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

VOTE **RCPC BOARD ELECTIONS: APRIL 21 & 23** SAVE THE DATES

RCPC Annual Meeting and Board Election to be Held on Thursday, April 21st at the Rockridge Library; Balloting Continues on Saturday, April 23rd.

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Board Member

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), with the election for Board of Directors, will be held on **Thursday, April 21, between 7pm and 9pm** in the second-floor meeting room of the Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Ave. There are nine declared candidates for six open Board seats. (See pages 3, 4 & 5 for candidate statements.)

A candidates' forum will be held at the meeting where candidates can provide short statements and respond to audience questions.* Those concerned with the COVID risk of indoor gatherings can observe the proceedings and submit questions electronically via Zoom. However, voting is only allowed in person. (There will be polling tables both inside and outside the building.)

If a quorum of 25 members is physically present on the 21st, balloting will continue on **Saturday, April 23 from 1-4pm** outside the library (signs will point to voting location).

Meeting attendees on April 21 must show proof of vaccination to enter the library, and masks (available at entry) must be worn in the library. Voters must show proof of identity and residence within the RCPC boundaries to receive a ballot (a map of the boundaries is available on the RCPC website, https://rockridge.org). A California driver's license or California ID card fulfills both functions. Proof of identity can include a US passport or student photo ID. Residency can be shown by a tax or utility bill, or a lease/rental agreement that shows the residential address and is dated in the last two to six months.

** If Covid rates surge in April, the candidates' forum will be via Zoom only on Thursday, April 14, from 7-9pm. **Check https://rockridge.org on Monday, April 10th for updated election information**. Election dates will not change, but indoor polling tables may be eliminated.*

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS — SEE PAGES 3, 4 & 5 —



CALLING ALL KITCHENS:

Preparations Now Under Way for 2022 Kitchen Tour

by Robin McDonnell, RCPC Kitchen Tour Co-Chair

Planning for this year's Rockridge Kitchen Tour is now in full swing, and **the deadline to submit a kitchen for consideration is May 15, 2022**.

The tour will be held on **Sunday, October 2, from 12:30 to 5:30pm**. For those of you who may be new to the neighborhood, this autumn will mark the 14th tour since 1995 and will feature eight beautifully renovated, restored, or remodeled Rockridge residential kitchens.

Rockridge kitchens come in a variety of styles, sizes, and budgets: traditional, modern, Craftsman. Remodels range from modest updates to large-scale renovations and feature green construction, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and innovative designs. We want to see it all.

The Kitchen Tour is the primary fundraiser for the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), the nonprofit community organization that sponsors the publication of *The Rockridge News*, holds town hall meetings on topics of importance to the neighborhood, and supports

Kitchen Tour, see page 2

Kitchen Tour, from front page

community building through programs like the Kevin Faughnan Memorial Community Grants Program.

To submit or refer a kitchen for the tour, the Kitchen Tour Committee invites you to do so asap. For info, contact Kitchen Tour Co-Chairs, Robin McDonnell or Kirk Peterson at kitchentour@rockridge.org. ■

The Tour Committee is accepting kitchen submissions through May 15.

Works in progress are welcome, although expected completion should be no later than August 1, 2022.

Email kitchentour@rockridge.org for more details.

Farewell Message from the Chair — *Leonora Sea*

In 2018, I wrote my first article as the newly elected RCPC Board Chair. It was only four years ago but so much has changed since then, and the position has turned out to involve much more than I expected. Recently I've been looking back at my six-plus years on the board, including the years as chair. It's been challenging, enlightening, educational, and often great fun.

At times, I've been disappointed to find out that many Rockridge residents don't know anything about RCPC and its accomplishments, but I also see this as an opportunity. The neighborhood has stepped up when asked, even when in-person organizing was limited by the pandemic.

I strongly recommend the new board to keep on asking for help from our neighbors. So many people with such a broad range of skills live here that together we can accomplish great things for Rockridge and the wider city. For example, Oakland is beginning the process of updating the General Plan. Right now, the focus is on the housing element, but safety, the CEQA process, racial equity, and zoning are coming up soon in Phase 1 — and the City needs to hear from Rockridge community members.

In my initial article as Chair, I encouraged Rockridge neighbors to email or call me with ideas and concerns. I repeat that encouragement now: let the new chair and board members know what's on your mind, and volunteer your help if you can.

And once again, you can express your support for the people you'd like to see on the RCPC board. This time, as in the previous two cycles, it's a competitive election, so your vote absolutely does count. I won't be running this time, but I will be helping on the election days, and I hope to see many of you then.

Finally, I want to thank my RCPC colleagues — past and present board members, officers, and advisors. In a very busy world, they've given a lot of their time and talent to RCPC and I appreciate them for it. ■

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The RockridgeNews

The Rockridge News was founded in 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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RCPC Board of Directors, 2021-22

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Mark Aaronson, Andrew Charman, Stuart Flashman, Annette Floystrup, Kirk Peterson, Ronnie Spitzer, Zac Unger

Contact the board: chair@rockridge.org
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 MAY: April 21, 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.

Candidate Statements

Dear Readers,

In this issue you will find candidate statements for the nine candidates (four incumbents plus five other candidates) for six seats on the RCPC Board of Directors. The Board provides the leadership to RCPC in addressing issues here in Rockridge.

This year, the Board suggested that, in addition to introducing themselves, candidates identify and discuss two or three issues that they feel are important for Rockridge. The Board also adopted guidelines for campaigning. Those can be found in the March 2022 Rockridge News *where you'll find details of the election procedures (April 21st and 23rd) on the front page.*

Alysoun Bonde

Lawton Avenue



Greetings neighbors; I'm running to support our community to be inclusive, family-friendly, economically vibrant, and safe during these challenging times.

A thriving Rockridge has diverse neighbors, successful small businesses, and activated streets and parks that are walkable, welcoming, and safe. I feel privileged to live in our wonderful community and want to make sure that others have that opportunity regardless of income, race, or status.

As an East Bay native, I've spent my life working to lift up small businesses, provide housing opportunities, and advocate for equitable economic development in Oakland. I'm a graduate of U.C. Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy and a member of Oakland's Head Start Advisory Board, and serve as a board member for local and international nonprofits.

I believe that communities and families carry the wisdom and solutions to our challenges that policymakers need, not the other way around. I'd be honored to be your representative. ■

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS continued on pages 4 & 5

Casey Farmer (Incumbent)

Carlton Street



I'm running for re-election to continue advocating for an inclusive and thriving community. My family has lived in Rockridge as renters and homeowners for nearly 12 years. Ten years ago, I moved to Old Oakland, but soon thereafter deeply missed our vibrant neighborhood and moved back.

During my service on the RCPC Board for the last four years, I have led our Redistricting Ad-Hoc Committee, managed our fundraiser for the new residents at Clifton Hall's transitional housing, and enhanced participation at our RCPC town halls.

I'll continue to advocate for four specific issues: 1) I want Rockridge to be inclusive for everyone, regardless of income; 2) I want Rockridge to be the most family-friendly neighborhood in Oakland; 3) I want College Avenue to thrive with fewer vacant storefronts; 4) I want our neighborhood to feel safe for everyone. Thank you for your vote. ■

Annette Floystrup (Incumbent)

Birch Court



I have served on past RCPC boards where I co-chaired the Rockridge DVD project, which raised $13,000 to double the number of DVDs for the library. I also write for *The Rockridge News*.

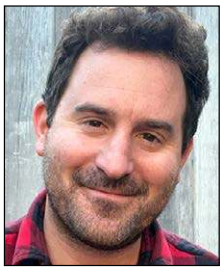
After renting in Rockridge for 7 years, I became a homeowner where I set up and ran my own business. I have also worked as a retail manager. I'm a past President and Board Member of the Bay Area Small Business Development Corporation where we provided loan guarantees to women-owned and minority-owned businesses.

I've worked on RCPC Kitchen Tours and other fundraising so that the nonprofit can continue to contribute to Oakland and our neighborhood in tangible ways like the Library and FROG Park, and environmental improvements at Claremont and Chabot schools.

As for my personal priorities, I will continue to work on fundraising, emergency preparedness for wildfire and earthquake safety, and the economic vibrancy of College Avenue businesses. ■

Ben Friedman

Colby Street



After almost 5 years as a resident of Rockridge, I excitedly announce my candidacy for the RCPC board. I work in environmental philanthropy and advocacy, and will use my conservation and government affairs experience to effectively share our community's needs with local, state, and federal decision makers as well as government-funded neighborhood grant programs.

As a contributor to *The Rockridge News*, I've covered our community's natural values and current events, as well as my own process of "Choosing Rockridge" as a place to call home. The RCPC can play a leadership role in addressing three significant issues our community faces today: our housing crisis, undeveloped lots within our community, and poor air quality, exacerbated by climate change.

How can Rockridge be a model for addressing these pressing issues in the Bay Area and California? RCPC must address these questions so that our neighborhood can remain the spectacular community that it is — and I want to help. ■

LAND USE COMMITTEE Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the RCPC Land Use Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 27, 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 Rockridge.org for details.

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NCPC MEETING

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

will hold its next virtual meeting on:

April 14, 2022, at 7pm, (pending further notice).

For Zoom link, or to suggest meeting topics, send an email to: chair@rockridgencpc.com, or visit https://rockridgencpc.com.

COMING SOON in APRIL & MAY!

– APRIL –

Scandinavian modern vibe on Upper Chabot Road! Large retreat-like setting measures 2,791 sq ft* and has 3 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms, 2 large flexible bonus spaces, plus a detached shed/office! Large 4,400 sq ft* lot!

– MAY –

The "***Thrilla on Manila***" returns to the market! Built as 100% new construction in 2018, this modern 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom home offers 2,050 sq ft* of beautiful open-plan living space, and upgrades like Heath tile & wide-plank European white oak flooring! Bedrooms, laundry and family room all on the upper floor. Attached 1-car garage with interior access!



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DRE#1919653 *Figures derived from measured floorplans from Open Homes Photography, and differ from public tax records

Candidate Statements, from previous page

Robin McDonnell: (Incumbent)

Auburn Avenue



My husband and I moved to Rockridge in 2018. We made Rockridge our home because of its unique combination of urban life and sense of community. My background includes 25 years in county government with responsibility for community development, housing programs and economic development. It also includes volunteer work and nonprofit board membership.

Soon after moving here, I volunteered to help with the Kitchen Tour. I enjoyed seeing the kitchens and meeting homeowners, RCPC members and docents alike.

Since joining the RCPC Board, I have chaired the Community Grants program, assisted with communications, and filled the position of Vice Chair along with helping with various community events.

RCPC has always worked to enhance the quality of life of all the residents and business owners in Rockridge. We have done this by supporting public facilities such as the library, advocating for Rockridge to the City and County, and promoting community events. I think it is important to continue these efforts to keep Rockridge a place we can all be proud to call home. ■

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Diana Mitchell-Chavez

Shafter Avenue



My purpose in running for a seat on the RCPC Board is very simple…it's to give voice to all Rockridge residents and represent them in decisions regarding housing, business, and safety in the neighborhood. I wish to listen to them and implement their desires and needs by working with fellow Board members as well as City representatives.

I've lived in Rockridge for 42 years. Rockridge has experienced the Oakland Firestorm, the Bay Bridge Earthquake, and the Covid-19 lockdown, and throughout each event, neighbor helped neighbor, and the neighborhood has managed to continue to grow. I will continue to work with my neighbors to implement their goals for the direction of Rockridge.

I want to make sure the people who live, work and pay their taxes here don't have their needs ignored or bypassed.

Thank you for your consideration. ■

Brett Moyer

Miles Avenue



My name is Brett Moyer and I'm excited to run for the RCPC. My wife and I moved to the neighborhood as renters near Trader Joe's five years ago, moving to a house on 51st Street 18 months ago. We love walking around the neighborhood with our standard poodle and one-year-old son, Miles, named after the street we used to live on.

I'm excited to run for RCPC to help with a few major issues facing the neighborhood – how do we keep businesses in the neighborhood and how can we ensure the neighborhood continues to welcome neighbors with housing and quality of life improvements for everyone.

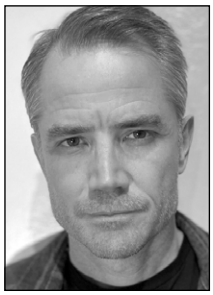
I work as a Financial Analyst for a bank, and I'm excited to see how I can bring my skill set to help the neighborhood. ■

***Candidate Statements*, see next page**

A candidates' forum will be held at the meeting on April 21 at 7pm.

Candidate Statements, cont.

Eric Neville
Thomas Avenue



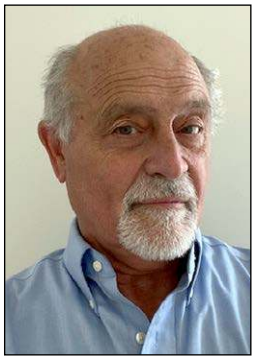
Who is government? It seems "activism" is a term used by folks thinking political impact is rightfully outsourced, that personal involvement is a deviation. I call it "participation," and it's the way nearly everything good in government has been achieved — from the Revolution to Abolition, from protecting wildlife to stemming pollution.

Is Rockridge livable? Will it be for another generation? If Oakland's population has grown 10 percent in 20 years, why has the cost of housing risen 150 percent? What's going on when 18 percent of Oaklanders live in poverty and we have the worst income inequality in 100 years?

The money problem leads, and space follows. How much livable square footage is sitting vacant on spec, deducted as a business loss? Where are the stats? Are they even collected?

If POTUS gets a Presidential Daily Briefing, how's the common citizen supposed to make sense of things? Who sees? Who troubleshoots? Who's government? We all are, and that ain't easy. ■

Kirk Peterson: (Incumbent)
College Avenue



I was born in 1951, on Pill Hill, at which time I inherited Italian citizenship; and I studied at U.C. Berkeley and the Rhode Island School of Design.

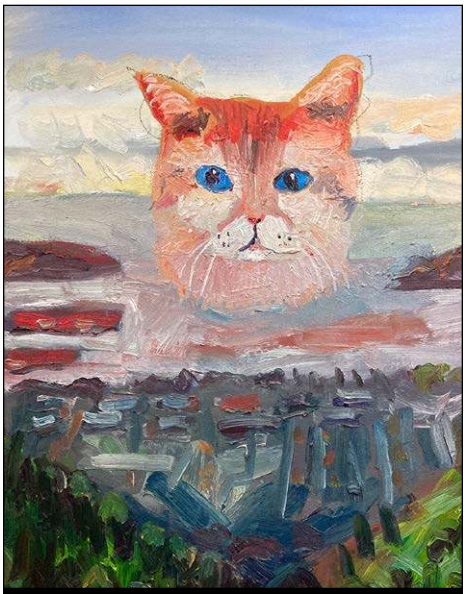
I've been practicing architecture on College Avenue for a few decades. I love the Oakland cityscape and its neighborhoods, its parks, its eclectic architecture, and of course the interesting sorts of people who call this area home.

I hike our great regional parks, make sculpture, and sing in a choir. I like to participate in civic activities, and volunteer for the Oakland Museum and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.

As a board member, I have written for, and distributed *The Rockridge News* and helped organize RCPC Halloween and clean-up events. I am active on the Land Use Committee and serve as co-chair for our fall Kitchen Tour.

Rockridge elected me to the Board in 2020, and I am asking the neighborhood to elect me again for another term. ■

Rockridge Café Hosts Artist Paulette Nichols



Nichols' painting (18" x 24" oil on canvas panel) is from 4 years ago, with a newly added cat.

Rockridge artist **Paulette Nichols** is currently exhibiting 25 of her paintings on the walls of the Rockridge Café. The majority of her *plein air* paintings are of views and subjects within a two-mile radius of the artist's home on Broadway.

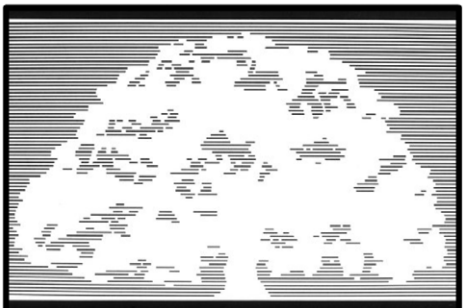
"I drove up to Grizzly Peak and painted the landscape, the view looking down one of the lookouts above Claremont Canyon. About six months ago, I started adding cats to some of the landscape paintings that I had around my home. People love cats. The other paintings in the show are pretty much all unadulterated local landscapes with no felines in them."

The exhibit will remain on display until May 11. The Rockridge Café is located at 5492 College Avenue near the corner of Lawton. ■

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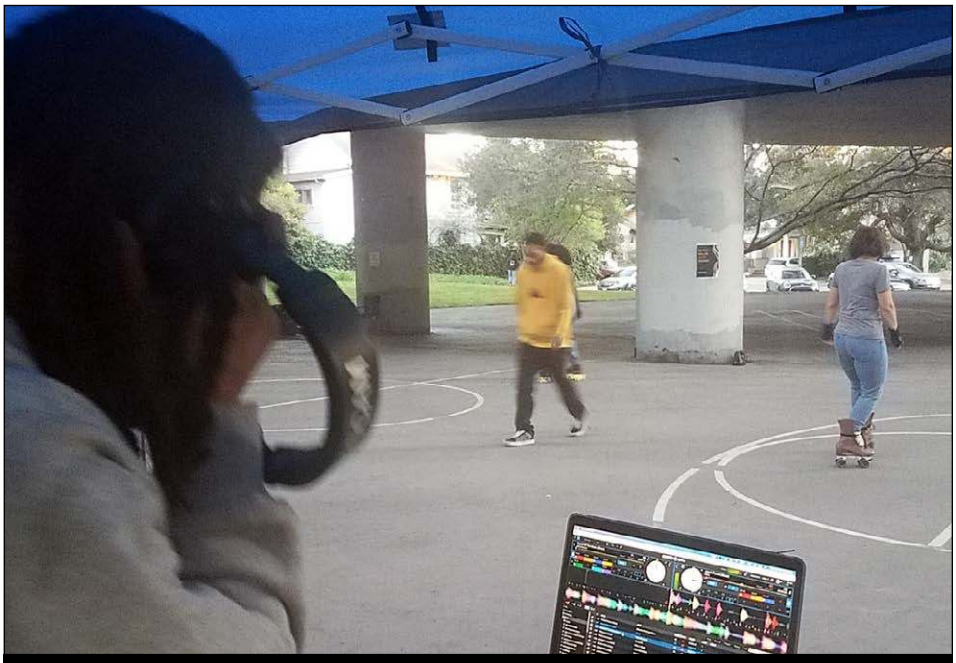
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Skate Sessions are Back at Frog Park

by Carol Kasparek and Gary Fine



DJ KG blends tunes for roller skaters Thursday afternoons, from 4-8pm. Be sure to bring your skates.

For those of you that are used to hearing kids playing, basketballs dribbling, and dogs barking, you can now add the sound of roller skates and great tunes to the mix. After a 4-month hiatus, Roller Skate Sessions have returned to Frog Park.

DJ KG and his team will be providing music **every Thursday, from 4-8pm**, at the basketball courts between Hardy Park and Frog Park. Tunes are a blend of old and new, with DJ KG creating a mix to play off the energy of the skaters. The area is covered so skaters can come out rain or shine. BART tracks overhead add to the vibrations.

KG began his DJ career at his church with double cassette decks, discovering how music brought people together. He decided to try other venues and upgrade his equipment to create that sense of community elsewhere. "Music is healing …this is what I have to offer the community," he said.



DJ KG and his brother, Cary, use music for recreation and health.

We all looked for ways to stay healthy during the challenges of the past two years. KG came to Frog Park to play basketball. He worked in UCSF operating rooms during the height of the pandemic and the park became a favorite destination for him. With the murals, huge columns and open expanse, "the place looked like a movie set."

Asking himself, "When am I going to start doing what I love?," he answered by setting up his equipment last summer and making music. With his brother, Cary, and friend, **Marjo Alexander**, they showed up every week to create an opportunity for people to come together. They carefully monitored sound levels to be respectful of the neighbors, passed out flyers and responded to what people wanted to hear. KG said some folks put blankets on the surrounding grass, transforming the tunes into dinner music.

Hudson resident **Sallie Olsen** was shooting hoops with her grandson recently when she saw KG and his brother testing their equipment. She was delighted, commenting that the sessions are "a yin and yang to all the [expletive] that's going on in the world right now." Agreed. Bring your skates.

For more info, call (510) 776-5161 or email Djkgbooking92@gmail.com. ■





Recipe Book Looks Back at the Blossoming Rockridge Food Scene

by Anna L. Marks

Back in 2001, when College Avenue Avenue wasn't such a culinary destination (think: Edible Complex) Rockridge resident **Barry Kaufman** wanted to educate neighbors about the burgeoning food scene, and thus began writing his longstanding column in *The Rockridge News*, "Rockridge Cornucopia," where he celebrated his findings with recipes and personal anecdotes.

Barry was married to his wife, Gail, for 50 years. They were both born in Brooklyn and met each other at summer camp when they were just 16.

Years later, the couple moved to Amherst, Mass, where they both did their graduate work, eventually making their way to Rockridge in the early 1980s when Barry served as Dean at the School of Education at Dominican College in San Rafael.

His obsession, however, was cooking, and he entered a weekend and evening program at the Culinary Institute that led to long food-prep shifts at a few local restaurants. In the end, however, he realized that he preferred to cook mostly for his friends and family — sharing his skills with his daughter who shares his passion.

Barry passed away in April of 2016, and Gail has recently put together a book with some of his most treasured recipes and photos to share with friends and neighbors. It is now available in print as a 20-page booklet (only a limited number of copies available) and as a pdf.

"I got so many amazing letters and emails from people when Barry died, about how they loved his column 'Rockridge Cornucopia' — they made his recipes and looked forward to reading it each month — they were so personal and sweet."

Kaufman loved to travel and research culinary traditions and was interested in the history of food in the world around him. Gail picked those recipes that revealed his loving and caring nature when writing about how the history of certain dishes was impacted by culture and language.

While many of his recipes were not original, they were some of his favorites, including a third generation knish recipe from Gail's side of the family and French chocolate ice cream from Vincent Price, along with exotic recipes from their travels to Southeast Asia and Indonesia. "He never met a spice he didn't like," said Gail.

If you would like to receive the link to the digitized version that you can print out or save for reference, please email Gail Kaufman at gkaufman@berkeley.edu. She does have a few hard copies and is happy to give them to a few of Barry's die-hard fans. ■

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March awareness month: Women's History, Optimism, MS Education, Humorists as Artists



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Two Volunteer Block Captains Needed Now

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager


Block Captain Sam Martin

The Rockridge News has two openings for Block Captains beginning in May. **Zach Larson** has to give up his Hillegass route since his work schedule has changed, and **Trish Campbell** is moving and needs to find a volunteer to cover her Ivanhoe route. Our thanks to both of these community volunteers — they both hope their routes will be claimed soon. Please let us know if you will be able to take on either of these routes:

- **Route 05D: 5800 and 5700 Ivanhoe between Miles and Chabot.**
- **Route 24B: Woolsey, South side, from Benvenue to Hillegass, both sides of 6400 Hillegass, up North side of Alcatraz to Benvenue.**

Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. Their bundles are delivered to their front porches the first weekend of each month (except August). Call (510) 547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer. ■

Sam Davis: "It's Been A Roller Coaster Ride…"

by Judith Doner Berne

Sam Davis views the Oakland Unified School District from several angles: as a former teacher, school volunteer, parent, and vice president of its school board.

Elected to the OUSD board in November 2020 from District 1, which includes Rockridge, fellow board members immediately chose him as vice president and re-elected him this year. Davis is the only trustee with a child attending an Oakland Unified school (Oakland Tech). He left a full-time job to devote more time to the district. Board members are paid just under $10,000 a year.

"School board members have to put in so much time," he told me, as we sat on the patio of Alem's Coffee shop on Claremont Avenue. Beyond the hours spent prepping for board meetings "which are extremely long," and the two committees on which he serves, Davis's days include meetings with district administrative, academic and facilities staff; dealing with "the many different controversies that come up all the time"; and responding to community members and interest groups with concerns on a variety of issues. He also keeps constituents informed through an emailed newsletter.

Taking office during the Covid-19 pandemic, Davis and his fellow board members, along with school trustees across the country, have struggled with the problems inherent in virtual learning, including when to re-open schools; parental, staff and student concerns over Covid safety measures; staffing shortages; and the beat goes on. And, through it all, the district's financial problems have worsened. What currently looks like a budget surplus, he said, doesn't consider the tentative agreements with various unions to which the district has already committed.

"It's been a roller coaster ride," Davis said. "I have days that I want to quit and days that I want to help the district do a better job instead of going from crisis to crisis. The issue is how do we get the district to be sustainable."

The current crisis is over school closings and consolidations, which have provoked upheaval including parent protests, staff and student walkouts, and a demonstration in front of Davis's house. "The people picketing my home was upsetting," he said, "but it's nothing compared to the two teachers who went on a hunger strike (now over) to protest the closings. I met with them."

Disturbed that the process was rushed and that affected families weren't being supported, he worked to persuade the board to trim the initial list of school closures and to slow down others. But given flagging enrollments, the need to raise salaries to retain enough staff (made even more urgent by rising inflation), and the threat of a takeover by the county, he voted in favor of the following:

At the end of this school year, Parker and Community Day School will close, La Escuelita will go from a K-8 school to an elementary school and Rise Community Elementary and New Highland Academy, which currently share an East Oakland campus, will

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page

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eyes on Rockridge

from previous page

merge. At the end of the 2022-23 school year, Korematsu Discovery Academy, Carl B. Munck, Grass Valley, and Horace Mann elementary schools will close, and Hillcrest K-8 will lose middle school grades.

"OUSD would be in danger of losing local control to the County if it was not able to meet its financial obligations," Davis said. "Once the Covid relief funds are used up, that could be a real danger if the district does not continue to reduce its expenses to align with revenues." Also at stake, he said, "is $10 million in State funding contingent on OUSD closing schools by the end of this school year."

One of the main issues," Davis said, "is that Oakland Unified has lost 2,500 students over the past four years, partly due to competition with charter schools but also due to the impacts of gentrification and the pandemic. Districts with similar numbers of students to Oakland, such as Fremont and San Jose, have half the number of schools, and in many areas of Oakland, there are far fewer families with school-age children than just a few years ago."

In addition, he noted that nearby school systems, such as Piedmont and San Leandro, which are also losing students, are recruiting in Oakland. "It's a competitive environment."

Although no schools in District 1 are scheduled to close, last year two schools in Davis's region were affected. Students at Kaiser Elementary in Hiller Highlands — which was at capacity but where few students came from the immediate neighborhood — were transferred to an under-enrolled Sankofa Academy in the Bushrod neighborhood.

According to Davis, "Sankofa is thriving now." Although 17 percent of Kaiser students left the district, Sankofa's enrollment went from 150 to 210 students, with an increase in the number of students on the list for next year. "It takes a few years for the strategy to work," he said.

In a recent *San Jose Mercury News* op-ed (2/7/22), former OUSD board president and long-time District 1 representative Jody London and her former colleague James Harris wrote of the necessity to change a failing system. "Good governance means looking at the entire system and making the right choice for children even when the decision is unpopular with some.

"OUSD would be in danger of losing local control to the County if it was not able to meet its financial obligations."

"With the proposed mergers and closures, every student will have a seat in a classroom, and teachers will still teach, albeit at a different school," they wrote. "The difference: The remaining schools will be better able to afford librarians, extra-curricular activities and additional academic and social support services. Are we so afraid of change that we are willing to hold on to a system that fails our children?"

Rockridge resident **Shelly Weintraub** takes an opposing view. As a former OUSD teacher and member of Educators for Democratic Schools, she initially supported Davis's election to the board. Speaking only for herself, she said the board reached its conclusions too quickly "without community input, without evidence that closing these schools would achieve its financial and educational goals, and without considering the question of equity. The process was pushed into two weeks. They didn't take the time to sell it to the community."



Sam Davis
Oakland School Board Director

At the same time, Weintraub sympathizes with Davis and his fellow school board members. "It's a horrible job because there's never enough money. They're asked to make decisions between bad and worse. California [30th in the nation in school funding] does a horrible job of funding schools."

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

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Ride for a Reason and Support Our Public Schools

by Cliff Rechtschaffen

Since 2009, parents, students, teachers and community members have ridden from Oakland Technical High School to the State Capitol in Sacramento to support public education. After a brief hiatus followed by a virtual event in 2021, the Ride 4A Reason bike ride/school fundraiser is back this year and scheduled for **April 23, 2022**.

The ride began as a protest against the deep budget cuts to Oakland Unified School District and all California public schools during the Great Recession. Since then, Ride 4A Reason has grown to include hundreds of riders and raised over a million dollars for 12 public schools in Oakland and Alameda.

All participating schools serve students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and many have very limited fundraising capabilities. Locally, funds raised will directly benefit Emerson Elementary, Claremont Middle, and Oakland Tech and Oakland International High Schools. Schools use these funds for library books, sports equipment, after-school programs, science equipment, and staff salaries for counselors, librarians, and reading specialists.



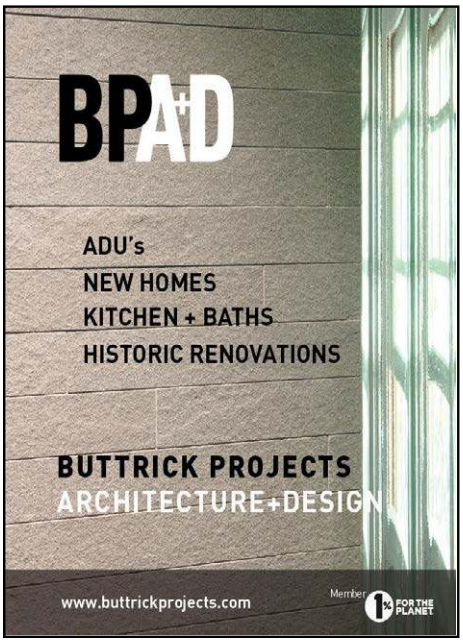
The crew from Westlake Middle School gets ready to ride from Oakland Tech, 2019.

Photo credit: Moses Omolade

The event is staffed by close to 75 volunteers, and 100 percent of the proceeds go directly to the schools. Riders can choose fully supported rides of distances of 45, 68 or 109 miles (for the shorter rides, cyclists take a bus to the starting point).

This year, a run/walk event with the Lake Merritt Joggers and Striders on April 24 has been added. All are welcome to join, or volunteer.

If you have questions, or would like to participate, please email Jessica de Jesus at R4RSchools1@gmail.com, or visit R4Rschools.com. ■





Bay Area Women Artists Exhibit at Rockridge Library

by Maryly Snow

Twenty-two of the 40 members of the long-lived Bay Area Women Artists Breakfast Group will present "A Pandemic Sketchbook 2020" at the Rockridge Public Library's upstairs display space this April and May. The exhibit will feature 12" x 16" prints of original drawings created in a circulating notebook while confronting Covid restrictions.

How did this all come about? Early in the pandemic, Berkeley artist **Pamela Blotner** asked, via email and Zoom, who in the group would like to contribute to a sketchbook. No theme. Whatever you wanted. Amazingly, 22 artists soon signed up. There was one requirement, however: bring the notebook to the next person on the list (a pandemic challenge).

Once the sketchbook was completed, Pamela Blotner (pamelablotner.com/) and **Lanny DeVuono** (lannydevuono.com) had the entire book photographed — a difficult task given the assorted materials peeking out beyond the edges of many pages, and with nearly every artist choosing to work with a double spread of pages on either side of the notebook's spiral spine. **Nancy Selvin** (selvinstudios.com), Berkeley artist and originator of the Breakfast Group decades ago, then had the images printed on paper. Sas Colby, a Berkeley artist known for her mail art creations and who is currently exhibiting at the San Francisco Center for the Book ended up with the final notebook and images.

Rockridge resident **Maryly Snow** then contacted Rockridge Branch librarians **Liz Soskin** and **Erica Siskind** to request an exhibition… and once Delta and Omicron waned, the date was set — **March 29 through the end of May.**

Come on down, borrow a book and see what a group of senior citizen artists have to say. ■

Frog Park Earth Day Cleanup

by Alison Drury, FROG Park Co-Chair

In celebration of Earth Day 2022, a cleanup of Big Frog Park, Little Frog Park, and the Temecal Greenbelt (between Big Frog and Little Frog) is being planned for **April 23, from 9am to noon.** This year's Earth Day theme is "The Great Global Cleanup" — a campaign to remove billions of pieces of trash from neighborhoods, beaches, rivers, lakes, trails, and parks, as a way to reduce waste and plastic pollution, improve habitats, and prevent harm to wildlife and humans.

Tasks include weeding, pruning, trash pickup, raking, sweeping, and applying a non-toxic sealant to the Little Frog play structure. Families and groups are welcome. Students needing service hours for school can receive a signed letter verifying their participation.

Big Frog Park: Meet at the big oak tree by the Big Frog play structure to sign the waiver to participate.

Little Frog Park: Meet at Little Frog Sign to help apply non-toxic sealant to Little Frog play structure.

Please bring your gardening gloves, tools, and refillable water bottles. Some gardening gloves and tools will be on hand, if you'd like to borrow them. Coffee and snacks will be provided to volunteers. ■



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Local Kids Join Together to Stop Global Warming

by Rachel Hollowgrass

On a beautiful and unseasonably warm Saturday in February, about three dozen people gathered in Colby Park. Though half were adults, it was clear that the children were in charge. Spread out on folding tables were dozens of plates piled with baked goods representing perhaps 100 hours of focused effort.

I had never seen earthly blue and green heart-shaped cookies before, or polar bear cookies. Younger children were sharing advice about their favorite treats. Older ones were tallying up sums and making change. While a lot of practical education was occurring, something larger was on their young minds. Eight-year-old **Aya Osler-Cahn** shared the themes of the day.

"One night I was getting in bed and I told my mom I wanted to start a club to stop global warming. I put a flier in the mailboxes of kids' houses in the neighborhood. Everybody joined. If we don't change our actions, in 20 years, it will be too late."

I spoke with some other club members, like 8-year-old **Meera Ayotte** who said, "The polar bears' ice is melting. The global warming club is fun because it feels good to help the earth. I used to feel I couldn't help the earth at all."

Dottie Cutler said, "Instead of a car that runs on gas, use an electric car, or maybe not use a car at all. Plant more plants, and keep them healthy so we can have more oxygen in the air."

Aya addressed some people's fear to respond: "To people who think global warming is sad, do something big with those thoughts."



Colby Park residents gather to raise funds for the environment.

In the '90s, most people did not need to join a club to stop the hole in the ozone. The Montreal Protocol phased out ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). That international treaty was ratified by every UN member nation. Our protective ozone layer is on track for recovery.

These children are right: Changing how people and freight get around could address a third of the greenhouse gases in California. We can also eat less meat, plant trees, turn down the heat, and use less plastic. In the future, we may use solid-state batteries, micro-grids, and carbon sequestration. However, we don't have years to stand by, waiting for these technologies to arrive.

Bay Area researchers say that every time a gas-powered device wears out — such as a furnace, a water heater, a stove or a car — we should replace it with one that uses a different power source such as electricity. Project Drawdown suggests that a key way to address climate change globally is to educate young girls. Adults can vote for climate-friendly candidates. Everyone can write letters of support for legislation that protects our climate, just as the Montreal Protocol did for the ozone layer.

For the children in Colby Park, their mission is clear: Stop global warming. They raised $745 in one day. Post-event contributions brought the total to $2,235.

To get more involved, donate to the club or learn more, see the club's website: stopglobalwarming.club/. ■

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Foxtail Grasses — Let's Get Rid of Them

by Anna L. Marks



Spring marks the beginning of foxtail season. You know, those little sticky weeds that pop up everywhere. This can be a big problem, especially for cats and dogs. Once the barbed grasses get into their little feet or ears, they can burrow deep and cause a lot of pain and distress. They can even be inhaled and enter through the nose.

Foxtails shed thousands of seeds that can quickly spread around the neighborhood, so it's important to completely remove them to prevent them from returning. The grasses can cause serious problems including infection and organ damage, and can result in hearing loss or even death. Children should use caution too as they are susceptible to getting them in their noses, on clothing, or in their shoes or socks, causing discomfort.

When you see foxtails (see photo above) in your yard, or while walking around the neighborhood, please pull them out. The best way to remove foxtails is to dig out the root with a simple garden tool. Cutting or breaking off the seed stems is less effective as that may need to be repeated over several years. Mowing them and leaving the clippings on the ground or sidewalk is the worst way to remove them as this also allows the seeds to spread around.

The earlier in the season they are removed, the less damage they can do. Do not put them in the green recycling bin where they can continue to thrive, but rather put them in a plastic baggie and into your regular garbage. If you notice your pet showing any unusual symptoms including incessant licking, or problems with chewing or swallowing, see your vet immediately. ■

The Oakland Tech Bulldogs Win Second Consecutive State Championship



Photo credit: John Sasaki/OUSD

On March 11, 2022, the Oakland Tech Bulldogs women's basketball team earned their second state championship in an exciting face-off against the Sacramento Lancers. Despite trailing behind for much of the game, the Bulldog's offense scored five points in the final seconds when **Mari Somvichian** scored a 3-pointer with only 20 seconds remaining in the game for the win.

The championship games in 2020 and 2021 championships were canceled due to the pandemic, so it is especially sweet that the team was able to retain the Division IV tile they won in 2019 despite an abbreviated season.

"We all just felt like we had something unfinished, and we finally finished it. It feels like we've been working for this for like the last two years, our entire high school career, and we finally have made it," said junior center **Sophia Askew-Goncalves**, who had 8 points and 12 rebounds.

Spectator **Zsanna Secrease** was also thrilled with the way the girls played. "Oakland Tech is the hidden gem of Oakland, but the Lady Bulldogs basketball team has proven that they are worth their weight in gold on and off the court. They are true student-athletes that are supportive of their classmates and other teams. As a second-generation alum, and parent of two alumni and a current student, the Lady Bulldogs are another reason that we are proud to be part of the Bulldog family. GO BULLDOGS!"

Plans are underway to celebrate with a parade and rally this spring. ■



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2/16/2022	3	2.5	6410 Regent St	$1,795,000	$1,795,000	16	$3,508,888
2/22/2022	4	2.5	5420 Boyd Ave	$1,275,000	$1,275,000	16	$2,575,000

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LOOK AROUND: California Bay Laurel

by Kirk Peterson



The California Bay Laurel *(Umbellularia californica)* grows in coastal mountains from northern California down into Baja, and throughout the Sierra foothills. There are fewer Bay trees in the flatter parts of Oakland where Live Oaks are common, but they are abundant in parks like Redwood and Tilden, and on the shady side of Lake Temescal.

Umbellularia C. can live for centuries; they are typically 70 or 80 feet high and sometimes taller. They tend to have multiple trunks, growing narrow in woodlands and broad in the open. Clusters of small yellow flowers appear in winter and purple-black seeds the size of olives are mature in fall.

The peppery leaves of the California bay can be used in cooking, like the "bay leaf" of their cousin the Grecian laurel, and also for making a crown of laurel for a graduate. A "laureate" is one crowned with laurel. ■

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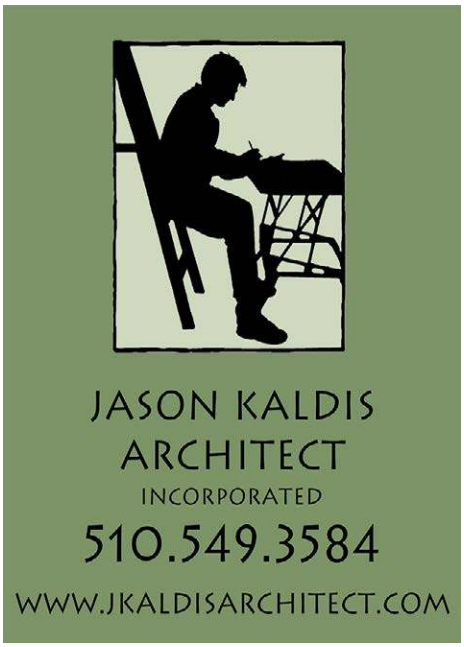
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For more details, email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com.

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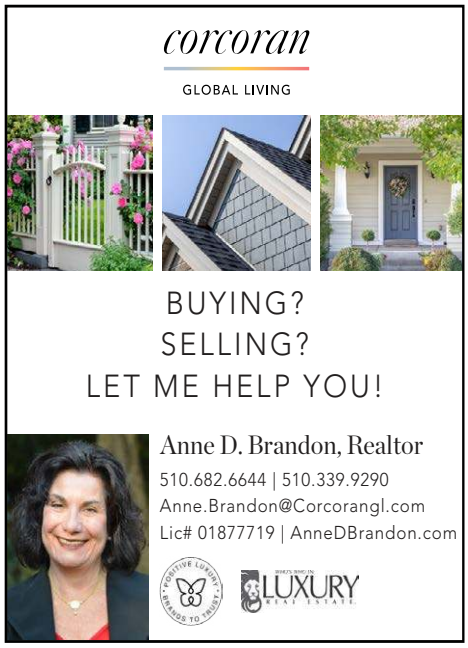
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