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

RCPC WELCOMES THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In November, the Rockridge Community Planning Council's board of directors made appointments to fill two vacant elected seats on the board (until 2023) and the one non-elected seat (until 2022).


Mark Aaronson

My wife Margie Gelb and I have lived on Chabot Road in Rockridge for 45 years. Our two daughters, Josie and Molly, were born here and now live with their respective families in nearby Oakland neighborhoods.

I am a Professor of Law Emeritus at UC Hastings College of the Law, where I was the school's founding director of its in-house clinical education program.

Prior to my tenure at Hastings, I was the Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights in San Francisco for 13 years. At the Lawyers' Committee, I represented clients on civil rights, public assistance, and community economic development policy matters.

I first came to the SF Bay Area in 1962 to attend UC Berkeley, from which I eventually earned AB, MA, and PhD degrees in political science. My law degree is from the University of Chicago.

In my view, a major challenge for RCPC is to figure out how to best support the development of affordable housing throughout Oakland, including here in Rockridge. ■


Andrew Charman

A fifth-generation San Diegan, I have enjoyed living in the Rockridge neighborhood on Lawton Avenue since 2008, from which I have a convenient commute to the UC Berkeley campus where I teach and do research in the Physics Department.

In addition, during the summer months, I have been running an international, residential STEM summer school program for high school students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I also study some of the mathematics underlying legislative apportionment, redistricting, and gerrymandering. In my spare time, I enjoy walking, reading, cooking, traveling (before Covid), and, less frequently as my knees keep getting older, ballroom dancing.

During my previous terms on the RCPC board, I focused on issues of transportation, and hope to return to working on these concerns to help Rockridge remain safe, convenient, efficient, and pleasant for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, passengers, and bus and BART riders. Please contact me if you are interested in joining the RCPC Transportation Committee. ■


Zac Unger

Hi, my name is Zac Unger and I live on Oak Grove, in a house three doors away from where I grew up. My kids tell me that this means my life has gone exactly nowhere.

I've been an Oakland firefighter for 24 years, and am the president of our union. As president, I am heavily involved in local and state politics and I hope to contribute my understanding of how to turn ideas into progress in this unwieldy bureaucratic environment. Both academically and professionally, I've focused on mitigating fire risk in the urban wildland interface.

RCPC can be instrumental in preparing for the inevitable but preventing the catastrophic. I also look forward to working on pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

In my free time, I balance fire with water; I'm a whitewater river guide and a passionate open-water swimmer. I'm terrible at sitting still, so you'll definitely see me wandering past your house sometime on a walk to nowhere. Please stop me and say hello. ■

RCPC SURVEY

The Rockridge Community Planning Council Wants to Hear from YOU!

Have you filled out the RCPC survey? If not, there is still time to let the RCPC know what you believe should be developed on the large vacant parcel at the Ridge Shopping Plaza at 51st and Broadway. **If you have already replied, please do not do so again** so that everyone has a voice. Find the survey online at https://bit.ly/3biMFOo; copy it into your browser; or use your phone camera app and scan the QR code on the right. ■

SCAN ME

Make Rockridge Your Holiday Shopping Destination

by Jody Colley, Marketing Director, Rockridge District Association

This holiday season, make the Rockridge district your destination for shopping and dining. Join in the festive spirit that is invoked when visiting College Avenue — illuminated in lights and adorned with decorations.

Enjoy live music at the Rockridge BART Plaza every afternoon on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays leading up to Christmas. Rockridge merchants will be extending hours, offering sales, hosting pop-ups, and throwing parties. If you are still looking for gift ideas, prefer purchasing online, or want a genuinely unique shopping experience, the Rockridge District Association's website (www.RockridgeDistrict.com) is the place to go. The online guide features a wide variety of carefully curated gifts for kids, adults, pets, home and garden. The website also has a calendar full of merchant-hosted events, holiday block parties, seasonal dinners, trivia, karaoke, drag shows, and other fun activities. ■

✲ Enjoy Live Music at the Rockridge BART Plaza This Holiday Season ✲

Bring a lawn chair, grab food to go from your favorite neighborhood restaurant, and enjoy the live music. The schedule is as follows:

FRIDAY, Dec 3 – **John Vicino** (1-4pm)

SATURDAY, Dec 4 – **Kevin Patrick Radley** (11am-1pm); **John Rybak Friends** (1:30pm-3:30pm)

SUNDAY, Dec 5 – **Catia Machado & the Brazil East/Bay Ensemble** (1pm-4pm)

FRIDAY, Dec 10 – **Clifton Street Regulars** (1pm-4pm)

SATURDAY, Dec 11 – **Aidan Moore** (11am-1pm); **300 Club** (1pm-4pm)

SUNDAY, Dec 12 – **Bob and Lenny Show** (1pm-4pm)

FRIDAY, Dec 17 – **Frances Ancheta** (11am-1pm), **Jason Movrich** (1pm-3pm)

SATURDAY, Dec 18 – **Drumming Magic** (1pm-4pm)

SUNDAY, Dec 19 – **The Marchmen** (1-4pm)



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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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? We'd love to hear from you.

All letters must be limited to 300 words and are published at the discretion of the Editor. Send them to: editor@rockridge.org. Please be sure to include your name, email address, and city and street of residence. **All submissions that are accepted for publication are subject to editing for clarity and brevity.**

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

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

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Display Advertising Deadline:
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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.

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.

Redistricting Process Moves Forward in Oakland and Alameda County

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Board Member

As reported in last month's article, "Redistricting — What's At Stake?," Oakland is planning to revise City Council and School Board districts for the next decade, starting with the 2022 elections. Alameda County, and California, are redistricting, based on 2020 census results.

Oakland's Redistricting Commission came up with four maps, labeled A through D, and then narrowed those to just B and D. The latter split Rockridge between two council districts, roughly along College Ave. Irate Rockridge residents were among the first to object (along with residents of West Oakland, which was also split).

The Commission responded by adding back map A, plus four more maps: E through H. Most of the new maps now leave Rockridge mostly as-is. All the maps are available on the Commission's website, along with public comments. The Commission also added more meetings, but the deadline remains December 31st.

You can view maps, comments, and remaining meeting dates on the Commission's website at: https://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/redistricting-commission. Alameda County's website has the new County maps. ■

Land Use Committee Meeting

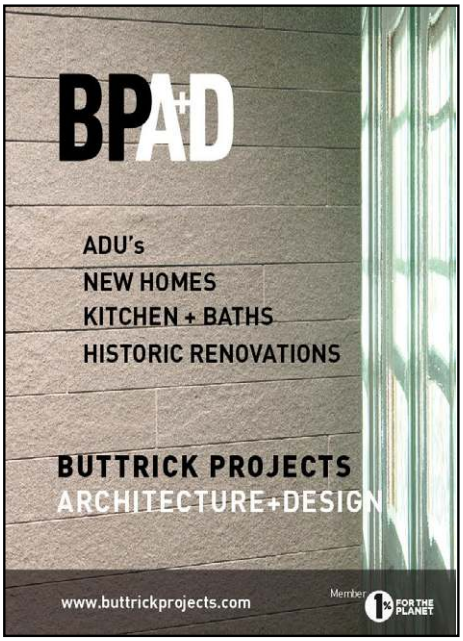
The next meeting of the RCPC Land Use Committee will be held on Wednesday, December 29, at 7:30pm, via Zoom.

Email landuse@rockridge.org, or call (510) 652-5373 to attend. The meeting is open to the public. Check www.Rockridge.org for details.

Greater NCPC Meeting

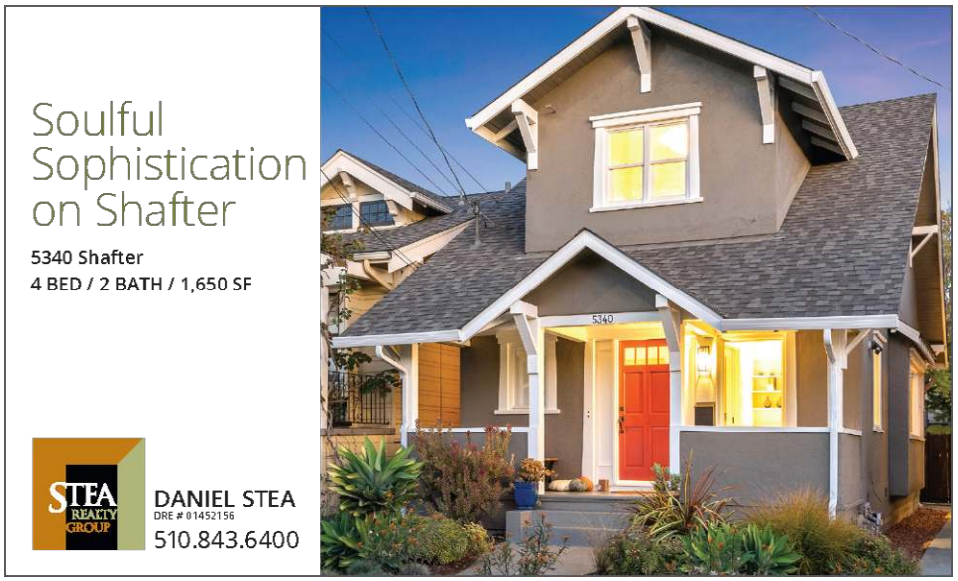
The next meeting of the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council is Thursday, December 9, at 7pm.

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









LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Latest NIMBY Code Term

EDITOR: For years we've heard NIMBYs attacking the prospect of affordable housing in Rockridge as "changing the character of our neighborhood" as though higher buildings in transit corridors or rezoning to allow more units per parcel would somehow result in the immediate and wholesale destruction of single family homes in our neighborhood.

Now the NIMBYs have come up with a new approach, reflected in not one but two letters to the editor in the September 2021 issue. Like Fox News talking points, both letters assert that "affordable housing in Rockridge" is "not financially feasible" and/or "a contradiction in terms."

My question: to whom are these missives directed? It's not like the authors of those letters are being asked to foot the bill. Why do they care if some developer decides to build affordable housing in Rockridge? Because the real issue, as one author admits, is they are worried that "apartment buildings will quickly obliterate single family dwellings if R1 zoning is banished."

Never mind the obvious speciousness of that assertion, and never mind that Rockridge residents are more privileged than almost any in Oakland. Rather than share the good fortune of this neighborhood with anyone who isn't extremely wealthy, these authors would prefer to be like Piedmont, which recently proposed annexing portions of Oakland to meet Piedmont's affordable housing obligations rather than risk any impact to their "neighborhood character." Like Piedmont, these authors suggest the character of our neighborhood (single family, "expensive") means we should simply relegate affordable housing obligations elsewhere.

Not everyone takes this narrow and self-serving view. Many people now recognize that restrictive zoning was deeply racist in its origins, intended to keep people of color out of neighborhoods like Rockridge by making them unaffordable. To now assert that affordable housing simply isn't financially feasible pays ironic tribute to the sad yet massive success of such racist and classist policies.

Things change. Change that creates more equity, even in Rockridge, should be welcomed. Remember that the "horrific" event cited by one September letter writer, the construction of Hwy 24, turned out to be quite positive: the proximity of Rockridge to the freeway and BART has helped cement its place as one of the most coveted neighborhoods in the East Bay.

I am not arguing against any market rate housing. But suggesting we should just rule out affordable housing because racist policies have made it expensive would reward a perverse system. More affordable housing would make Rockridge look more like Oakland, which in my mind is a good thing. I hope others join me in supporting affordable housing in Rockridge and speaking out against this new NIMBY strategy, calling it out for what it is, racist.

Star Lightner
62st St.
40+ year Rockridge resident who was born and raised in the community. ■

*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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Tree Planting in Oakland, Continued

EDITOR: Cassidy Lundin's article "Why Plant Trees?" *(October 2021)* refers at the end to Urban Releaf as "dedicated to improving the tree canopy in Oakland." Unfortunately, Urban Releaf suspended operations in November 2019, and removed their name from their space on 59th Street — and is no more to be seen.

I also regret the author forgot to mention Tree Team for Oakland (TTfO) which has followed the Sierra Club Tree Team (SCTT) that attempted to replace City efforts which had been suspended in August 2008. SCTT had planted more than 2,400 trees before it fell under the Sierra Club's blanket cessation of all activities when the pandemic hit in March 2020.

Local Club leaders then withdrew their support for SCTT, and TTfO is now in formation to resume those services. TTfO sponsors weekly pruning sessions (Sundays at 1pm, variable locations around Oakland) and will restart the planting program in December.

TTfO has also assisted the City with its first in 12 years planting program which has put 300 trees in parks and public spaces with TTfO staff assistance and salvaged wooden units to save money for the City otherwise needful of new wooden stakes from nurseries. Regrettably, some in Oakland see more trees as a sign of gentrification and destroy young trees wherever they may be.

Tree Team for Oakland will accept planting applications and provide technical assistance before forwarding tree permit requests to the City; recently only two of the 95 applications that the team made were rejected.

Arthur R. Boone
Kales Avenue
Rockridge resident off-and-on since 1976 and founder of SCTT in 2009. ■

The Impact of Racial Exclusionary Policies on Rockridge

by Annette Floystrup

This is part one of a two-part series on this topic.



My article in the June 2021 issue of *The Rockridge News*, titled "RCPC's Place in Rockridge History," brought a very thoughtful reader's letter in response. The writer noted that the Rock Ridge Park development, which eventually gave the hills neighborhood its name, was sold with racial exclusionary covenants in its deeds, and in 1909 advertised in the *San Francisco Call*, "No negroes, no Chinese, no Japanese can build or lease in Rock Ridge Park" *(see advertisement circa 1910 on right)*.

Racial exclusion in Oakland was created through deed restrictions, zoning, societal conventions, and federal and local lending policies. In fact, a good argument can be made that almost all existing housing in the United States, whether privately funded, government-subsidized, or built using Federal mortgage-guarantee funds, is racially biased in fact or practical effect, and most certainly in historic context.

The question is: Does that history mean neighborhoods like Rockridge are essentially and functionally racist today?

Unfortunately, racism is in the DNA of the founding of our country. The Constitution of the United States was written for the benefit of white, land-owning men, and the ideals of equality expressed therein excluded most U.S. residents as they did not apply to women or non-white people. Countless laws dating from the Spanish, French and English colonial governments were passed to make the status of indigenous and African-origin peoples inferior under the law, restricting their rights and treating them as second-class citizens or property. The status of women was defined and controlled by men, and they were considered the property of their husbands or fathers. Indeed, to this day, the United States has yet to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to give women full equality with men under the Constitution.

San Francisco began passing ordinances in the 1870s that were designed and intended to discriminate against the Chinese, and when California cities began to adopt zoning ordinances in the early 20th century, a similar pattern unfolded in many places.

Berkeley's first zoning ordinance, adopted in 1916, may have been similarly tainted. The planning criteria in the ordinance were race-neutral, but zoning decisions were largely guided by petitions from landowners and the advice of the planning commission (the then-Civic Art Commission), whose president, Duncan McDuffie, was an active supporter of restrictive (including racial) covenants. Much of the impetus for the first zoning decision, designating a portion of Claremont-Elmwood as a single-family zone, was to fill the gap left by expiring or absent covenants in the affected area.

The U.S. Supreme Court finally outlawed race-based zoning in 1917 only to have it replaced by racial covenants on individual deeds. Although many racial covenants had sunset clauses, some lasted only five years, enforcement was not outlawed until 1948. Nevertheless, minority ownership of single-family homes in the Vernon Tract of the Rockridge flatlands can be documented already in the 1920s. Examples of non-white ownership include Chinese, African-American, and Sikh families.

Over time, zoning has evolved to separate uses, with special zones for multi-family and single-family housing; high-density multi-family housing; commercial, light, and heavy industrial zones; and farmland. This type of zone separation is common to developed nations.

Federal policies have had the largest impact on the inability of Black Americans to gain homeownership, and with it, the ability to build equity in an appreciating asset thus creating generational wealth. In the 20th century, the single most toxic Federal policy was created by the Federal Housing Administration, established in 1934, which furthered segregation

Racial Policies, see next page

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Racial Policies, from previous page

efforts by refusing to insure mortgages in and near African-American neighborhoods — a policy known as "redlining." The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was passed to fight the practice. Even the GI Bill, a piece of sweeping legislation aimed at helping World War II veterans with benefits including college tuition, low-cost home loans, and unemployment insurance, functionally excluded Black veterans from gaining those benefits.

The wide disparity in the bill's implementation ended up helping drive wider gaps in wealth, education, and civil rights between White and Black Americans. Much housing in America was not only specifically denied to Black Americans through racist laws and policies involving both the purchase of, and lending for, properties, but as the ability to build and retain wealth was denied them, more housing became financially out of reach. Now, as one of Oakland's priciest neighborhoods, Rockridge is also among its whitest.

Despite this, some neighborhoods remained integrated. Those of us who grew up in the Rockridge flatlands in the 1950s and '60s lived with a diversity that has been slowly disappearing. I grew up here, and my classmates at Peralta Elementary school included kids from Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino heritage, as well as Black children whose families came here as a result of the great WWII migration from the South for jobs related to the war effort. There were also immigrants from a number of countries including The Netherlands, Cuba, and me, from Denmark. The flatlands were also largely working class. These were my neighbors.

For in-depth information on the effects of systemic racism on housing in the Bay Area, see the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley publication, Roots, Race and Place: A History of Racially Exclusionary Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area, *and the excellent book by Richard Rothstein,* The Color of Law, *which examines local, state and federal policies that mandated segregation.*

To learn more about the current local impact of these policies, see: https://placesjournal.org/article/black-homelessness-in-oakland/ ■

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Oakland's $14.5M Fund Award Is "Reconnecting the Town"

On November 19, 2021, the City of Oakland celebrated the awarding of $14.5 million in federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants to fund transformative projects on Broadway and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, restoring access for historically redlined communities to the waterfront with projects that support reliable public transit and safe walking and biking.

The *Reconnecting the Town* project puts into action Oakland's planned and funded commitments to improve physical mobility and digital infrastructure across barriers as part of the City's broader efforts to undo the harm from decades of injustices, in parts of town historically impacted by redlining. New fiber cable will extend access to wireless internet for parts of West Oakland that currently lack access to OakWIFI (free public WiFi service), a neighborhood that has historically lacked access to public goods and services.

Additionally, the cumulative projects will result in long-term job creation at the prevailing wage, and will benefit Oakland businesses and workers who suffered economic hardship from a decline in economic activity during the pandemic. ■

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Violence Prevention and Intervention

— by Dan Kalb, Councilmember, District 1

There have been numerous shootings in Oakland this year, and more recently, well-organized, armed caravans engaged in burglaries and robberies in several East Bay cities. The Oakland Police Department (OPD) has reiterated that it's committed to the full investigation of these violent incidents and is working in close coordination with nearby jurisdictions also experiencing an upsurge in violence.

Councilmember Gallo has joined with me in calling for recommendations from OPD, Department of Violence Prevention, Measure Z Safety & Services Oversight Commission, Ceasefire, and Community Policing Advisory Board on Reducing Gun Violence in Oakland for the long-planned Council meeting on public safety on **Tuesday, Dec. 7, at 5:30pm**.

Our Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) and our Ceasefire partners also are working on how best to stop this recent upswing in gun violence. DVP is focusing on gang and group conflicts that are contributing to the violent behavior.

Over the holiday season, in order to keep residents and visitors safe, OPD will deploy tactical teams to support the patrol officers who are responding to the armed caravans, dangerous sideshows, and various violent crimes. The teams are highly skilled in de-escalation and using less lethal options. OPD already had directed uniformed officers from non-patrol units to spend time assisting with prioritized hotspots and patrols to increase the number of officers visible and working on the street.

My staff and I meet regularly with the OPD Area Captain for North Oakland as well as DVP senior staff to discuss recent crime trends in North Oakland, OPD response and investigation, and implementation of DVP short and long-term strategies.

I am continuing to advocate for robust staffing for OPD's Criminal Investigations Division and for our well-regarded Ceasefire program, lateral hiring of experienced law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions to fill key vacancies more quickly, an increased focus on intelligence gathering and greater emphasis on what is known as Problem-Oriented Policing. At the same time, I will continue to support meaningful investments in violence prevention, rehabilitation and job readiness. ■

City of Oakland Encourages Residents to Adopt A Drain on Their Block to Prevent Flooding

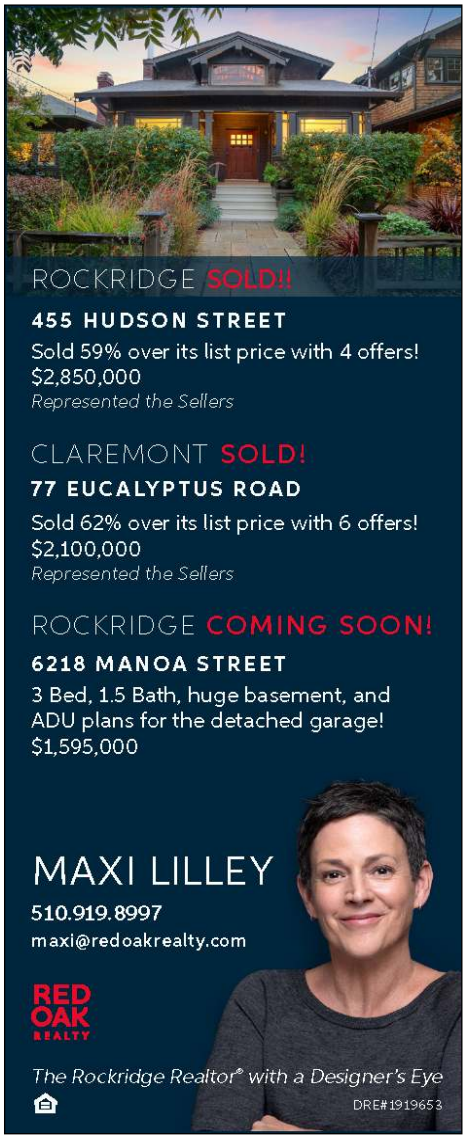
Winter is arriving, and could bring with it rainy or stormy weather that City workers, residents and business owners can prepare for now. Oakland Public Works and the City of Oakland Department of Transportation crews have been making advance preparations to help mitigate weather impacts and enable crews to respond as effectively as possible to requests for service.

Volunteers are needed for the City's Adopt-A-Drain program to keep storm drains near their home or business free of debris. Oaklanders currently adopt about 1,100 storm drains, but many thousands more drains are waiting. Volunteers receive storm notification emails before large storm events, and the City can provide rakes, brooms, dustpans, bags and other supplies. Remember: "Clear the drain before the rain."

For storm-related emergency issues on public property and in the public right-of-way (such as flooding, mudslides, landslides, and manholes overflowing onto streets and sidewalks), dial 311 from any phone within Oakland or call 510-615-5566.

To sign up to adopt a drain, call (510) 238-7630, or visit https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/sign-up-for-adopt-a-drain. ■





Born, Bred and Rooted in Oakland

by Judith Doner Berne



Dad Michael, Sister Madison, and mom Barrie Bulmore, are the close-knit and sports-minded family of Oakland Roots defensive player Max Ornstil.

Max Ornstil is Rockridge-born and bred. That's why, after four years playing professional soccer for the Portland Timbers, the 27-year-old alumnus of Chabot Elementary, St. Paul's Episcopal and Bishop O'Dowd is thrilled to be back in Oakland, playing for the Oakland Roots in the United Soccer League (USL).

"Dear Oakland, damn I've missed you," Ornstil writes on the Roots website. "I know I've been gone for a few years, but I've been working on my craft. I've been watching from afar and witnessing something special happening. The Raiders left, Warriors moved across the Bay, but Roots are different. Why is it different? Because it's Oakland, and if you're from here you'd know they are the first professional soccer team in Oakland. You know what they say, there's no place like home."

Although a defensive player, he scored a goal in his Roots debut in August at Merritt Field, a field he grew up playing on. "To score a goal on Oakland soil was a dream come true," he told me, as we sat in the family room of the Rockridge home where he grew up and where he returned to during his first months back in Oakland.

"I'm very emotionally attached to this house" and to his family, all of whom are sports-oriented. His dad Michael, a mediation attorney, played baseball and basketball for the University of Miami; his mom, Barrie Bulmore, was Cal's first tennis All-American and taught and coached tennis at Head Royce School; sister Madison is a sports agent for NBA and WNBA players. A butterfly tattoo on his arm "is a nod to my sister whose Hebrew name translates to butterfly, as well as to the importance of personal evolution."

He recently moved into an apartment in the Bella Vista neighborhood that he shares with an O'Dowd high school classmate. "I got too comfortable when I was living here in Rockridge — going to the same restaurants, Zachary's and Gordo's, Cole Coffee, and La Farine for pastries. It's a little bit of a bubble. I wanted to experience other parts of Oakland."

At Santa Clara University, Ornstil majored in finance and played sports, but he didn't see a clear future in professional soccer. The best college soccer players, he said, typically get drafted. "My route was far from traditional."

After graduating, he had the unpaid opportunity to play for a Timbers' developmental team and slept in his sister's dining room when both lived in Portland and worked for Adidas. "She was in corporate, and I was folding t-shirts." After he was named Player of the Year, he moved on to the Timbers' practice team where he earned a spot on this USL top division team.

Still, "I see myself as more than an athlete," Ornstil said. That led to him to become co-owner of a Portland

Max Ornstil, see next page

eyes on Rockridge

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Max Ornstil, from previous page

studio he rents out for photo shoots. As a kid, he said, he loved shoes and clothes, and now models for clothing and shoe brands such as Allbirds, Merrill, Columbia, and Sorel. He also just completed a year co-hosting a podcast, Marathon Minute, with his dad.

The two are taking a break after completing 20 episodes, broadcasting from Ornstil's boyhood bedroom, now his dad's home office. They talk to athletes, creatives, and entrepreneurs, because "I see myself as an intersection of all those kinds of things." He picked guests, including Roots owner Steven Aldrich, because their interests and endeavors go beyond their education and profession, he said. "The whole first season has been a learning process."

Soccer-related but away from the actual playing field, Ornstil served as player representative from his Portland and Oakland teams, both part of the USL Championship League. This fall, after four years of negotiations, the two sides signed the first collective bargaining agreement for a professional men's second division soccer league.

"It's a step toward making the USL (which spans North and Central America plus the Caribbean) a league built to last and a step forward for United States soccer," he said. "For me, to have been there from the start and to see an agreement get passed is special."



Roots defender Max Ornstil tied the score against the LA Galaxy in a play that was featured as the United Soccer League's "Goal of the Week" in mid-August.

"He's a neighborhood hero," said Glenn Van Straatum, former director of coaching for East Bay United, who has known Ornstil "since he was a little guy." As a teenager, Max helped coach the younger players and spent time talking with them. "He would give back."

"The position that he plays is one of persistence and consistency," Van Straatum, who is now head soccer coach at Merritt College, said. "Max has grown up to live his dream. What is so beautiful about him is that he always stays the humble person that he is."

"As the parent of two high school and college athletes, I am well aware of the commitment necessary to excel in a player's chosen sport," said Barbara Leslie, a Rockridge resident and president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce who has known Ornstil since his high school days. "A love of the game and natural talent are essential, but the more important qualities include sacrifice, perseverance, and maturity — which are rare. Max embodies these qualities."

He's an Oaklander first, Leslie said. "Yes, there is no disputing Max is a talented athlete able to blast a goal from midfield while defending with ease, but what I believe is more compelling is what he is doing off the pitch. These are the things that matter the most for our community."

To suggest topics for this column, email judyberne@att.net. ■



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In Memoriam: Angel Vaughn

by Courtenay Morgan Redis



If you live between 57th and Alcatraz, Telegraph Avenue and Colby Street, you probably knew Angel — our amazing and beautiful Oakland postal carrier. It is with a very heavy heart that I share news of Angel passing away suddenly on November 6. The more than 50 neighbors who gathered around "her" mailbox for a candlelight vigil on the 13th speaks to how many of us loved her.

Angel Vaughn was just 41 and leaves behind her devoted husband of 22 years, Broderick, her parents, siblings, and seven children ranging in age from 13 to 20 years old.

I have lived at three different properties in this neighborhood. In these ten years Angel often stopped by to chat about many topics including how my son was enjoying Peralta Elementary, what subjects hers liked, and how she was planning to spend her vacations. We compared what costumes our kids were wearing for Halloween, and talked about shoes, music and chocolate. If my front door was open she'd playfully shout "knock-knock!" and I'd pop out with fresh baked cookies or the latest Trader Joe's creation.

"Angel radiated happiness and love to everyone she met. She was always smiling. She loved her family so much, and they loved her deeply in return.

Angel grew up in El Sobrante. She attended De Anza High School, where she met her high school sweetheart, Broderick Vaughn. Together since, they were one of the most loving couples many had ever seen. On his days off, Broderick would accompany her on her route, carrying her heavy packages. They were planning a celebration of their 25th anniversary.

She had a sweet tooth for chocolate. She loved movies. She was a huge fan of Tom Brady (no matter what team he was playing on). She was extremely funny, with the best goofy side. She loved Saturday morning manicures with her girls. It was always a pleasure to see Angel's latest hair color, nail design, and beanie on your doorstep. And, of course, we all loved her colorful hair evolutions. She was everyone's Mom, Auntie, and friend.

She had the longest mail route, and her postal family marveled at her speed (and competitive spirit). Nearly every day, she pulled her truck in first to the post office at 4900 Shattuck. Her postal family will miss her strength, humor, love, and light. They say she was a friend who was there for them like family.

Angel, we love and miss you —

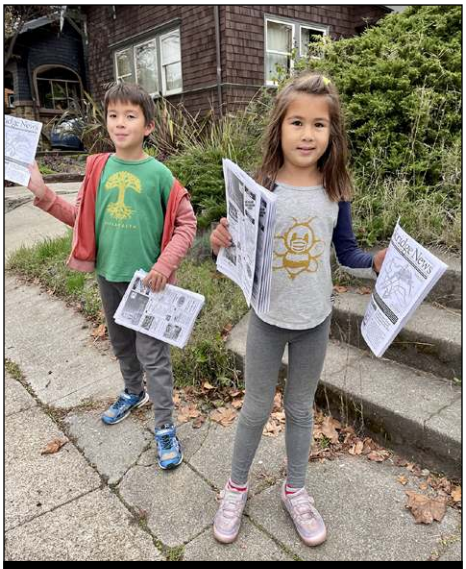
Please visit Nextdoor for upcoming information about Angel's GoFundMe page, or email Courtenay at soopercyclechic@yahoo.com. Donations will go directly to help with funeral expenses and to provide support for her children. ■

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Eucalyptus Calls, Who Will Answer?

by Susan Montauk, RCPC Distribution Manager



We welcome two of our newest Block Captains: Dylan, 9 years old, delivers to the 5500 block of Lawton, and Carmelle, age 7, will replace 25-year veteran Block Captain Todd Morrish, and starts her new route on Presley Way this month.

Many thanks to Emmi Govers for her service as Block Captain for her block of Eucalyptus over these many years. Emmi is ready to hand over the job to someone in her neighborhood. It's a lovely route — perfect for a bit of exercise once a month. Who will step up? Here are the details:

· Route 03C: Along Eucalyptus in Oakland boundaries (23 houses)

This job is monthly, normally falling on the weekend following the first Friday of the month. Block Captains receive their bundle on their doorstep and then go door-do-door, delivering to 23 houses. Newsletters must be left on porches or porch railings (not in mailboxes please, this presents a problem for the postal employees). This route takes about 15-20 minutes.

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

Claremont Middle School's Auction Wraps Up

by Sharon Flor, Auction Co-Chair

Thank you to the entire Rockridge community for a successful Claremont Middle School online auction that ran from November 1st through the 12th. As a result, the Claremont PTA raised over $39,000, which will directly support our students in the classroom.

The donations will be used for: replacing books in the library that were not returned post-Covid shutdown; equipment for the science labs; and string instruments for the music program (to replace wind instruments which could be problematic during an airborne viral epidemic). This will also fund enrichment programs, restorative justice, athletics and more.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to all the merchants and restaurants along College Avenue that donated gift certificates or items, and to everyone in the community for logging on and bidding. Thank you — your support is vitally important to Claremont students. ■

Temescal Whole Foods Market Opens This Month

By the time you read this article, the new 31,011 square-foot Whole Foods on Telegraph Avenue at 51st will be open to the public.

The store features more than 2,700 local products including prepared foods, a full-service meat counter (with butchers to cut steaks to order or debone poultry), as well as a prepared foods section with an array of made-to-order sandwich options and a local charcuterie selection. Customizable whole pizzas and pizza-by-the-slice are available, as is grab-and-go sushi by Kikka.

To give back to the Temescal community, Whole Foods Market is sponsoring the *Bay Area Trails Challenge*, an annual self-guided and free hiking and bicycling program taking place until Dec. 31, 2021, that encourages people to explore the East Bay regional parks and keep fit outdoors.

The store will also sponsor the *Twelve Days of Christmas* with the Eat.Learn.Play. Foundation, an organization founded by Stephen and Ayesha Curry to fight childhood hunger, ensure access to education and enable active lifestyles (*see the organization's website for details*).

For info, visit https://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/temescal. ■



Monarchs Find A Home in Rockridge Gardens

by Anna L. Marks

While working as a park supervisor at The Gardens at Lake Merritt, **Tora Rocha** attended an open forum talk about Pollinator Gardening at Merritt College, and soon thereafter saw a documentary called, "Queen of the Sun: What the Bees Are Telling Us." It then dawned on her that plant pollinators, like bees and butterflies, rely on habitats maintained by home and municipal gardeners, not just wild spaces and farms.

"I realized I was removing the habitat of local native bees that I hadn't even know existed. Then I realized that nobody else I worked with knew that either. That's when we decided to build the Bee Hotel. Fortunately, then Director of Public Works, **Brooke Levin**, gave full support to the idea and had the City carpenter build the bee hotel that's on display in the gardens now. We call it the Air Bee-N-Bee."

When local science teacher **Terry Smith** serendipitously ran into Rocha in the gardens, they discovered that Smith had been searching for Monarch caterpillars for students to raise in their classrooms, and Rocha happened to have some in her office. So began the posse… Oakland's own Pollinator Posse.

A Facebook group soon followed and a website was launched at PollinatorPosse.org to provide resources to the public. The site includes recorded talks, lessons for kids, articles, plant lists, and ways to connect and join the Posse. Representatives of the Posse can be found tabling at events, visiting classrooms of all age groups, gathering data, and, of course, planting habitats — all as advocates for our essential pollinators.

> ***"This is a community science project that is having real impact on policy decisions"***

Perhaps the most important project they're working on right now is tracking Monarch butterflies. Many Rockridgeans plant milkweed to provide habitat for Monarchs but, according to Rocha, there could be as many as 20 other species of butterflies that can also be found in this neighborhood including Gulf Fritillaries, Buckeyes, Pipevine Swallowtails, Tiger Swallowtails, and Red Admirals. They all need different host (nectar) plants for their caterpillars to survive, and gardeners could be planting those as well to support a broader ecosystem.

After a devastating drop in numbers last year, they're making a small comeback, but nothing compared to the numbers seen a few years ago. In addition to very low numbers at the overwintering grounds on the coast, Pacific Grove did not see a single butterfly last year. There has been a significant change in behavior that seems to be centered in the East Bay, particularly in temperate areas like here in Rockridge where they are hanging around and breeding at unusual times of the year.

In response to this change in behavior, Terry Smith and the Posse have stepped up to gather data and document this change for scientists and conservationists so effective plans can be made to protect and restore Monarchs and their migration.

"If you have any milkweed, if you have monarchs that come into your yard, we would really love for you to join our community science project and report on what you're seeing. We ask folks to report in once a month or whenever they see new activity in their gardens. You can find more explanation and a link to the survey on the website. This is a community science project that is having real impact on policy decisions," Says Smith.

Rocha emphasizes that people should avoid using pesticides and herbicides, if at all possible, in their gardens, as this is the biggest problem, and to purchase pesticide free plants, ideally from a local native plant nursery. Systemic pesticides, in particular, make a plant toxic for the life of the plant, which means it's poisoning every pollinator who comes to visit.

There are several varieties of milkweed, and, as it turns out, some of them are not native to the area. These non-natives can host a type of protozoa that endangers monarchs and can also trigger breeding during the wrong times of year. These plants do not go dormant in the winter, like the natives, and, as a result, butterflies will continue to eat and lay eggs past the time they should be migrating to the coast.

Monarchs, see next page



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Competition Drives Price in November

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
11/01/2021	4	2	5676 Oak Grove Ave	$1,795,000	$1,795,000	7	$2,900,000
11/05/2021	3	1	5862 Chabot Ct	$1,249,000	$1,249,000	12	$1,500,000
11/09/2021	4	2	5841 Colby St	$1,375,000	$1,375,000	12	$2,570,000
11/12/2021	4	3	5327 Shafter Ave	$1,595,000	$1,595,000	14	$2,630,000
11/15/2021	4	2	6449 Chabot Rd	$1,895,000	$1,895,000	15	$2,450,000
11/18/2021	2	2	5340 Broadway Ter	$665,000	$665,000	35	$675,000

Homes sold in November closed 48% over the asking price on average.

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Avid gardener and Boyd Avenue resident, Julianne Sherback *(pictured above)*, has been enjoying watching Monarchs go through metamorphosis — from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly — in her assortment of milkweed.



Photos by Anna L. Marks



Monarchs, from previous page

How do you tell if you have a non-native milkweed? If they have yellow, orange or red flowers then they're not native. Or, if you have the tall variety with white flowers and large round seed balls, colloquially referred to as "Family Jewels," these are the south African variety, and are also non-native. Native milkweeds in Rockridge all have white to pinkish flowers.

You can plant the local native variety, called Narrowleaf of Showy, in the fall, but it does better if planted in spring since it's going dormant right now. All non-native milkweeds should be cut back without delay unless they have caterpillars currently finishing their season, or better yet, replaced with a native variety. Anyone interested can contact the Posse for free Narrowleaf seed.

"Now would be the perfect time to think about converting to the native milkweed," confirms Rockridge resident and founding member of the Pollinator Posse, **Brooke Levin**.

It's also important not to over manicure a habitat garden and to be careful when cutting things back or removing leaves. Native bees lay their eggs in dead wood, hollow stems, and loose soil, and many butterfly and moth caterpillars wrap up in dead leaves, which then fall to the ground. When gardeners remove debris and mulch every inch of bare ground they can also eliminate habitat for these essential creatures.

"A messy garden is a better garden for a pollinator garden. We tell people don't rake the leaves and remove them. Rake leaves under your shrubs, sprinkle a little bit of compost, and let nature do its job. The good news is it's healthier for your plants and saves on buying compost and mulch."

There is an ongoing conversation in the Pollinator Posse FB group which now has over 1,500 members and offers additional information. Join the group, sign up for their email list, or contact them through the website www.pollinatorposse.org. Join the Posse and help the pollinators. ■







Nuthouse Comedy Is Back

Nuthouse at the Golden Squirrel is a weekly comedy show in the heart of Rockridge. The event was postponed on account of the pandemic, but they are back and ready to make you laugh, **every Saturday at 8:30pm** with a rotating lineup of some of the best comics from the Bay Area and beyond.



The show is produced and hosted by internationally unknown comedian **Clara Bijl** (Edinburgh Fringe Festival, SF Sketchfest, Cobbs, Punchline), **Jeff Dean**, San Francisco-based comedian and writer by way of Reno, and Oakland resident and top-notch comedian **Jonah Pollack** (Oakland Comedy festival, Comedy Soup, Underground at Oakstop Comedy in Oakland).

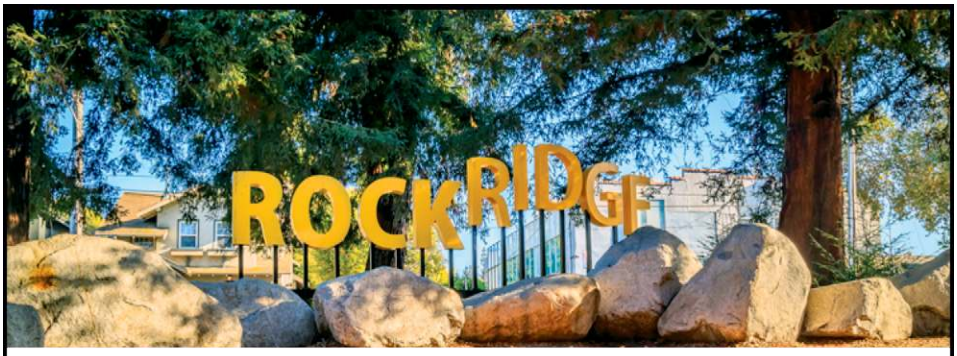
The venue is located at 5940 College Avenue. Tickets are $15 online, $20 at the door. To purchase tickets in advance, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nuthouse-at-the-golden-squirrel-tickets-210176913807. ■

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Oakland Launches New, Free Bulky Waste Pickup

All Oakland residents can now schedule no-charge large item drop-off appointments with Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC), and apartment tenants can now schedule curbside bulky pickup service directly with WMAC.

Single-family households can now set out four cubic yards of items, plus recyclable items, including mattresses, tires, TVs, and computers (up from three cubic yards) for single-family residents and 1.5 cubic yards for multi-family residences. This builds on the progress already made by the City's successful Bulky Block Party service event series.

"All Oaklanders deserve a cleaner city and an easy, affordable way to dispose of those items that won't fit in their usual trash bin," Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf said. "Today we're taking big steps forward on both counts, including making access to service easier for renters — an especially impacted community in Oakland. Now all Oaklanders need to do is pick up the phone (510-613-8710) and take advantage of these new free services.

"From Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021, Oakland Public Works staff cleaned up more than 23,000 tons of illegal dumping. Our crews are working harder than ever, but we know our community is still feeling illegal dumping impacts more than ever. We also know that when we can trace dumped material back to a source, it's more often than not an Oakland household. With these free new and improved services, no Oaklander should have to dump their belongings on the street or hire an illegal hauling service."

Visit www.oaklandrecycles.com to learn more about the services available; information on how to combat and reduce illegal dumping; and learn how you can help at oaktownproud.com. ■

RN Classified Ads

List your 36-word message here for only $22 (phone number counts as one word). Make check payable to RCPC, and write "Rockridge News Classified Ad" in the memo line. Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131.

The deadline for the January 2022 issue is December 23 (available Jan 8, 2022). For more details, email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com.

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Perry's November Rockridge area sales

-SOLD: 2BD 2BA updated condo w/balcony, open plan, 5340BroadwayTerrace.com: Sold $675,000
-SOLD: 4BD++ 3.5BA stately, updated, views 5636Golden Gate.com List $1,995,000 Sold $2,950,000
-SOLD: Impeccable updated 4plex, great rents, 1 vacant, Nr BART/Market Hall 578Forest.com $1,900,000
-SOLD: 4BD 2BA GorgeousTudor, sweet yard, 5809Ross.com Listed @ $1,795,000 Sold $2,500,000
-SOLD: 1BD 1BA condo 3050 College Ave, corner updated unit, oak floors, heart of it all: $600,000
-COMING: 3BD 2BA Bungalow nr Frog Park, updated systems, kitchen, baths, 2 garages, level yard, $ TBD

December Awareness Month > Human Rights, Safe Toys, Vaccination, Love Your neighbor, Write a Friend!



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