THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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Redistricting — What's At Stake?

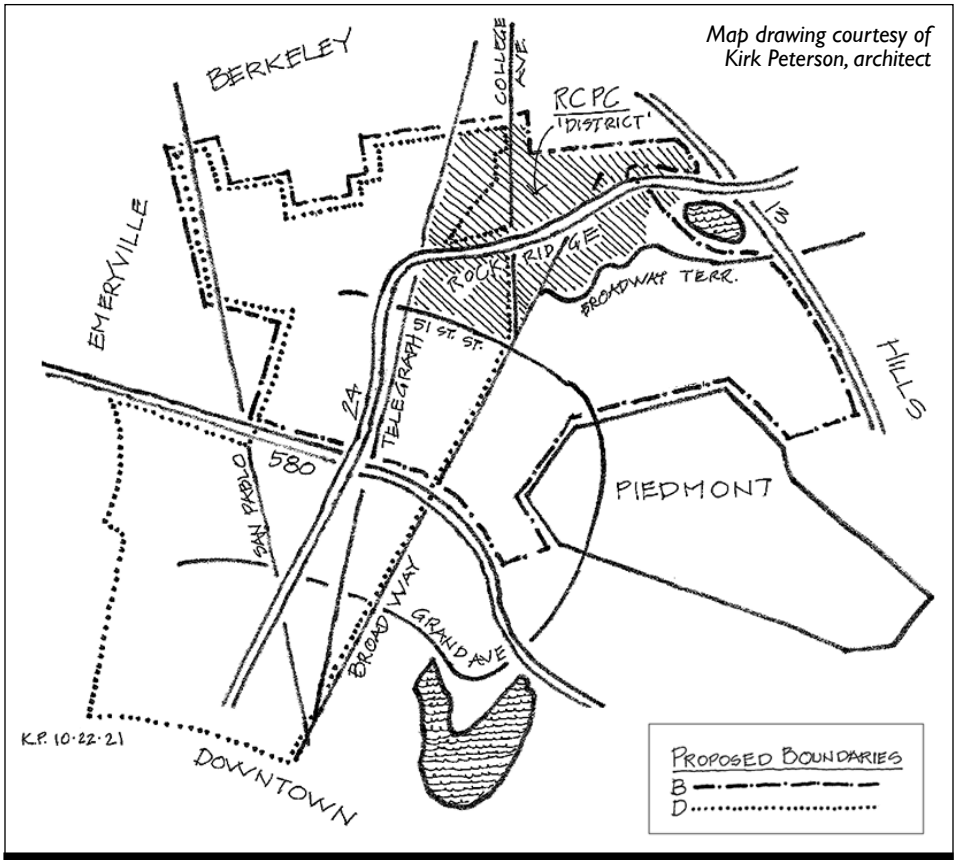
by Leonora Sea, RCPC Chair

On October 8, 2021, the Redistricting Commission of the City of Oakland released four proposed maps for new Oakland City Council districts, since reduced to two, titled "B" and "D" respectively *(see drawing on right for boundaries)*.

Rockridge and the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) received virtually no advance notice from the Redistricting Commission, and was unaware of the opportunity to provide community input on these maps before they were released. RCPC has since set up a Committee on Redistricting to put together a coherent and organized response.

Under the City ballot measure establishing the Commission, a final map must be adopted by December 31. The last public meeting of the

REDISTRICTING, see page 4



The drawing above shows the two proposed maps, B and D, that are currently under consideration. These draft maps are intended to start the conversation on what new boundaries could look like and how they would impact local communities.

What Do Rockridge Neighbors Want?

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) wants your input. Neighbors are encouraged to fill out a short, five-minute survey to share your thoughts on what you believe should be developed on the large vacant parcel at the Ridge Shopping Plaza, at 51st and Broadway.

To complete the survey online, click this hotlink: https://bit.ly/3biMFOo or copy it into your browser; or use the camera app on your phone to access it via the QR code on the right. ■

SCAN ME

Presbyterian Church To Host Community Thanksgiving Day Meal

by Monte McClain

For more than 40 years, the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (CAPC) Oakland community has held a community-organized Thanksgiving Day Community Meal. Last year, due to the pandemic, we adapted our annual community meal for takeout.

This year is still a hot mess, albeit a little less hot. So, as we all struggle to

THANKSGIVING, see page 14


Photo: Anna Marks

A recent Saturday found Shafter Avenue residents enjoying a Pop-Up Porch Concert with jazz singer Jenna Mammina, Glenn Appell and Michael B. Pelz (porch provider). They were accompanied by Robin Lewis on 7-string guitar, John R. Burr on piano, and percussionist Mark Rosenthal.

Shafter Pop-Up Porch Concerts Support Musicians and Entertain Neighbors

by Anna L. Marks

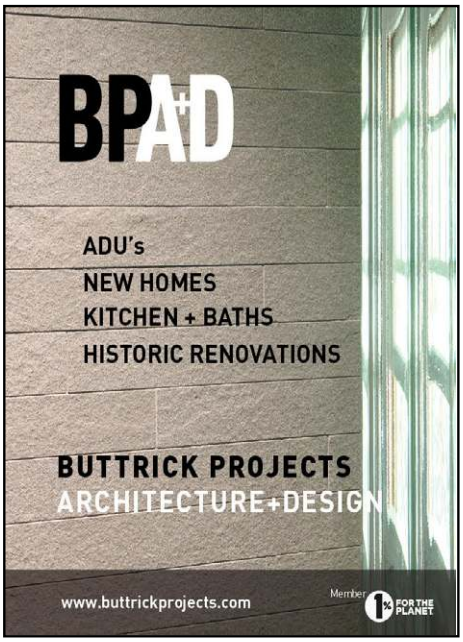
Live music moved outdoors during the pandemic, and sweet tunes have been swirling around Shafter Avenue for months. Since May of this year, **Michael Peltz** began hosting Peltz Pop-Up Porch Productions outside his home for neighbors to come and enjoy free entertainment, and has held four concerts so far.

"I've always wanted to have house concerts, and indoor house concerts are not very practical these days. My house isn't really in shape to accommodate it anyway. And then I was thinking, well, my porch is probably too small, but when I saw my neighbor do it with a much bigger ensemble, I thought, well, if they could do it, I could do it."

Peltz went into action after talking with friend and professional jazz singer **Jenna Mammina** whom he met when she was living on James. After so much time being stuck indoors and not having opportunities to perform, she agreed to help to get it going. An ad-hoc group was formed with other folks in the neighborhood, and each concert was a bit more successful than the previous one as more and more people showed up.

"It was a lot of fun and we managed to raise some money for the musicians, which is always good, because, you know, especially for some of them, it's their livelihood."

As of now, they don't have a schedule and nothing is being planned, but, to the delight of his neighbors, Peltz is determined to continue hosting porch concerts. So keep your ears open when strolling down the Avenue. ■



The RockridgeNews

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? We'd love to hear from you.

All articles and letters submitted for consideration should be emailed to: editor@rockridge.org, and must be limited to 600 words. Please be sure to include the author's name, email address, and city or neighborhood of residence. **All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and brevity.**

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Oakland Releases Draft of Five-Year Paving Plan for Public Comment

by Ronnie Spitzer, RCPC boardmember

The Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) has released a draft 2022 Five-Year Paving Plan (5YP), to continue the City's investment in the care and maintenance of Oakland's streets (bit.ly/oakdot5yp). The 5YP proposes pavement rehabilitation and preventive maintenance treatments on more than 350 miles of Oakland streets. The majority of the financing is dedicated to local streets while keeping major thoroughfares in good condition.

Want input? The **December 9, 2021,** Greater Rockridge NCPC meeting is where you can speak directly to City staff *(see rockridgencpc.com for meeting information)*. A draft map of proposed streets can be found online at bit.ly/draftmap5yp.

Transportation-Related Bills Signed Into Law by Gov. Gavin Newsom

AB 43 provides Oakland greater flexibility to set speed limits on streets with high injuries and fatalities. Currently, the speed limits are set using the 85th percentile of the prevailing vehicle speed, which can often be too fast to be safe, particularly around schools and senior centers.

AB 917 authorizes transit operators statewide to use camera-based enforcement for transit stops and transit-only lanes where it is already illegal to park. After the devastating impact the pandemic had on public transit ridership, the bill enables transit agencies to improve service reliability and rider safety.

Transportation-Related Bills Gov. Gavin Newsom Did Not Sign

AB 122 would have allowed bike riders to treat stop signs as yield signs until January 1, 2028, increasing bicyclist safety. Newsom cited his concerns that "children may not know how to judge vehicle speeds or exercise the necessary caution to yield to traffic when appropriate." He prefers a safe-system approach, with increased transportation investments and traffic calming design.

AB 1238 would have authorized jaywalking and prohibit any related fines or criminal penalties for pedestrians entering a roadway when no cars are present, until January 1, 2029. While Newsom agrees that people of color are unfairly targeted for this type of enforcement, he is concerned about California's high rate of pedestrian deaths. In the end, in order not to add further risk to pedestrian safety, the Governor witheld his signature. ■

RCPC Land Use Committee Meeting

The next Land Use Committee meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 24, at 7:30pm**, via Zoom. To attend, email landuse@rockridge.org, or call (510) 652-5373. The meeting is open to the public. Check www.Rockridge.org for details.

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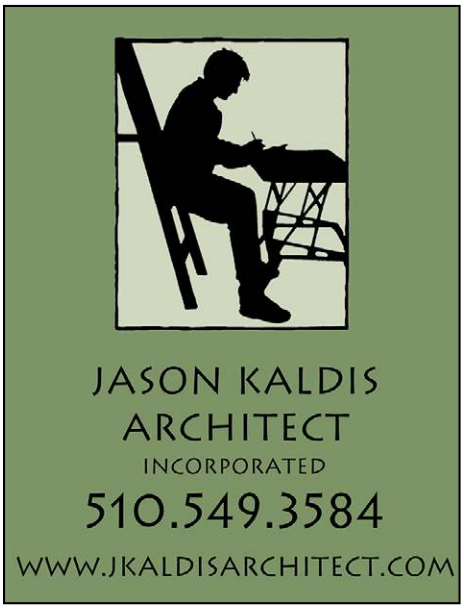
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REDISTRICTING, from front page

Commission will be on December 8. We, as a neighborhood, must speak up now with a strong and unified voice, especially since the proposed Map D threatens to tear Rockridge apart.

What's at Stake?

Map B adjusts the existing district boundaries to reflect changes in population since the 2010 census. It leaves Rockridge substantially intact, splitting off a small triangle of territory containing Lake Temescal and the immediately adjacent streets to the south and west.

Map D is deeply problematic to Rockridge. Our neighborhood is an exemplar of a Community of Interest, as defined by the Oakland City Charter. Article II, Sec. 220 (E) (4) on redistricting City Council districts states in part:

"The geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes their division to the extent possible... A Community of Interest is a contiguous population that shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation."

Map D ignores established neighborhoods and current council district boundaries. South of the BART station, it divides Rockridge at College Avenue, with everyone on the east side of College (including merchants) placed into a new district covering the entire Oakland Hills. North of the BART station, all of College Avenue up to the Berkeley border would be in this new hill district, as would a few residential blocks west of College. If Map D is adopted, a cohesive community represented by a single city council member would be split.

Our issues are neighborhood-wide, and effective government should ensure that a unified community is equally represented. Rockridge has functioned as a single geographical unit for more than 100 years, and our common understanding has allowed us to successfully tackle many issues.

Splitting Rockridge between two Council districts would introduce artificial boundaries and impact the community's ability to work towards future common goals, especially in the areas of housing and transportation. The political power of our neighborhood would be divided and weakened. One council member may deflect responsibility for an issue to the representative of the adjacent district. However, our issues are neighborhood-wide and effective government should ensure that a cohesive community is cohesively represented.

The Rockridge Community Planning Council works to represent the whole of Rockridge. We have a long history of working collaboratively on many various issues with previous City council members (informational issues, emergencies, major developments). Having split representation would complicate this relationship and make the RCPC much less effective.

What Can We Do?

Speak up. Attend the Zoom **Redistricting Commission meeting on November 10** (https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86447943502). Each member of the public is allotted two minutes of speaking time. Written comments on the proposed maps may be submitted to Deputy City Administrator Richard Luna, rluna@oaklandca.gov (please cc info@rockridge.org).

Make your concerns known to the RCPC Committee on Redistricting. This is an ad hoc RCPC Board committee formed to put together a coherent, thoughtful, and firm response to the threat of a divided Rockridge (email info@rockridge.org).

There is an excellent article by Casey Farmer and Louise Rothman-Reimer explaining the process in the October Rockridge News. *The Redistricting Commission website is: https://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/redistricting-commission* ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Zonehaven Offers Critical Evacuation Information

EDITOR: Regarding last month's *Letter to the Editor* in response to the Zonehaven emergency evacuation system article *(see September 2021)*, the Oakland Firesafe Council would like to clarify some possible misconceptions. In Oakland, zone names all follow the format OKL-EXXX, where XXX is a three-digit number. To know your zone, you only need to learn the three-digit number for the area where you live, work and/or study.

Go to community.zonehaven.com, enter a street address, and Zonehaven will provide that number, which police/fire may then reference when ordering evacuations or sheltering in place. Post this zone name/number by your front door, on your emergency go-bag, in your cell phone contact list or anywhere else where you could easily reference it.

Zonehaven has been endorsed by local fire departments and was purchased by Alameda County. It was used during recent California wildfires to help police and fire agencies better manage evacuations and sheltering. This free service also provides the public with more information on when and where evacuations are taking place, along with other critical information such as road closures and temporary refuge areas.

The Firesafe Council highly recommends that everyone sign up for **AC Alerts** (www.acgov.org/emergencysite/) to be informed of emergencies and actions to take; and "**Know your Zone**" (community.zonehaven.com).

Take these preparedness steps now, before there's an emergency. For more preparedness information, please visit the Oakland Community Preparedness & Response program at www.oaklandcpandr.org. Visit the Oakland Firesafe Council at www.oaklandfiresafecouncil.org. ■

Doug Mosher
Oakland Firesafe Council

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Discusses Local Crime and Fireworks

by Karen Ivy, Secretary, Greater Rockridge NCPC

On October 14, 2021, the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) held its bimonthly meeting on Zoom. Our Community Resource Officers, **Meeran Gichki** (12Y) and **Aaron Johnson** (13X) reported on crime over the last 90 days in beats 12Y and 13X, which was about the same as compared to the same 90 days in 2020.

The only crimes that increased substantially over last year were auto burglaries and vehicle thefts, and, to a lesser extent, petty theft. The officers reminded residents that beats 12Y and 13X have had much less crime than some other areas of Oakland.

The officers answered various questions from people on the call, and noted that the case of the homicide at the barbershop on the 5200 block of College Avenue was still open. They reminded people that abandoned cars should be reported to 311 (or SeeClickFix), not 911 or the police non-emergency number.

Sergeant Alain Manguy stood in for Acting **Captain Robert Rosin**, who couldn't attend. He discussed issues around fireworks in the neighborhood. These are illegal in Oakland, and citations carry a $1,000 fine. But, as we know, people shoot them off, especially around holidays.

Sergeant Manguy noted that staff shortages and increased activity around holidays might make it harder for OPD to respond to a call about fireworks in North Oakland if they are also responding to calls about gunfire in another district.

The meeting minutes are available at https://tinyurl.com/y7r5qmbz. ■

The next meeting of the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council is Thursday, December 9, at 7pm.

The Zoom link will be published shortly before the meeting.
Please email subject suggestions to:
chair@rockridgencpc.com

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Rockridge's Generosity Reaches Libraries Across the City

by Alona Rivord

This year, Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL), a nonprofit organization that has been supporting our neighborhood branch since its inception, piloted a new mini-grant program aimed at extending the reach of its donors' impact by helping to fund the needs of other Oakland Public Library locations.

The organization announced during its annual fundraising appeal last fall that it intended to share up to 50 percent of all donations with the broader library community, noting that many other branches do not have access to the same level of generosity as Rockridge.

"We received grant requests from eight different library 'Friends of' groups, covering a wide range of projects," said **Hal Helfand,** who spearheaded the initiative for the Friends of the Rockridge Library. "We were delighted by the great response and were able to fully or partially fund each proposal we received."

Grants were approved to support a 12-month creative writing workshop for elementary school students at the Elmhurst branch and a five-week creative writing workshop for middle school students at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland.



Chavez Library purchased a large canopy with their mini-grant.

Four chairs were purchased for the library's Teen Zone in West Oakland, and shelving and bins were requested for the Food Pantry Distribution Program that operates on location at the Melrose branch.

The Tool Lending Library in Temescal will use grant support to run four hands-on junior carpentry workshops at two branch locations. Support will also go to the Friends of Hoover Durant Public Library, a group seeking to establish a new branch in Oakland. A grant was approved for the development and hosting of a fundraising website over a two-year period. Additionally, the Main Library is receiving support for an educational monarch butterfly lifecycle exhibit, and César Chavez for garden beautification outside the branch.

"With the mini-grant from the Rockridge friends group, Chavez Library purchased a large canopy, tool shed and garden materials to help spruce up the patio space adjacent to the library," said Librarian **Joshua Alperin** from the César Chavez Branch.

"This covered, outdoor space has been critical during the pandemic, allowing patrons to sit comfortably, in an open-air space surrounded by green gardens. Our Amigos group hopes to use some of the space and materials to propagate and sell succulents in support of the library," said Alperin.

Given the program's success, the Friends of the Rockridge Library plans to offer mini-grants again next year in hopes that additional branches will take part. ■

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Scavengers Scramble About at Rockridge's Rock-N-Hunt

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association

On October 9, the Rockridge District Association (RDA) challenged neighbors to compete in a scavenger hunt that spanned the entire district. The hunt coincided with Rock-N-Stroll, an event that featured live music dotted along College Avenue as well as great discounts from various participating retailers.

Teams and individual players were given 42 clues and 12 hours to solve as many as they could. Participants were automatically entered into a raffle for each clue they discovered.

Players could find clues in both indoor and outdoor locations and they consisted of a combination of local trivia, iconic images, and specific items to locate such as book titles, a pumpkin patch, and murals. Rockridge businesses participated by hiding items, sometimes in plain sight, for the scavengers to discover as they scoured the street.

The Grand Prize "Rockridge Experience" was $100 and a gift card bundle to use at nearly 20 Rockridge merchants, valued at hundreds of dollars. The winners were **Evelyn Yuen** and **William Smith**. Second place went to **Bree Marchman** and **Patricia Legaspi**, with each of them receiving a $100 gift certificate to Market Hall. The third-place team was **Robyn Gregg, Mauro Rubina, Noelia Rubina-Gregg**, age 11, and **Martino Rubina-Gregg**, age 6, each receiving $50 gift certificates to Market Hall. Over 100 people participated and many said they would have enjoyed the game with or without prizes.

Bree Marchman, the second-place winner, said of the hunt, "We already really enjoy spending time in Rockridge so we knew we would enjoy this too. It was fun learning about some new spots we hadn't visited before and having an excuse to spend time in some of our favorite places. Overall, a great morning, and we felt so accomplished every time we figured out a clue."

For info on the RDA, visit them at www.RockridgeDistrict.com. ■

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

Mark and Rosi Schneider of Rockridge, and their daughters, Avery, age 6, the Leopard, and Eva, age 4, the cheetah, participated in The Golden Squirrel costume contest on Sunday October 31, 2021.



Photo: Andrew Snow



CCA Holds Annual Holiday Fair and Homecoming

Although the California College of Arts (CCA) is moving to San Francisco, it turns out that the Oakland campus is still operational. There are students currently living on campus, and 40 courses are being taught this current semester. Their annual **Homecoming Celebration and Holiday Fair** will be taking place on the Oakland campus again this year on **November 20, from 11am to 4pm**, at 5212 Broadway.

Attendees can shop for unique, handmade goods made by local artisans, craftspersons, and designers from the CCA community. There will also be food trucks, live music by the Delta Wires featuring CCA alum Ernie Pinata (between 12–1:30 pm), and open studios, including a showcase of CCA student work from Ceramics and Jewelry & Metal Arts programs, a casting demo in the Jewelry & Metal Arts studio, and a mono-print workshop by alum and CCA Professor Emeritus Thomas Wojak in the Printmedia studio.

From 3pm to 5pm, join the Oakland Campus Legacy Committee for the Homecoming After-Party + Legacy Print Project exhibition launch. All attendees, regardless of vax status, will be required to wear masks unless actively eating or drinking. ■

Why Plant Trees?

by Cassidy Lundin

Besides their beauty and potential to add property value, trees help to clean the air, absorbing pollutants and producing oxygen while also filtering rainwater and preventing erosion. Their shade cools overheated urban environments, and they provide food and habitat for a wide range of organisms, from mosses to mammals. Trees are known to reduce stress and induce feelings of calm and connectedness to the natural world.

When to Plant

Though trees can be planted year-round in our mild climate, the ideal time is in the fall, after deciduous types drop their leaves. Planting at this time lets roots get established during the rainy season before the warmth of spring stimulates new growth.

How to Plant

1) First, call 811, the national call-before-you-dig phone number, and find out the exact location of nearby underground utilities.

2) Once you're sure you've found a safe spot, dig a planting hole two or three times as wide as the root ball of the tree, and the same depth as the nursery container in which it came. You want your tree to sit on solid, undisturbed soil but to be surrounded by cultivated soil for ease of establishment. Make sure the root crown, the natural margin where the trunk flares slightly to meet the roots, is partially exposed. Unfortunately, store-purchased trees often have their root crowns buried, so take a few minutes to rinse or brush away the extra soil so that the trunk flare is visible.



3) Straighten the tree in the hole; check for alignment from several angles.

4) Backfill the hole with the excavated native soil (soil amendments are usually not needed). Pack the soil gently around the root ball to stabilize it. Use some of the extra soil to create a basin (a donut-shaped mound) slightly larger than the diameter of the root ball.

Carefully remove the nursery stake, which is often lashed tightly against the trunk. Install two or three tree support stakes outside the circumference of the root ball, and fasten ties loosely so they hold the tree upright but allow it to sway in the wind.

Give your tree an initial deep soaking by filling the basin two or three times and letting the water soak in slowly. Then provide approximately 20 gallons of water per week to help it become established.

For a list of approved species, along with other helpful information, please see the City of Oakland's Master Street Tree List. The City also has a free, tree planting permit application.

Contact Urban Releaf (https://californiareleaf.org/network/urban-releaf/), which is dedicated to improving the tree canopy in Oakland. ■



MOTLEY TEAM

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Competition Drives Price in August

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
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8/5/2021	4	2	5310 Boyd Ave	$1,795000	$1,795000	13	$3,075,000
8/13/2021	3	2	5252 Lawton Ave	$1,125,000	$1,125,000	16	$1,400,000
8/16/2021	3	2	5863 Chabot Ct	$1,295,000	$1,295,000	15	$1,855,000
8/20/2021	2	2	5340 Broadway Ter	$795,000	$795000	17	$835,000

Homes sold in August closed 38% over the asking price on average.

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FROG Park Committee members and founders: (Left to right) Steve Costa, Robert Capalbo, Theresa Nelson, Barney Smits, Will Sheldon, Alison Drury, Leonora Sea

Neighbors Clean Up at Frog Park

by Alison Drury

On Saturday, September 25, 2021, Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG) Park community volunteers participated in the Creek-to-Bay Day cleanup.

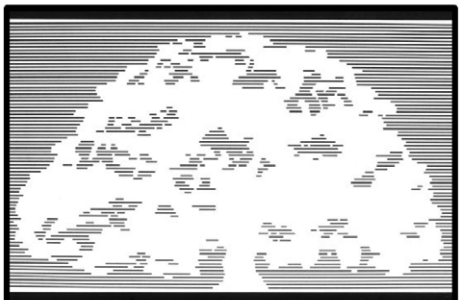
This was the neighborhood contribution to the International Coastal Cleanup Day events — a truly global effort to make our planet's waterways cleaner and healthier — and aligns with the efforts of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 11, 14, and 15 (https://sdgs.un.org/goals).

The Temescal Creek is a pump-controlled water feature that runs through the park. Volunteers cleaned up trash and debris, which not only made the park look better, but also keeps litter out of the creek, bay, and ocean. A big thank you to all who came out for the event, and a sincere thank you to Bakesale Betty and Peet's Coffee for donated treats, and the City of Oakland for the cleanup tools. ■





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RGym Knows Your Name

by Anna L. Marks



Shirley Corrothers of RGym welcomes neighbors to stop by and enjoy live music, snacks, and lots of prizes at the grand re-opening on Sunday, November 14, from 11am to 3pm, at 5357 College Avenue. *Photo: Anna Marks*

As a result of the Covid pandemic, **Shirley Corrothers** was forced to close her franchise circuit-training gym for months on end. She is forever grateful to her members who continued to support the gym by keeping their memberships active.

"The 'R' in RGym stands for 'our,' because our members supported us for the 14 months of being closed, and continue to, even though some aren't ready to come back yet. I have always told them, 'this isn't my gym, it's ours,' because without their support we would have had to close a long time ago. God bless them."

The gym originally opened in the basement of Market Hall in 2003, where it operated for 16 years before relocating to 5357 College Avenue (near Manila). Then a year later, mid-pandemic, they went private. To make it all happen, Shirley and her husband took their retirement packages and invested in rebuilding the space from the ground up, and purchased a variety of different brands of equipment to suit their 400-member base.

"It was a huge risk, especially at the advanced age of my husband and me, and we did everything. All of the equipment is suited for both men and women," said Corrothers.

They have a full range of weights, free-motion machines, cross-cable trainer, cardio and a variety of strength equipment. Corrothers explained that this new equipment requires only minor adjusting, which allows for a simpler workout routine that people can adapt to quickly.

"We are a small gym, but you're not going to get lost, we're going to know your name. We're going to know when it's your birthday. We're going to know what your goals are and what you want to work on. We're going to know what you haven't been trained on yet. And we encourage all of our members when they come in to try something new. Let's try another piece of equipment you haven't tried yet. Let's test it. Let's see if it will work for you."

There are no long-term contracts, new members can sign up for a month at a time ($89) to see if they like it (a 30-day notice is required to cancel), and have access anytime the gym is open.

Effective Nov 1, the hours are 6am to 7pm on Monday, Wednesday, and 6am to 3pm on Friday; 7am to 5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and 9am to 1pm on Saturday. They are closed on Sundays. Vax card or current negative Covid test along with mask-wearing is required for all members until the restrictions are lifted. For information, visit https://rgym4fitness.com/. ■

Seeking a Volunteer to Lighten My Load

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

I have been managing *The Rockridge News* for about 20 years, and it has been a fulfilling and gratifying experience. I get to know so many people — those who volunteer to take over routes and those who retire from their block captain jobs after a long stint (sometimes since the newsletter's inception in 1985) — a hardy and faithful group who show up to bundle the newsletter once a month. Thank you, Rockridge Community Planning Council members who pitch in when there's a pinch, and the wonderful staff of the newsletter. I love my job, and I intend to keep on doing it as long as possible.

Here's the rub. In addition to managing the distribution and bundling of the newsletter, I work behind-the-scenes to keep the paper on schedule and in the black. In October, after completing the bundling with my crew, I delivered boxes and bundles to my routes. Whew. It was just too much. I then realized I needed to cut back on my efforts and find someone to take one of my delivery routes.

Here's a description of my District Captain route that is up for grabs:

Pick up one box of newsletters at the bundling site (always a nearby location) and deliver each of the 10 bundles to houses on the 5300 blocks, between Miles and Desmond. Is there someone out there with a car who can sign on to this 20-30 minute task once a month? I hope so.

Call me at (510) 547-3855, or email smontauk@gmail.com. ■

Claremont Auction Is Live Online — Now

Claremont Middle School's annual auction fundraiser will take place online from **November 1 to 12**, and the entire community is invited to log in and bid on the items up for auction including products, services, food, beverages, gifts and more. Raffle tickets for a wine cellar's worth of wine will also be for sale (raffle winner will be notified on November 13).

Claremont serves Oakland families with kids ages 11-14 (6th-8th grade). The student body is highly diverse, both economically and ethnically. Thirty-three percent of students are white, 25 percent are African American, and 32 percent are of other races. Forty-two percent qualify for a free or reduced-fee lunch.



Rasheeda Johnson and Sharon Flor, 6th grade parents and co-chairs of the 2021 auction.

Photo: Anna Marks

The auction is the school's largest fundraiser of the year, and all proceeds will be used for student and teacher support. For example, funds will be used for classroom supplies (so our teachers don't have to use their own money) along with enrichment activities such as athletics, science, art, music, technology (media), the library, field trips and celebrations. The school is also planning to build a Restorative Justice & Community Center.

By the time this newsletter is delivered to your mailbox, the auction will be live and ready for bidding. Log on today to the auction website (https://www.claremontms.org/pta/auction/) and peruse the great items available for bidding. And maybe even bid on some wine, too. ■

Flex Streets Extended to March 2022

The Oakland City Council recently adopted a resolution to extend the Flex Streets program in its current form until March 2022. Through Flex Streets, all fees have been waived, and permitting has been streamlined for businesses to use the sidewalk, parking lanes, street closures, and other public rights-of-way for additonal seating. All currently approved permits will automatically renew on December 31, with no need to resubmit applications.

Legislation now gives businesses a one-year grace period to apply for permanent expansion. ■

Bomb Cyclone Hits The West Coast



On Sunday evening, October 24, an atmospheric river "bomb cyclone" brought much needed rain to the Bay Area — shattering all previous one-day records for the month. The deluge brought down a tree on Shafter and downed a power line on Lawton, which kept our neighborhood in the dark for hours.

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Traveling Abroad During Covid

by Judith Doner Berne



Large peaceful protests against requiring proof of vaccination or recent negative Covid test to eat out, travel, and attend events in Paris have become a wekend norm, although compliance is reported as high.

It was a difficult decision, but my husband, adult son, and I are now back from a month-long trip to three European counties — first Romania, then France and Poland. We had planned our journey for May 2020, but of course, canceled when the pandemic hit our nation, and the world.

For those of you who may be considering overseas travel (by mid-October, 86.9 percent of Rockridge residents over age 12 were fully vaccinated and 90.6 percent had had one shot), I thought that our experiences might be useful. The ability to get the booster shots two weeks ahead of the trip was our deciding factor.

We knew that flying abroad required proof of vaccination and, of course, a mask to board and wear throughout the flight. But when my husband checked in with a well-fitting cotton mask, he was told it must be a KN95 or a surgical mask. So be aware.

Flying into Bucharest, we had to fill out a form giving our address in Romania in case of the need to quarantine. Although the Romanian police looked at them as we disembarked, they didn't write anything down, leaving us to wonder what actual use they were.

We had built our trip around 10 days exploring Romania, which had a low but rising number of cases during our trip. Since then, cases have spiked and, as I write this, are the highest in Europe. Unlike in either France or Poland, we did encounter two situations there that were problematic.

The Bucharest Airport required masks and social distancing but then jammed us BART-style at rush hour onto a bus to drive to the plane. And, in one small, isolated village we stayed in a family-run guesthouse, which included homemade breakfasts and dinners. Our guide told them we were vaccinated, but I'm not sure that they were. We didn't mix with the handful of other guests. No one wore masks.

Otherwise, masks were almost always required and adhered to in indoor venues — restaurants, hotels, shops, and museums — and on all forms of transportation. But on the street, unlike here in the Bay Area, it was unusual to see someone in a mask. We were in Paris and Warsaw over beautiful, sunny weekends where people thronged the pedestrian streets and sidewalk cafes, lined up for take-out food, and picnicked in the parks — all unmasked.

Proof of vaccination, either the CDC card or a photograph of it on your phone, was required to eat indoors in both Romania and France, but not in Warsaw, which had a low incidence of Covid. They also checked your status at every indoor site be it museum or castle in all three countries.

In France, your vaccination card was also necessary to eat at an outdoor table. And at another outdoor setting, Monet's Gardens at Givenchy, we also needed proof of vaccination to enter, with masks required throughout. They even had mask patrols along the paths.

TRAVEL ABROAD, *see next page*

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TRAVEL ABROAD,
from previous page

We never needed the Passe Sanitaire that the French must show to verify vaccination or negative Covid test. We did witness a large, peaceful protest march through Paris against the mandatory pass. Dozens of police in riot gear flanked the march.

If you are thinking about a cruise, our week on the Seine River from Paris to Normandy might give you an idea of what to expect.

The ship was about half full with only 55 passengers, and the Covid protocols were stringent. No passenger or crewmember could board without proof of vaccination, and masks were mandatory in all public spaces onboard the ship and on the busses to points of interest.

When we had sailed with this cruise company in the past, you had a plastic boarding card that you showed to leave and re-enter the ship. Now, they have facial recognition screens that don't entail any person-to-person exchanges.

eyes on Rockridge

As for the breakfast and lunch buffets aboard the ship, it was no longer do-it-yourself. Rather, you walked through the offerings with a waiter, pointing out what you would like as he (they were all "he") filled your plate. For dinner, rather than having paper menus, you made your choice through a phone app; and the tables were set for your group of passengers only.

Two days before returning to the United States from Warsaw, we walked to a small Covid testing lab recommended by our hotel. A half-hour later we had the negative results on our phones required to re-enter the United States. The airports also had Covid testing areas.

No, Romania is no place to go right now, but both Warsaw and the parts of France we traveled to, are, in our minds, very doable — at least as of this writing. Protocols and vaccination numbers for every country change daily, so it is advisable to check online to verify local conditions. Safe travels.

For questions or column suggestions, please email judyberne@att.net. ■







THANKSGIVING, from front page

get together in ways that are safe, we're again committing to a takeout meal for those who come to eat as well as those who come to serve.

A "To-Go" meal will be available on Thanksgiving Day from 11am to noon, at 5951 College Avenue. All are invited as this is always a joint project with diverse members of our Rockridge community — involving congregational members, local merchants, and residents.

Currently, too many of us feel exhausted, disempowered, and alone. Our cultural ritual of Thanksgiving responds to these cravings for renewal, agency, and inter-personal connection. This is an opportunity for neighbors to gather together as a community to respond to the needs of those struggling with hunger, solitude, and joblessness. We're adapting the meal to serve 200 meals, free, for anyone who wants to come by.

Donations of money and food are gratefully accepted and seriously needed. In past years, each meal costs on average $4 with all the fixings, totaling roughly $1,500 to make it all happen. These costs are covered through numerous generous donations from our friends and neighbors.



Volunteer serves Thanksgiving dinner.

Volunteers are also needed to help in our socially distanced, protocol-observing effort to provide this holiday meal. Help is needed for cooking (at distance), preparing the site, serving, and cleaning up — all done with the utmost attention to safety measures.

Visit the www.capcoakland.org/thanksgiving-meal to volunteer for a slot or to make a secure donation.

Contact the church at capcoakland@gmail.com or (510) 658-3665.

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Red Cross Seeks Blood Donations At Claremont Location

Overall demand for blood products went down over the past 18 months as a result of many people deciding to postpone elective surgeries. Fortunately, this trend is reversing and these appointments are now being rescheduled.

As a result of the uptick in need, **Justin Mueller, Regional Executive Donor Services of the Red Cross**, is concerned about a nationwide shortage of blood products. Inventories are the lowest they've been in years, and the organization has been tasked with collecting an extra 10,000 units per week to meet current needs.

Blood drives are still on hold, and additional safety guidelines have been implemented since the beginning of the pandemic. According to Mueller, the Red Cross is actively seeking donors at the current location on Claremont Avenue, regardless of an individual's Covid vaccine status. "You've got heightened need and less opportunities to schedule blood drives. Its the perfect storm, which is why we are in a severe blood shortage."

The facility is looking forward to moving to its new location on College Avenue once the Conditional Use Permit from the City of Oakland has been approved, as the Claremont office is "too small to accommodate the number of folks that we really want and need to be able to see," says Mueller.

They are encouraging donations from Black and LatinX populations to address specific health issues that disproportionately impact these communities. For example, blood transfusions are an essential treatment for those with sickle cell anemia, and donations from individuals of the same race, ethnicity and blood type have a unique ability to help patients combat this disease.

The Red Cross encourages anyone interested to call 800-RED CROSS or go online to redcrossblood.org. ■

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-NEW: 4BD 2BA Tudor, garage, level in, sweet yard, gorgeous architecture, 3 blocks to College Ave, 5809Ross.com Listed @ $1,795,000
-COMING: 3BD 2BA Bungalow nr Frog Park, updated systems, kitchen, baths, 2 garages, level yard, Price TBD

November is Awareness Month for > Adoption, Gratitude, Alzheimer's, Inspirational Role Models, Universal Kindness Day



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RR Shop Rockridge

Rockridge Artist Maryly Snow
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