridge BART. It would apply to almost all of Lower Rockridge. Like the other two bills, AB1401 is supported by many pro-housing groups and opposed by some local neighborhood groups including the League of California Cities. AB1401 will be heard by the Senate Governance & Finance and Housing Committees, and is likely to pass both (Sen. Wiener is on both, and Sen. Skinner is on housing.)

For more about these bills, go to: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/. ■



Thank You Former and Future Volunteers

— by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

The Rockridge News would like to thank **Janet Kirk**, **Alan and Julie Chin**, and **Noah Treuhaft,** who have graciously served as Block Captains and are now moving on. We also extend a warm welcome to three new volunteers who will be Block Captains for the first time as of this issue — **Charlotte Strother**, **Peter Birkholz**, and **Benjamin Connolly**. We are constantly buoyed by the enthusiasm and goodwill of our Rockridge neighbors who step up to serve their community.

Lastly, we wish to acknowledge all of the 150 volunteers who prepare the paper for delivery, pick up and deliver boxes and bundles, and go door-to-door to over 5,400 homes in the Rockridge area. *The Rockridge News* has been on people's doorsteps since 1986 and is one of the very few community papers that is still printed and hand-delivered, making Rockridge even more special.

This is a call to those of you who wish to be part of *The Rockridge News* family to claim one of the Block Captain routes below:

05G: Both sides of 5800 Chabot Court and 6578-6608 Chabot Road.

11B: From 5484 College, even numbers up to 5542 Taft across to odd numbers, starting 5545 then to 5560 College.

12A: From Manila odd numbers along 5539-5437 Broadway to Ada, evens on Ada to Bryant, even numbers 5408-5442 Bryant to Manila.

This monthly task takes about 15-30 minutes to complete and is typically done during the weekend following the first Friday of each month. Bundles are dropped at the doorstep of our Block Captains to deliver onto porches or by inserting the newsletter in stair railings (no mailboxes please).

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

A Party Pops Up On College Avenue

— by Anna L. Marks

On Saturday, June 12, College Avenue businesses, from Keith to Lawton, set up individual pop-ups to celebrate the end of Covid restrictions. "This Block Party was a joint effort of all the stores on the 5500 Block of College Avenue to celebrate all that we went through during such a difficult time this last year and a half — and that we are still here," said Liz Taylor of Tootsies." Tootsies Rockridge/Crush On College, is a women/minority-owned boutique that opened in 2005. **The next block party is scheduled for July 17th**.

Other participating stores included the Oak Art Library *(see news item below)*, BART Bridge, Open Mind Music, Golden Bug, Pegasus Books, Cole Hardware, Bella Vita, Right Angle Salon, and Phoenix Optical. ■



BART Bridge's Jeff Shores is a "Man of Many Hats."



Oarsmen Steve Bollhoefer and Zach Vieira entertained passersby.

Rent Before You Buy at The Oak Art Library

Did you ever think it would be nice to test out how new artwork looks in your home before purchasing it? Well, now you can at the Oak Art Library. This new concept allows you to check out artwork like you would check out a book from the library. A $20 monthly fee allows members to "borrow" any one piece of art for up to three months and then swap it out with something new, or purchase the artwork directly from the artist.

Located at 5550 College Avenue, the artspace gallery is open for visitors and features up to 30 different artists. ■



Mike Hampton, who also runs the pop-up shop BART Bridge, helps find artists for the library's collection.

Stained Glass Restorer Honors A Legacy

— by Judith Doner Berne, Rockridge News Staff Writer



"We use a lot of old dental tools for the precision required to restore stained glass," says Ariana Makau, founder of Nzilani Glass Conservation.

She's the second person in the world, and the first woman, to receive a master's degree in stained glass conservation from the Royal College of Art in London. She has interned at The Getty in Los Angeles and worked in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

But **Ariana Makau**, who describes herself as "proudly half-Californian, half-Kenyan," chose Rockridge to raise her family, and Oakland as headquarters for her stained-glass creation, preservation, and restoration business — Nzilani Glass Conservation.

Nzilani, the company she founded and nurtured from a tiny one-room studio in Berkeley 20 years ago, now inhabits five spacious units in a West Oakland building dedicated to artists and small businesses that support the arts. She named it for her Kenyan grandmother, "to honor and amplify my grandmother's legacy."

But it was her Southern California grandfather, a carpenter and draftsman, who gave Makau her first toolkit around the age of seven, including "a hammer that fit my hand." From there, it was a winding road to a career in stained glass conservation influenced by a life-long desire to contribute to the stability and longevity of meaningful objects.

She first came to Oakland for what was supposed to be a six-week housesitting stint for her father. "Twenty-plus years later I have a well-established stained glass conservation firm in West Oakland, and my family has been living in Rockridge for over 15 years. My father has since moved two blocks away, so we are a multigenerational family with Peralta and Claremont kids."

During Covid, when we were forced to become homebodies, Makau experienced "a shift in our clientele from monumental buildings as in San Francisco's Grace Cathedral to residential houses in Oakland and Piedmont. We've always done residential but not of the volume we've done in the last year" as many people devoted more attention to their homes, where they lived, worked, and studied.

eyes on Rockridge

Makau seems to find the same joy in these smaller, very local scenarios as she did from the 2018 California Preservation Design Award-winning repair of the two 45-foot high, 303-panel New and Old Testament windows in the iconic Grace Cathedral. Stained glass windows are assembled with strips of lead, she explained, and somewhere between 80-100 years in place the lead starts to fail. The Grace Cathedral windows, installed in 1931-32 and composed of 2,000 square feet of glass, took four years to remove, restore, clean, and replace.

"I take pleasure in being a woman business owner who can bring a diversely skilled team to preserve

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page



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Competition Drives Price in June

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
6/1/2019	3	2.5	6315 Chabot Rd	$1,895,000	$1,895,000	12	$2,840,000
6/2/2019	3	2.5	5533 Taft Ave	$1,295,000	$1,295,000	0	$1,800,000
6/2/2019	5	3	5916 Ivanhoe Rd	$1,949,000	$1,949,000	11	$2,900,000
6/3/2019	3	1.5	5323 Broadway Ter	$1,349,000	$1,349,000	4	$1,900,000
6/8/2019	4	3.5	5845 Colby St	$1,925,000	$1,925,000	12	$3,350,000
6/10/2019	2	1	5515 Broadway Ter	$995,000	$995,000	9	$1,320,000
6/11/2019	3	2	482 Clifton St	$1,085,000	$1,185,000	22	$1,200,000
6/14/2019	3	1.5	5430 Thomas Ave	$1,695,000	$1,695,000	13	$2,205,000
6/15/2019	2	2	5340 Broadway Ter	$695,000	$695,000	12	$825,000
6/22/2019	2	2	5340 Broadway Ter	$749,000	$749,000	26	$760,000

Homes sold in June closed 40% over the asking price on average.

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Eyes on Rockridge, *from previous page*

windows in 'my backyard,'" Makau told me. The art glass she sees in vintage houses throughout Rockridge "adds so much quality to these homes and, often, there's a story behind them." Although sometimes it's a repair made necessary by a stray football, more often the life of stained glass in these houses, built in the early twentieth century, is ebbing.

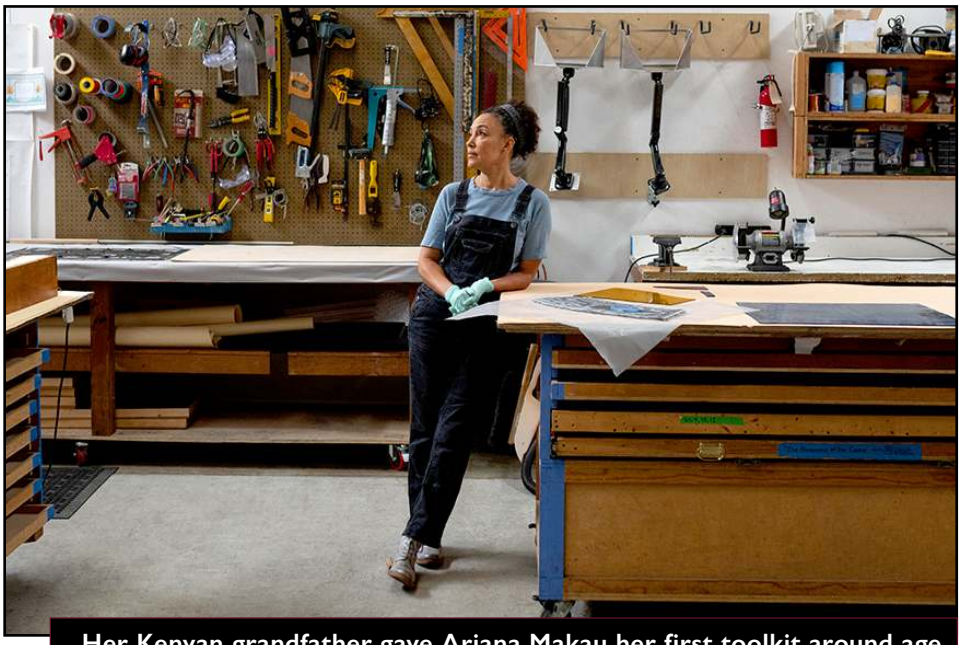
Particularly meaningful to her, she said, "was doing a small repair on a front door at St. Albert's Priory after which I was given a tour of their beautiful stained-glass windows that line the chapel. It's experiences like this that make it hard to consider living elsewhere."

"We contacted Ariana after an incident of vandalism," Fr. John told me as he, Fr. James, and I stood within the gates of the Priory, nestled within the row of homes lining Chabot Road. Someone had smashed an antique window closest to the lock on the front door of the chapel, built in 1940 but, luckily, didn't gain entry.

"We were very pleased to find a local artist of her ability who was a member of our Rockridge community," Fr. John said. Makau and her crew set up shop on the chapel lawn to make the repair and used antique glass from the Priory's storerooms. "It's always a joy to work with someone who has her ability and craftsmanship," Father James added. They are hoping to reconnect with her for the renovation of the chapel windows.

Makau received a 2020 California Preservation Design Award for her company's successful conservation of the 12-panel inverted stained-glass dome in the sanctuary of Resurrection Oakland Church, on Franklin and 17th Street in downtown Oakland. "At 118-years-old," the award presenters said, "the dome was in a critical state of disrepair, requiring glass stabilization, re-leading, and the re-engineering of its structural support system."

Top of mind for Makau in taking on these projects is the safety of the artists she trains and employs, and the contractors she hires. Among other measures, she has installed a heavy metal filtration system and requires extensive personal protection gear for handling hazardous materials. "Everyone in the core team is a certified lead and asbestos worker," she told me. "We check people's blood lead levels every six months and do annual respirator fit tests."



Her Kenyan grandfather gave Ariana Makau her first toolkit around age seven, including "a hammer that fit my hand."

She takes pleasure in making presentations to schoolchildren, most often at Peralta Elementary where her 10-year-old goes, and her 13-year-old, now at Claremont Middle School, also attended. A recurring theme is: "There are different ways to learn. You don't have to have a master's degree to be successful," explaining that her employees come from different backgrounds and often learn on the job. "The only thing we can't teach is curiosity."

Married to Dylan Nolfi, a videographer "who can make anything," Makau once told a real estate agent who suggested a house in another community, "I'd rather rent (which they were doing) than move out of Rockridge." They enjoy eating at Filippo's and "the Rockridge Library is one of the staples of our family." She loves the sense of community at Peralta where "I've made lifelong friendships."

"She's a dear friend and a stand-up individual who I really respect," said Jessica Waggoner, a neighbor and fellow Peralta parent. The two found common ground as female entrepreneurs. Waggoner, a principal in Maj Realty, had Makau speak to some of her colleagues since "we often do repairs in older homes. She's so top of her game, so professional. I love her credo: 'Be safe, have fun, do excellent work.'"

To comment on this column and/or suggest topics for the future, please email judyberne@att.net. ■



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Helping Neighbors In a Most Unusual Way

Trader Joe's Line-Watch Camera Shuts Down After A Year of Serving Rockridge

— by Theresa Nelson

When the sudden lockdown happened in March 2020, few of us were prepared for the subsequent long lines for everyday activities like buying groceries. Occupancy limits and product shortages made tasks like these very stressful. Almost overnight, lines became hours long, leading to frustration and sometimes, even confrontations.

Adrian Moyer, a marketing consultant and a neighbor who then lived on Miles Avenue, could see this stress and anxiety out her apartment window every day. For a few weeks, she would post on Nextdoor when the line was short, but many did not see the message until much later. Someone suggested a livestream, and given her ideal location, she delved into what would be needed. Within a week she put together a website, set up a Twitch account, carefully positioned an old cell phone in a window, and launched it with a note on Nextdoor. In April 2020, Adrian launched her website, RockridgeTJsLine.com and the livestream was an immediate hit, even more so as the weather grew warmer, and the long line often deterred people from shopping. For the elderly, the disabled, pregnant women, people with young children, and anyone especially vulnerable to the new virus sweeping the country, minimizing the wait time was a true benefit.

One reader suggested appealing to users with a donation opportunity. Adrian thought that the Alameda County Community Food Bank would be the right match, especially given the severe effects of the shutdown on so many East Bay families. She added a button to donate to the Food Bank, and many grateful users did indeed make donations, quickly reaching a $1,000 goal, and then even higher goals thereafter. Positive comments poured in, and users called it "life-changing" and "this made a huge difference for me." Adrian's project was even mentioned in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Then, on Memorial Day, Trader Joe's moved the line to Oak Grove Avenue, on the other side of the store. Many people had come to rely on the livestream, so the next day, Adrian dropped a note in a few mailboxes on Oak Grove, asking if a resident might

TJ's Line Watch, *see next page*

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Marketing consultant Adrian Moyer found retired State employee Alison Colgan to answer the call to host the TJ line-watch camera.

TJ's Line Watch, *from previous page*

be willing to host the webcam.

Alison Colgan, a retired State employee, answered the call, and within two days, she and Adrian had the webcam back up and running. Alison's home had a perfect view of the line, and she generously took over the daily task of turning the stream on and off to match TJ's open hours. "I was so grateful to be able to do something that would help others," Alison noted, and Adrian responded, "and it is so nice to have made a new friend during this pandemic." Alison smiled in agreement.

In thinking about when and how to end the webcam, Adrian hit on the idea of using plastic vaccine card-holders to spur a final surge in donations. Today the donations to the Food Bank stand at $7,800, from more than 230 people. Adrian is offering a handy card-holder for every $5 donated, but she's offering to triple the offer for *Rockridge News* readers. She's hoping this final push will bring her closer to her final goal of $10,000.

When asked what she'd learned from this experience, Adrian said, "I learned that you never know when you might find yourself in the right place at the right time to help others... I went from feeling rather helpless to having a purpose and a mission. It's something I never could have predicted when this pandemic started." And Alison noted, "I am so grateful to Adrian for giving me the opportunity to do something positive."

Show your gratitude, donate to the Alameda County Foodbank at https://www.gofundme.com/f/rockridge-trader-joes-line-watch-project. ■

How To Claim Your FREE Vaccine Card Holder

1) Visit RockridgeTJsLine.com and click the 'donate' button (all funds directly benefits the ACCFB).

2) Take a screenshot of your donation and email it to adrianemoy@gmail.com along with information on where you want the card holder/s sent.

3) Mention *The Rockridge News* to receive three card holders for every $5 donated.

Card holders should arrive via USPS within a few days.

TJ's Line Watch

Key Website Stats as of June 15, 2021:

30,050 unique visitors

5,048 hours streamed

231 individual donors

$7,855 total donations

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Is Affordable Housing Still Possible in Rockridge?

— by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

In last month's article on the results from the Rockridge Housing Study, we learned that land cost can be an important part of overall housing cost. Because Rockridge is such a desirable place to live — with pleasant tree-lined streets, convenient walking access to shops selling food and clothing as well as a drug store, hardware store and lots of other things, and convenient access to public transit, freeways, and major surface streets— land costs are higher here than almost anywhere else in the East Bay. That's not good news if one hopes to build affordable housing in Rockridge.

The analysis that housing consultant Darin Smith volunteered to do for the Rockridge Housing Study, based on figures available from 2018-2019, gave us some unpleasant news about how costly it would be to build affordable (or even market rate) housing here in Rockridge. *(The results of this analysis are posted on the new Rockridge.org website.)*

The study revealed that the average per-acre cost of for-sale housing in zip code 94618, at that time, was about $11 million per acre. That means a developer seeking to replace an 1,800-square-foot, single-family home on an average 5,300-square-foot lot would have to pay about $1.4 million. If you built two homes on the lot, the land cost would be about $700,000 each.

If we assume each new unit is 1,500 sq. ft. at $500/sq.ft. construction cost, that's $750,000 per unit, for a total cost of $1.45 million per unit ($700k for land + $750k for vertical construction). That comes out to a cost of $967 per square foot, which is pretty high for a duplex unit — and that doesn't take into account tear-down cost or the developer profit.

The results don't come out much better if one builds a fourplex instead. As a result of the high land cost in Rockridge, it still doesn't pencil out.

The figures don't look any better for trying to buy a commercial lot, say the Levant Rug Store parcel, where, based on 2020 assessed value, the land cost would be even higher at $15 million per acre. The price per acre of commercial property here is generally every bit as high as for residential property.

The only Rockridge lot that looks at all feasible for affordable housing development would be the Davita Dialysis Center on Claremont Avenue where the large amount of parking space brings the land cost down to about $4 million per acre. ■







The Re-Up Refill Shop Relocates to Rockridge

— by Skip Fogarty

If you're looking for signs of retail revival on College Avenue, you'll be pleased to learn that the Re-Up Refill Shop is opening a new store this week. Located at 6025 College, just south of Claremont, the new brick-and-mortar operation relocates the Re-Up business from an urban farm and maker space in West Oakland to the commercial heart of our neighborhood.

Since we first reported about Re-Up and its co-founders last June, they've operated out of a converted shipping container, offering their line of cleaning and personal care products in eco-friendly, reusable containers. In addition to onsite retail sales, Re-Up also makes home deliveries in the Berkeley and Oakland area with a battery-powered bicycle.

The pandemic did not deter lifelong friends and Rockridge residents **Peter Lollo** and **Matt Zimbalist** from starting their business. Indeed, they realized that home delivery was a winning strategy for the times.

"It's been a good first year for us. We've served over 2,000 customers, diverted at least 15,000 single-use containers, and created several decent paying jobs."

Lollo jokes that a future "Fortune 500 company can operate out of a shipping container for only so long. Now with a lot more space, we can expand our product offerings," explains Lollo, who has partnered with Zimbalist and associate **Carly Fishman** in growing the company from a startup concept to their new storefront.



Photos courtesy of Re-Up

The Re-Up team in front of their new shop at 6025 College Avenue.

From left: Peter Lollo, Carly Fishman and Matt Zimbalist.

"Initially, we'll add a range of bulk foods to our product line," Lollo says. "Nuts, cereal, legumes, and flours. And we'll have grinders so people can make nut butters." He adds that they will also carry a variety of essential oils. "And the e-bike deliveries will continue," he exclaims.



Amber glass bottles are the hallmark of Re-Up's line of products. Reducing the waste of single-use plastic is at the core of the business.

Wherever possible, Re-Up products are pure, organic, and locally sourced. Another core principle of their mission is reducing plastic waste, so their liquid products are packaged in beautiful amber glass bottles. When you've used up your lotion or hand sanitizer, you simply return the bottles to the store or delivery person for a deposit refund and reuse.

"Diverting a plastic bottle from landfill can seem so small as to be meaningless," Lollo says. "In reality, plastic production has significant climate and social impacts. While our diversion efforts only make a tiny dent, the real point is to increase awareness, drive policy change, and do our part to shift away from single-use. That's our hope, at least."

The Re-Up team is aiming for a soft launch of the new store on July 3. In characteristic fashion, the partners remodeled the space themselves. Naturally, they've used reclaimed lumber to build rustic wooden shelves and counters. New flooring and lighting lend a slightly industrial feel as the partners transformed what was previously a dry cleaning business. Of course, it helps that Zimbalist is a licensed contractor.

To encourage neighbors to stop by and browse their new store, Re-Up is offering a 15 percent discount to first-time customers, or visit their website at www.reuprefills.org and use the promo code "WelcomeRockridge." ■

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***RCPC History,** from front page*

freeway from the Caldecott Tunnel to the Bay, incorporating Ashby Avenue, to accommodate the growing Contra Costa commuter traffic to San Francisco. Berkeley's conservative elites were well-organized, and pushed back on those early plans, forcing relocation of the freeway to the working-class neighborhoods of the North Oakland, Temescal, and West Oakland flatlands. Ashby Avenue is still a designated part of the State highway system, now numbered CA-13.

Before the Grove-Shafter Freeway was built, most people knew the neighborhood as the Chimes District, a name popularized by the opening of a very fancy movie theater in 1917 that featured a full set of chimes. It stood about where the Market Hall is today. By the 1920s, College Avenue was known as the Chimes district, and many businesses carried the name. By the 1950s and 60s, people thought the name came from the fact that the area was so quiet that the carillon bells at UC Berkeley's Sather Tower could be heard chiming the hour and playing the noon concert.

The neighborhood boasted a robust commercial district that over time featured multiple groceries, two movie theaters, two bowling alleys, a skating rink, two car dealerships, three gas stations, florists, children's and adult's clothing stores, bakeries, French laundries, dry cleaners, pharmacies, churches, banks, a community hall and later, eating establishments.

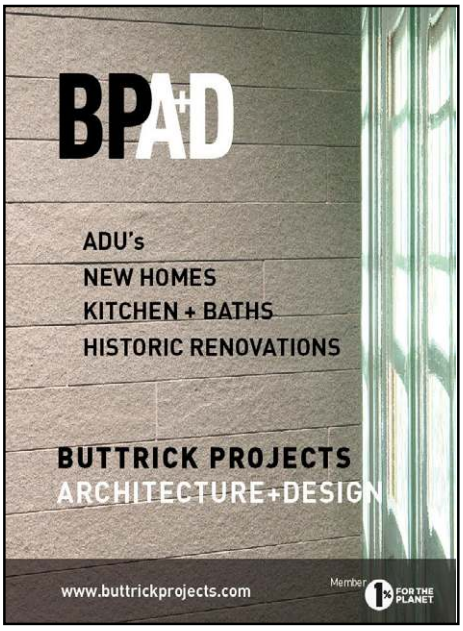
On the upper floors of most buildings were commuter-oriented apartments, and two buildings had doctors and dentists upstairs (look up at Harwood and College to see the architectural evidence), plus one of the first elevators in a commercial building in Oakland. The merchants association sponsored an annual weekend Arts & Crafts Fair.

One of the finest features, one enjoyed by generations of children and adults alike, was a beautiful creek running through Temescal Canyon that functioned as a large neighborhood park. Temescal Creek ran almost fully open from the dam at Lake Temescal to below College Avenue on Oak Grove. It was an important influence on and a frequent subject of a group of Plein-air painters, who in 1917, became known as The Society of Six. As William Gerdts wrote in his book *American Impressionism*, "The Oakland Six may constitute the most important modernist development that occurred in this country during the 1920s." Their use of color, the land, and light had a great influence on postwar Northern California modern painters such as Richard Diebenkorn and Wayne Thiebaud. The creek now runs almost totally in culverts under the freeway in Rockridge, with a few open sections on Miles above the firehouse.

Six years of freeway and BART construction brought a new reality. Key shops and services were razed, including the Bank of America. Thousands of neighbors were displaced as hundreds of dwelling units were taken by eminent domain. The business district was bisected and left with multiple empty lots, previously used for freeway construction yards.

Only roughly 50 percent of the original businesses were still open, and many storefronts were boarded up. Prominent spots that were vacant included the corners at Harwood and College (currently the Golden Squirrel building) and Chabot and College (Beer Baron), as well as the lot that the Market Hall now occupies. The empty lot at Harwood became the focal point for the neighborhood pushback.

The next article will trace the origins of community organizing in Rockridge. ■







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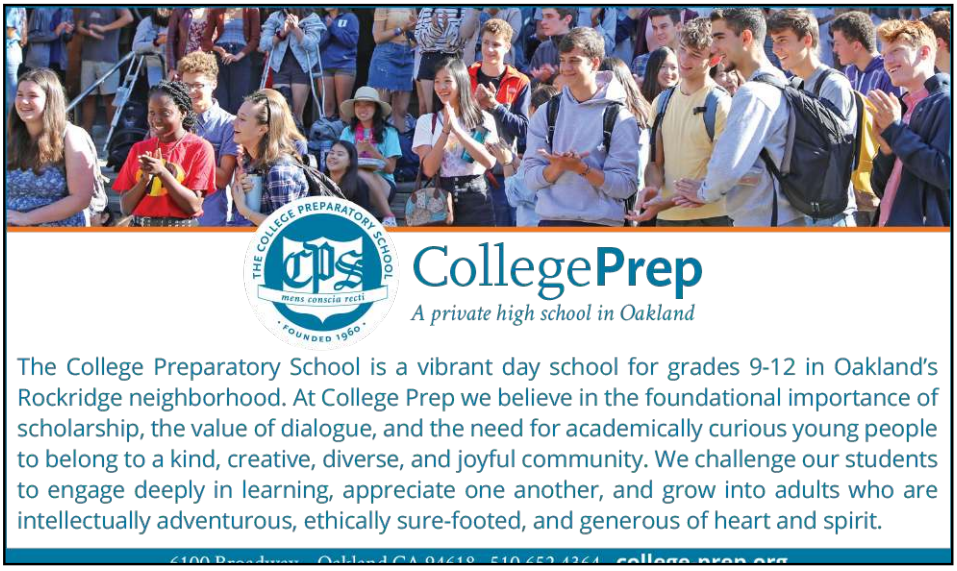
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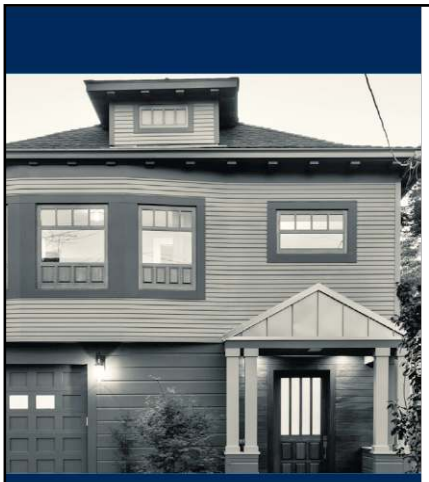
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