THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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

RCPC Board Elections Planned for April 2022

by Leonora Sea, RCPC Chair

The 2022 Rockridge Community Planning Council Board election is scheduled for **April 15 and 17, 2022.** Now is the time to think about whether you may be interested in running for a seat on the RCPC Board. Six seats are up for election, each for a two-year term. Board members are elected at large by the entire community. Board membership is an excellent way to gain a deep understanding of our neighborhood and our city. Much of the work of the Board occurs in standing committees and programs.

The Land Use Committee is at the forefront, working on issues of development, inclusion, and community enhancement. The Transportation Committee tackles traffic and transit, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. The Parks Committee looks after our precious green space — collaborating with the FROG Park Committee — and also working on pocket-parks like Ayala and small neighborhood parks like Colby Park. Through the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Grants Program, RCPC distributes small grants to groups and individual community members to carry out projects for the improvement of their immediate neighborhoods.

Membership on the RCPC Board involves a significant commitment of time and effort. Among the most basic activities are board meetings (held monthly), Town Hall meetings, and committee meetings. All meetings are currently held by Zoom. Board members are expected to

RCPC Elections, see next page



Six-month-old Hayes is his mom's companion as she delivers the news.

Volunteers, Young and Old, Make Door-to-Door Delivery in Rockridge Newsworthy

by Judith Doner Berne

It's plunked on your doorstep every month. It doesn't get there by magic. It takes upwards of 150 of your neighbors to make sure *The Rockridge News*, founded in April 1986 by long-time resident **Don Kinkead**, is dispersed throughout our community's more than 5,800 residences and 200 businesses.

It's time you, our readers, met some of our longest-serving, newest, oldest, and youngest distributors — starting

RN Delivery, see page 6

Wanted: Kitchens & Docents for RCPC Kitchen Tour

by Leonora Sea, RCPC Chair

An old and dear friend is returning! After a hiatus in 2021, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour (KT) is happening in 2022. The Tour is the Rockridge Community Planning Council's major fundraiser, and it provides RCPC with the financial resources to support the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Grants program, the Town Halls, the Halloween Parade, and many other neighborhood enhancements. However, the KT is more than a fundraiser; it's a community-builder. Neighbors volunteer on the KT Committee and as docents; and the tour showcases local architects, contractors, and craftspeople — it truly is a delightful Rockridge block party writ large.



Kitchen Tour, see next page

RCPC Election, from front page

participate in at least one committee, and in planning and organizing Town Halls and community events, including the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour fundraiser. For an individual Board member, the typical time commitment is about 10 to 12 hours per month, varying with circumstances.

Candidates must meet the criteria for membership in RCPC (18 years of age or older, and maintain a principal residence within RCPC boundaries).

For more information about service on the Board, contact RCPC at election@rockridge.org. In order to run for election, prospective candidates must submit a statement announcing an intent to run, no later than **Wednesday, March 2, 2022**, by email to chair@rockridge.org. ■

Kitchen Tour, from front page

But there can be no Kitchen Tour without kitchens! The Tour Committee invites homeowners, architects, designers, and builders to submit kitchens to be considered for the 2022 Tour. A kitchen does not have to be finished to qualify, but should be finished by the beginning of August. The Committee isn't looking for a single design theme, but themes often appear serendipitously. In 2019, two inspiring accessory dwellings — one a new build, and one a remodel of an early 20th-century backyard cottage — were volunteered coincidentally.

Kitchens can be large or small, traditional, Mid-Century Modern or Post-modern, open-plan or separate. Tour guests are always interested in unusual designs, clever layouts, and, increasingly, sustainable materials. You get the idea; the Tour is always eclectic with something for every budget and taste. Tour guests come to admire and to be inspired by Rockridge's beautiful kitchens, and to meet the professionals whose artistry, design genius, and craftsmanship fashioned the amazing results.



The Kitchen Tour can't happen without volunteers. The Tour needs Committee members to visit kitchens, find sponsors and advertisers, recruit and train docents, manage publicity, create the Tour Brochure, and all the other tasks that make it run smoothly.

If you are interested in volunteering as a Kitchen Tour Committee member, the first meeting is planned for **March 7, 2022**, the first Monday.

Sign up via email at: kitchentour@rockridge.org.

It's been the custom for the Tour to feature one whole house on display. If the idea of showing off all the great features of your home as well as your kitchen intrigues you, please let the Committee know. Over the past few tours, the whole-house tours have showcased historic properties, sustainable home builds, ADUs, and spectacular modern designs.

The Tour Committee is accepting submissions through March 15, 2022, at kitchentour@rockridge.org. Works in progress are welcome, although expected completion should be no later than August 1, 2022. ■



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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Jo Ellis ..... Assistant Editor & Ad Manager
Susan Montauk ..... Business Manager
Judith Doner Berne ..... Staff Writer

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For information: info@rockridge.org

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 350 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 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.

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: **RCPC,** 4900 Shattuck Avenue, PO Box 22504, Oakland, CA, 94609

Display Advertising Deadline for March: February 17, 2022

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.

RCPC Town Hall: A Smashing Success

by Anna L. Marks

What does Rockridge need most? How can we put these ideas into action? This was what local residents came together to discuss at January's first virtual Town Hall meeting of 2022.

After Board member introductions and a summary of recent past Board achievements by Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Chair **Leonora Sea**, attendees participated in two rounds of breakout groups. Subsequent facilitated conversations culminated in thoughtful action items to move the process forward.

High on the list were the desire to provide more housing stock (including more affordable housing) and a concern for public safety. There was much discussion regarding the blighted undeveloped parcel at the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center and the circulation of a petition asking the City and the leaseholder to clean up the site *(see article on page 5)*. The site remains vacant, and the current landowner shows no interest in developing housing of any kind at this time.

In addition to concerns about housing, development, crime, potholes and easing transit corridors, the breakout groups focused on pressing issues, like homelessness and how the changes in economic diversity over the years have impacted the neighborhood.

There were many suggestions and questions about how to address these and other issues. Do we need a guide to make ADUs easier to build? Can we keep commercial rates low for more business diversity on College? What about offering teacher's housing at Oakland Tech so they can live and work in the area? Others suggested that we offer disaster preparedness and first-aid training through the City's CORE program for our neighborhood block captains now that it has been re-activated.

There was also a suggestion to create a database on the RCPC website of skilled neighbors who could be called upon to volunteer to work with students or help folks with projects. It could include those willing to offer advice on energy efficiency and home design, or even links to reliable suppliers. RCPC is currently looking at ways to increase resident participation on committees as a way to be more responsive to these and other concerns, and are currently considering the option to allow neighbors to join committees by signing up through the website.

In the past, as a direct result of the efforts of RCPC, Rockridge was able to establish CN1 zoning, which has since been embraced by other neighborhoods in Oakland. Notably, it was the result of this type of RCPC's community organizing that led to the creation of Frog Park *(see article on page 8)* and the building of the Rockridge Library. This type of collaborative effort also led to environmental mitigations at our schools.

Notably, some attendees at the meeting mentioned that they were unaware that if you live within the Rockridge boundaries you are automatically a member of RCPC and can vote in Board elections and participate in Town Hall meetings.

Good conversations led to great ideas — many of which will be further evaluated and integrated into RCPC's annual planning.

The Rockridge News serves as the liaison between the RCPC Board and our community members. Stay tuned for more ways to become informed, engaged, connected, and involved — we will continue to keep our readers up to date on these and other important activities.

If you're interested in reaching out to RCPC directly about upcoming meetings or any other issues, email TownHall@Rockridge.org. ■

Land Use Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the RCPC Land Use Committee will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 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.

The Land Use Committee currently has one vacancy for a member.

If interested, please send a brief response, including qualifications, to: landuse@rockridge.org or to the RCPC P.O. box *(see page 2)*.

All members must be Rockridge residents and must be approved by the RCPC board.

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Backyard Birding — A Crowd-Sourced Science Event

By Annette R. Floystrup

February means Valentine's Day, Presidents Day, and Chinese New Year (Gung Hay Fat Choy my fellow Tigers), but it is also a special time for bird watchers. For four days, February 18-21, birders all over North America count birds in their backyards, at feeders, and in nearby parks and recreational areas for as little as 15 minutes in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). It is one of the largest ongoing global science projects, and impossible to do without the tens of thousands of ordinary people who participate. Data submission is done on your mobile or computer through the eBird App.

GBBC is a project of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, The Audubon Society, and Bird Studies Canada. Cornell maintains a terrific website at www.birdcount.org with all the basic information you could ever want and many links to listen to bird calls and see pictures of birds and habitat as well as distribution maps. They give guidance on attracting more birds, with and without bird feeders, and are a great source for all things bird.

Why Count Birds?

GBBC is a key biologic dataset, an indicator of species distribution, migratory patterns, species increase or decline and global climate change. Climate change which can be seen in alterations of normal distribution patterns: warm weather birds moving further north, certain waterfowl moving to follow oceanic food sources as the oceans cool and warm in new patterns, and species leaving areas where their food sources have disappeared. It is an indicator of changing food sources and abundance or scarcity based on altered weather patterns.

Count Feeder Birds for Science

A similar, but longer running participation study, Project FeederWatch, continues through April 9th. Visit https://feederwatch.org/ to learn more.

To participate, visit https://www.birdcount.org/participate/.

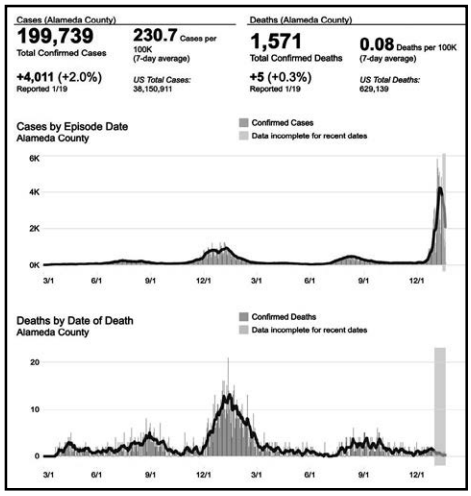
There's an App for That

Cornell offers two apps for all platforms: **Merlin**, where you can ID a bird by answering five questions, snapping a photo or recording the birdsong; and **eBird**, that allows you to record the birds you see and add them to your eBird database with ease.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mandates Protect Us

Dear Editor: We are responding to Ms. Eudaley's letter in the January *Rockridge News*. Her intentions were undoubtedly good, but, as the last month has shown, her facts were erroneous and/or outdated. As background, **Dr. Flashman**, while now an attorney, was trained in virology (Ph.D., Molecular Biology, Harvard Univ.). **Dr. Richter** is a geriatrician with over 30 years in practice, including dealing with viral diseases: HIV, influenza, and, for the past two years, treating COVID-19 patients in Contra Costa County nursing homes.



Alameda County Public Health Department

Research shows that the omicron variant is very different from past strains of SARS-CoV-2. It is much more transmissible, including from asymptomatic people. It also more easily causes breakthrough infections in immunized people, despite prior infection or vaccination. However, those with prior immunity, if infected, are generally less afflicted and less likely to transmit the disease to others. Right now, Alameda County, including Rockridge, shows widespread community transmission with growing hospitalization and a rising death rate *(see graph on left, or visit https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/?state=CA).*

What all this means is that requiring proof of vaccination (and masking) for entry into indoor public spaces is important to protect public health. It encourages vaccination (which should include a booster) and helps protect others present, including employees. It is particularly important for protecting the elderly and the immune impaired, who are both more susceptible and more likely to suffer severe disease.

Requiring proof of vaccination may be inconvenient for businesses and the public. It may even impair the freedom of the unvaccinated. But courts have long held that protecting public health and safety overrides minor infringements on individuals' freedom to do whatever they wish.

Dr. Stuart Flashman
Dr. Jacqueline Richter
Ocean View Drive ■

NCPC Meeting

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council
will hold a virtual meeting on

February 10, 2022, at 7pm,
(pending further notice).

For Zoom link, or to suggest meeting topics,
email: chair@rockridgencpc.com

Neighbors Fight Blight at The Ridge

by Myrna Walton

Over 200 Rockridge residents and shoppers at the Ridge can't be wrong! Two years ago, those residents signed a petition to clean up and maintain the four-acre former Safeway site at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley Road. The petition cited blight, unsafe conditions, garbage, and a rickety dangerous fence as the primary concerns and called on the City and the leaseholder, TRC, to clean up the lot.

Just look at the large, vacant site across from the Oakland Kaiser Medical Center (Broadway and MacArthur), and you can see what a long-term vacant lot should look like. It is a pleasant sight to the neighbors, walkers, and drivers passing by.

Since Phase I of Shops at the Ridge was completed, the developer has completely neglected the remaining parcel, leaving residents of Rockridge and shoppers with this eyesore. Let's spark action to fix this and make sure the City and developer fulfill their obligations to the community.

Now, with the blessing of three neighborhood groups, Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA); Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC); and Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL); neighbors are launching a new petition. The petition specifies the dangerous and blighted conditions, including the inadequate and in some cases dangerous sidewalks that pedestrians must use to get to the shopping area.



Undeveloped lot at Broadway and Pleasant Valley.

While neighbors look forward to the lot being developed for appropriate use, until then, the leaseholder must follow City guidelines to clean up and maintain the lot.

Public pressure is the only way we will see an improvement. Go to https://www.change.org/NoUglyLot51Broadway to read and sign the petition, and ask your neighbors to do the same. Or scan the QR code below to go right to the petition. Thank you. ■

Rockridge Community Planning Council 2021 Financial Statement

RCPC General Fund	
Income	
Contributions	$930.00
Rockridge News	$42,205.00
Interest Income	$7.50
Total Income	$43,142.50
Expenses	
Rockridge News	$37,434.49
Contractors	$4,280.25
Insurance, Permits, Sales Tax	$1,564.00
Misc Administrative & Program Expenses	$3,900.00
Events	$571.86
Total Expenses	$47,750.60
Net Receipts/Loss (RCPC)	-$4,608.10
BALANCE SHEET	
Assets	
RCPC Assets, Savings/Checking	$83,808.52
Locksley Gardens Assets, Checking	$746.00
Total Assets	**$84,554.52**
Equity & Liability	
KF Community Improvements Prgm	$5,618.41
Legal Fund Reserve	$55,000.00
Equity	$28,543.84
Net Income / Loss	-$4,607.73
Total Equity & Liability	**$84,554.52**





RN Delivery, from front page

with the eldest and ending with the young'uns.

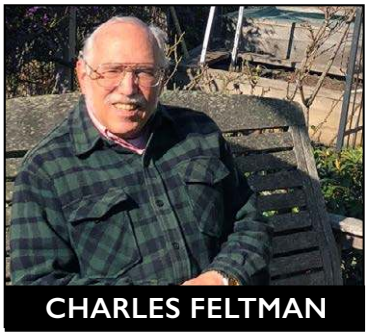

EDWARD JAY

Edward Jay: "I am now 90-years-old and have been delivering the newsletter from when it started. I am a retired professor of anthropology, Cal State East Bay." His route is Chabot Road from Ivanhoe to Chabolyn Terrace.


CHUCK AND CAROLINA

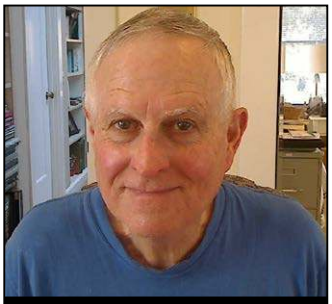
Carolina Juárez: "I really don't know when I began delivering *The Rockridge News*, but since Don Kinkead is our immediate neighbor, I suspect as long as it has been published. I am 84-years-old, taught English, Spanish, and Drama in the Bay Area since 1969, until last year when I had hip surgery and did not like teaching virtually! Dear Becky of Becky's Chinese Restaurant was an ESL student of mine when her Chinese family moved from Vietnam to Oakland. My first husband and I bought a house on Oak Grove Avenue in 1965 when ordinary people could afford to buy a home here. My very fine and brave husband of 41 years who married me when I had four teenagers, **Chuck Afflerbach**, also delivers *The Rockridge News*." Her route is 5600 Miles and 5700 to 5711 College. His is both sides of Lawton between Clifton and Cavour.

Carolyn Hendsch: "I deliver the paper for Clover Drive. I'm age 82 and have done it for maybe 5-7 years. I like it because it helps me know my neighbors, but I know them already. Clover Drive is a short block and very friendly."

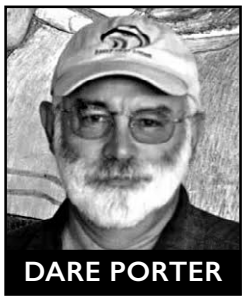

CHARLES FELTMAN

Charles Feltman: "I may be the oldest at age 79, and I never had a paper route as a kid. That's because I grew up in Manhattan, that main island in New York City. For a while, my father had a newsstand and also delivered papers to a local hospital. So I come by my interest via a family tradition, in addition to the value of walking :-)" His route is Broadway Terrace between Buena Vista and Golden Gate; Hill Street between Broadway Terrace and Golden Gate; Buena Vista between Broadway Terrace and Acacia; and Acacia between Buena Vista and Golden Gate.

Jimmy Pedersen: I'm not sure when I started delivering. It was around 1993 when I moved to Avon Street. I'm 76-years-old now and planning on getting older. I have had to let go of my involvement with the FROG Park committee. I just couldn't do it anymore. I am retired and living out my time on Avon, the farm-belt of North Oakland." His route is both sides of Avon between Shafter and Miles.


STEVE PARMELEE

Steve Parmelee: "Bobbie Kinkead recruited me back when *The Rockridge News* first started. I can't remember the exact date, but I believe I started delivering the newsletter sometime in 1986 and am still doing it. I have lived in Rockridge since early 1975 and will be 76-years-old this year. My route is even-numbered properties on Broadway between Manila and Lawton avenues."


DARE PORTER

Dare Porter: "I started delivering *The Rockridge News* in 1986. I am now 75." His route is on both sides of Hudson between Boyd and College.

Marcy Whitebook: "I'm not sure whether I'm the oldest one delivering *The Rockridge News*, but I will be 74 at the end of the month. I have been

RN Delivery, see next page

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Stroll the Avenue and Deliver the News

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

Joy Kummer is giving up her College Avenue delivery route. We thank her for her years of service as block captain to businesses along her route, and invite an interested neighbor to take her place. Says Joy, "You get to pop in, say hello, and share the news — all while serving your neighbors." Businesses are now open and eager to get the newsletter. Who will step up and deliver to the route described below? (Shopping is permitted and encouraged.)

Route Cav1: Businesses and apartments along College Avenue from Claremont Ave to BART. Stacks at Zachary's and Crossroads (sharing stands with East Bay Express), 1951, Supercuts, and the Golden Squirrel Block

The newsletter is published the first weekend of each month except August and your bundle will be dropped off on your doorstep. Call (510) 547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com and mention the route number when you do. ■

RN Delivery, from previous page

delivering the paper for many years though I cannot remember exactly when I began. I have two routes, having taken on the second when my neighbor Jim couldn't deliver anymore, and I know he had the route from the beginning. I moved to my home on 63rd Street in 1977." Her routes are both sides of 63rd Street between Colby and Hillegass and the even-numbered addresses along Colby between 63rd and Alcatraz.

Gary Lippmann: "My wife Catherine Gray and I have been delivering *The Rockridge News* since 'the beginning' on our block of Taft Avenue and Broadway around the corner. We're devoted deliverers and devoted readers. We also paste 'Street Sweeping Warnings' to its front page so that our neighbors can avoid receiving parking tickets. *The Rockridge News* is a truly outstanding neighborhood newspaper, and the advertisements are informative and useful. It's a real gift to residents."

Candy Vernetti: "My daughter Amy Vernetti moved to Boyd Avenue in Rockridge in 2001. I was working at the Pentagon in D.C., and she convinced me that Rockridge is the perfect spot for me. She found a house on Shafter that she said was 'my house.' I quit my job and sight unseen moved here in 2006 and started delivering the paper. After moving away in 2013 and back to Rockridge in 2020, I picked up where I left off — delivering my paper route for *The Rockridge News*. I love it here and hope to continue my routes with my big yellow lab, Teague." She delivers to the odd numbers along Manila between Broadway and Ada and odd numbers along Claremont.



JAN HOWLAND

Jan Howland: "I think I started delivering *The Rockridge News* soon after I moved to Buena Vista Ave, so that would be 1987 or so. I took a few years off after the fire and started up again in the fall of 1994, and still deliver it today. I am glad we have a neighborhood newsletter/paper, and I am happy to help. I have had the same route for all these years. Many of my neighbors have moved away but there are still some from before the fire on my route." Her route is Buena Vista Avenue from Contra Costa Road to Belap Path plus one block of Acacia Avenue.

Mark Coyle: "Not sure where we fit in, but my daughter Skyler (eight years old, at Chabot Elementary) and I (58 years old) have been delivering since just this last summer. I carry the newspapers and she takes each one to deliver to each house. It's ironic and sweet to me that my first job was delivering the *Hibbing Daily Tribune* (northern Minnesota) when I was about 10, and now I get to share this with my daughter. It's a highlight of the month for her — she loves it." Their route includes both sides of Chabot between College and Claremont and merchants along College.



KALI AND REINA PARMAR

Koonal "KP" Parmar: "I would like to nominate Kali and Reina Parmar. They just turned four years old yesterday and have been delivering *The Rockridge News* since they were two. Cheers." Their route is on both sides of Mystic Street.

Jen Milley: "It's a pleasure to be a part of this neighborhood effort. Hayes, my six-month-old son *(see photo on front page)*, must be the youngest delivery person. He keeps trying to eat the papers, but we still manage to get them out :)" Their route is the 500 blocks of Forest and Martin.

(The author thanks Rockridge News *business manager Susan Montauk for soliciting these responses, which have been slightly edited, and for the work she does keeping track of all of us [yes, me too] who deliver the* News.*)* ■



Community-Built Greenspace, Frog Park, Marks 20th Anniversary Year

by Theresa Nelson, Frog Park Co-Founder

Almost any time of day, you can hear the laughter of children playing on the swings and the two Frog Park play structures; see folks strolling along the paths; watch kids of all ages playing basketball; and see happy dogs chasing balls and each other in the dog park. All of these are important elements of Frog Park, the central open space in the lower Rockridge-Temescal area. However, more than 20 years ago, most of the park's amenities didn't exist, and a community came together to create this new park — and with the park's 20th anniversary comes an opportunity to share its story.

Back in the mid-1990s, I co-led a group of parents who had been searching for a place to build a small children's park in lower Rockridge, as the nearest play areas were in south Berkeley, Montclair, and Piedmont. It seemed a shame that in this most walkable neighborhood, there was nowhere for children over the age of 5-years-old to play.

This same group had helped to guide the renovation of Colby Park in 1995, tailored for toddler and pre-school-age children under 5-years-old with small-sized equipment, which my own daughter had outgrown while the renovation was planned and built. Around this time, a citywide survey identified Rockridge, Temescal, and the Fruitvale neighborhoods as the three areas most lacking in open space.

Early Planning

Various sites were reviewed, but finding a space was difficult, as this neighborhood was built up circa 1910-1930, and was densely developed. After much community discussion, and some disagreement about whether a park was even needed and where it should be, a terrific opportunity arose.

Two neighbors, **Peter Hollingsworth** and **Tom Dolan**, came up with a master plan that imagined a greenbelt centered along the historical path of Temescal Creek that has flowed on this land for millennia. The plan reclaimed the right-of-way that resulted from culverting the creek in the 1970s.

This fenced-off area of tall weeds between Hardy and Clifton was to be anchored at both ends by play structures, with a pond created from creek water pumped to the surface. Much of the community came together around this idea and a committee was formed to develop plans — the core of this group later became the Friends of the

FROG, see next page

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Celebrating the opening of Phase Two, 2006.

FROG, from previous page

Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt Park, lovingly referred to as FROG.

FROG worked with the City of Oakland and the State Department of Parks and Recreation to identify some available bond funding, and a committee was formed to raise awareness and private funds for the new park.

Around this time, in the year 2000, several Oakland parks were being renovated with safer, more up-to-date equipment that was ordered from big-play equipment catalog companies. But, building two play structures at Frog Park was going to be cost-prohibitive. In other places, some of us had experienced the unique wooden play structures designed by Robert Leathers & Associates and built by the communities where they were sited, and we ultimately decided to go this route.

The Big Build, Phase One, 2001

The community-built approach is based on the idea of asking children what they want in a play area, bringing together hundreds of volunteers to build the structure, raising the funds, doing PR, providing food, tools, and even childcare for the volunteer workers. Thanks to the leadership of the original "Big Build" Committee, chaired by **Eileen Fitz-Faulkner**, FROG was able to recruit more than 1,300 volunteers to build these two unique play structures over the course of 10 days in October 2001.

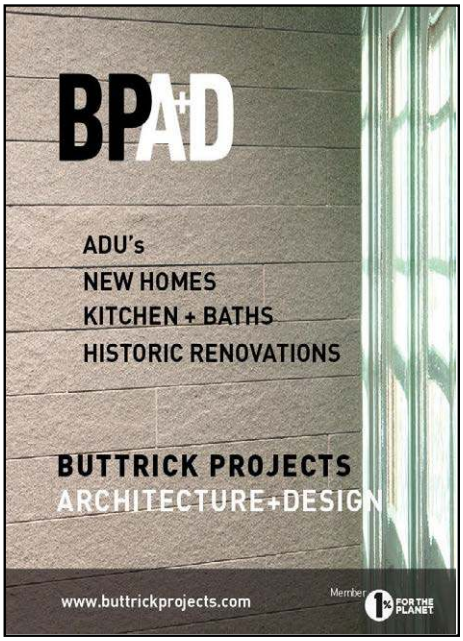
More than $1.4 million was raised for the project, including public bond funds, a large donation from then-Councilmember **Jane Brunner**, private donations from residents and local businesses, and significant donations of food, tools, and equipment. To get approvals and finalize plans, the Committee also had to work closely with the City of Oakland, Caltrans, and the Alameda County Flood Control District — all of which owned various parts of the Greenbelt.

BBI Construction did the concrete work and paths, and all the wood play structures were built by volunteers (see photos). The core of the park opened in November of 2001, in what we now call Phase One, with Big Frog the name for the play area near Hardy Street, suitable for all ages under 12 years; and Little Frog for the area near Redondo and Clarke Streets for children 5 years old and younger.

Steve Costa became the first chair of FROG, and noted, "As the FROG Park co-chair to witness the extraordinary power of a community coming together to creatively design, fundraise, build, and maintain this amazing and most valuable neighborhood asset, this has been one of the most inspirational community actions of my life."

FROG sponsored semi-annual clean-up events over the next two decades with dozens of volunteers turning out on Earth Day (April) and Creek-to-Bay Day (September)

FROG, see next page





rockridge • temescal
frog
friends of the greenbelt

from previous page

each year to help maintain and clean the park, including many local high school students from Oakland Tech and College Prep.

Park Build-Out Phase Two, 2006

As often happens, even with enormous volunteer commitment and lots of fundraising, not everything could be built with the available funds. **Jennifer Cooper** became the next Chair of FROG, and she helped to guide Phase Two (which included another smaller effort to restore the historic 120-foot-long "Oceanus" mural opposite the park, under the guidance of the original artist).

Nearly $1 million was raised for creating the tables and seating of the Lily Pad Plaza at Big Frog, renovating the basketball courts, adding a water fountain, adding wildlife public art along the path, installing regular swings, a tire swing, and ADA play panels. The funds also helped complete the path and creek restoration from Clifton to Cavour.

A year later, the popular Sunday morning farmers' market opened at the front parking lot of the DMV, and the whole length of Frog Park became a popular stroll and play option, and I became FROG Chair for a time.

In 2011, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Big Build and worked with the City of Oakland and Caltrans to build a small bathroom at Big Frog (the area near Hardy Street). A local artist, **Caroline Stern**, later painted a frog-themed mural on the sidewall. The unique story of Frog Park was highlighted in Landscape Architecture Magazine in February 2014.

Swings and More: Phase Three, 2019

While semi-annual maintenance work continued, parents in the community had been asking for more swings to accommodate the growing population of young children. **Carol Behr** became the next FROG Chair in 2012 and launched a community survey process to find out what people wanted.

Toddler swings, public art, and noise reduction were the top requests, and FROG began another planning and fundraising phase. More than $250,000 was raised and plans were finalized in 2017, again involving multiple public agencies. New toddler swings, new regular swings, and a new ADA swing were to be added, along with a see-saw and conical spinner that allowed for children of various ages to play together.

Construction finished and ribbon cutting took place in February 2020, just before Covid-19 closed down parks citywide (the park re-opened later that fall). In early 2021, **Alison Drury** and **Dr. Will Sheldon** became the new Co-Chairs of FROG.

20th Anniversary

November of 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the grand opening of Phase One of Frog Park. At the time, with the uncertainty around Covid, it seemed wisest to postpone the celebration until the spring of 2022; we'll announce that date soon.

FROG will be hosting an Earth Day clean-up event on the morning of 23rd of April 2022. Save the date, and watch this newsletter and the FROG website (www.frogpark.org) for details. ■

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Oakland Tech Fundraiser Lays Groundwork for Future Success

by Linda Tafur, Oakland Tech Auction Committee

The annual spring auction is Oakland Technical High School's biggest parent-run fundraiser. Its success relies on the generosity of the wider community to help fill the gap in public education funding so our 2,200-plus students can continue to participate in the clubs, field trips, sports, and learning opportunities that make Tech a place that lays the groundwork for our kids' future success.

It has been a challenging year for the school along with the larger world — we have had students, teachers, and staff infected with Covid, and we have also seen people protect each other by getting tested, vaccinated, and boosted on campus, including working together to distribute high-quality masks and home test kits. Now is the time to bring our community together to benefit our wonderful public school.

We welcome everyone to bid in our online auction starting on **March 13 and running through March 23** at https://oaklandtech.schoolauction.net/2022techauction — it includes a raffle for an Instant Wine Cellar and perhaps another large prize. We remain hopeful that we can have our live event on March 26 in-person, but will go virtual again if health concerns dictate.

Proceeds will benefit the Tech PTSA that funds a wide range of activities and support services for students and teachers through their regular budgetary process as well as special projects through their mini-grant program. **Donations are due by Feb. 14, and are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law (Tax ID #94-6174624).**

Local neighborhood merchants are encouraged to consider making a donation of merchandise, a professional service, an experience, or a gift certificate. We would be happy to pick up items in person. We also have an online donation form available online at: https://oaklandtech.schoolauction.net/2022techauction/donate_items/new.

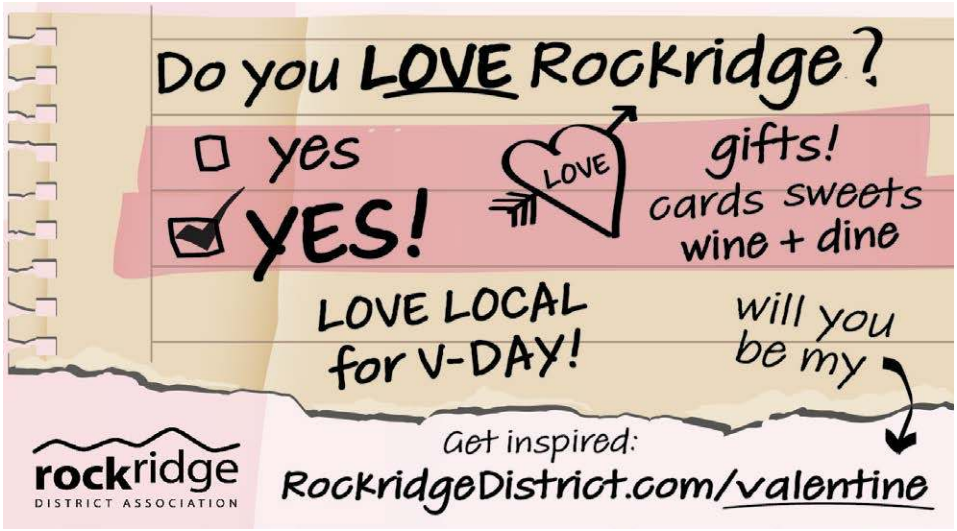
If you'd like to promote your business while supporting Oakland Tech at the same time, we have several tiers of sponsorship available beginning at $100. Your logo will be featured at our live event, on our auction website, and in the school newsletter. Contact auctionsponsors@oaklandtech.com for more information.

If you have questions or would like to help, please email auction chairs Shelly Cox and Leslie Ayers at auction@oaklandtech.com or call/text (415) 260-1490. ■



Photo: Karina Tafur





One Hundred Years Young!

Locksley Avenue residents gathered together to celebrate beloved neighbor **Victor Silva's** 100th birthday. A cake and gift basket from our own Market Hall were delivered outside on a beautiful sunny day. Victor turned 100 years young on New Year's Eve 2021.

A Rockridge resident since the 1960s, and ever the gentleman and storyteller, Victor can't resist offering his guest something to drink and an insight or two from the past. ■

Happy birthday Victor!

Mary Lanier & Amy Draizen
Locksley Ave



From left to right: Jay Constable, Amy Draizen, Caitlin Lang, Larry Wornian , Victor Silva, Anthony Mason, Mary Lanier, Kelly Hall, Ellen Fenichel.

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February awareness month: Cancer prevention, Creative Romance, Black & LGBT History



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Masons' Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

You have passed it many times. The Masonic Lodge at 5449 College Avenue (between Forest and Hudson) is normally closed to the public. But once a year, the members of the Oakland-Durant-Rockridge Masonic Lodge open their doors, don aprons, and serve breakfast to the neighborhood as part of a fundraiser for Claremont Middle School. This year, the 12th Annual Claremont Middle School Pancake Breakfast is being held **Saturday, Feb. 26**, and all are welcome.

The menu offers pancakes, sausages, bacon, soufflé, orange slices, and coffee. Tickets are $12 with three seatings: 8am, 9:15am and 10:30am. A raffle will also be held with fantastic prizes donated by the community.

Special thanks to the Masons and community support — with their help, the fundraiser has raised $4,000 annually for the Claremont PTA. For tickets and information, go to www.claremontms.org/. ■

College Preparatory School Used Book Sale Returns, in New Location

After a Covid-required pause in 2021, the College Preparatory School's renowned used book sale is back. Join fellow Bay Area book lovers to find out why this is a not-to-be-missed event. **Sale hours are Saturday, February 26, 10am-4pm; and Sunday, February 27, 10am-2pm.**

Thousands of used books will be on offer for adults, teens, and children, including many recent and popular titles in excellent condition. There will also be some media, vinyl, puzzles, and a small selection of vintage/antique books — something for book lovers of every age. Most books are priced $1-3, with some special books priced slightly higher. On Sunday, there will be a bag sale all day — $5/bag from 10am to 1pm, and $5 for 2 bags from 1pm to 2pm.

Please note this year's new location at the former Seneca Center, 6925 Chabot Road, at Golden Gate Ave. There is limited parking at Seneca Center, and street parking on Chabot and Golden Gate.

Please note, payment is by cash or check only. *Contact Bookfair@college-prep.org with any questions.* ■

Black Culture Fest: A Celebration of the African Diaspora

by Kelsey Fredriksen

The Oakland Public Library (OPL) welcomes everyone to the 3rd Annual Black Cuture Fest. This month, OPL's dedicated staff of African American heritage are excited to present a variety of dynamic programs (virtual and in-person), curated book and music lists online, and other media celebrating various aspects of Black Culture.

Focusing on joy and celebrating Black lives, the Rockridge branch will have a front lobby display with a variety of books and media near the express check-out machines to take home or enjoy with friends and family inside the branch.

Local Rockridge resident, **Yohan Smith,** has created a four-panel collage with works by African American painters, collage artists, and abstract artworks by those who have inspired him creatively. This is the 4th year of exhibiting Yohan's collage process, and it will be on display this month near the entrance lobby of the Rockridge Branch Library. A comment book soon will be available.

Complementing the exhibit will be a blog post of eight of his favorite artists' works, including Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Catlett, and Romare Bearden, among others. "I am excited and inspired to play a role in OPL toward the continuity and the ongoing commitment of the Black Cultural Fest/African Diaspora."



Rockridge resident, Yohan Smith

For more information and to save your seat for these wonderful programs, please visit: oaklandlibrary.org/black-culture-fest. ■

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Neighbors Donate Time, Money and Gifts to Clifton Hall Residents

by Judith Doner Berne

"I'm into building community." That's why **Nancy Morton** showed up a few days before Thanksgiving at Clifton Hall, the former California College of the Arts building that currently serves as a temporary shelter for homeless families who need permanent housing; and as a permanent residence for seniors experiencing homelessness and who are highly susceptible to Covid-19.

Although Morton wanted to volunteer her services, maybe teach cooking or help children with their homework, Covid restrictions, even then, made that impossible. Undeterred, she took on Christmas.

With the aid of **Elizabeth Woods**, the Family Front Door housing advocate and fundraiser who is based at Clifton Hall, Morton got a list of "wishes" from the 25 children and 13 families currently housed there. "Elizabeth didn't make promises, she just asked, 'What's your wish,'" Morton said. Nonetheless, with contributions from her friends and neighbors, Morton raised about $2,500 to provide gifts for each child — ranging from a set of earbuds to a Barbie doll (contributions were also made separtely by members of the RCPC Board who provided gift cards redeemable at College Avenue stores).



A group of area children made and baked ornaments using Morton's kitchen as their studio.

When Cole Hardware donated a Christmas tree, and a friend, **Robin Avant**, contributed lights, Morton's neighbor **Venessa Hasten** mobilized a group of area children to make and bake ornaments using Morton's kitchen as their studio. They included 12-year-olds Violet Hasten, Stella McCombs, McKenzie Miller, Ava Ting, and 11-year-old Pria Gularte, as well as advocate Woods who brought along Mia, age 12, from Clifton Hall.

Morton is quick to give credit to Hasten. "She rounded up the girls, she brought supplies, and she wrote a check at the end." As for Hasten, she said, "Nancy is just one of those people who wants to find out what they can do to help."

Woods said of Morton's efforts to make Clifton Hall part of Rockridge, which included introducing Woods to College Avenue business owners, "We now have this bridge across." ■

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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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The deadline for the March 2022 issue is February 17, 2022 (available March 5). For more details, email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com.

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