THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
ISSUE #400!
VOL 37 • NO. 8 • ISSUE NO. 400 • SEPTEMBER 3, 2022 CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

Mayor Schaaf Holds Town Hall Meeting At Colby Park

by Judith Doner Berne

Wearing a bright print top from a College Avenue boutique, Oakland **Mayor Libby Schaaf** held a Town Hall at Rockridge's Colby Park on a sunny August evening as she entered the last several months of her term-limited eight years in the city's highest office.



The shortage of police forces the city to prioritize violent crime over property crime, Mayor Schaaf told residents. *(Photo credit: Judy Berne)*

"It's been the honor of a lifetime to be your mayor," Schaaf told the gathering of about 70 people who came by foot, bicycle, and car to what was billed as "a community conversation with the mayor."

"I live a block from here. I want to find out what's going on," said **Joe Lindsay**. "If the Mayor's around the corner from you, you gotta come," said **Laura Mytels**, with her son, Oakland Tech senior **Max Andelman,** in tow. "We are longtime Oakland Athletic fans, and we are longtime fans of the mayor," said **George Krevsky**, who drove with his wife **Doris Krevsky**

Schaaf Town Hall, see page 4

❖ Coming Sunday, October 2nd ❖

The RCPC Welcomes Neighbors to the 2022 KITCHEN TOUR

by Robin McDonnell, Kitchen Tour Chair



This stunning kitchen will be featured on the 2022 Kitchen Tour.
Photo credit: Chris Woodcock

Kitchens have a rich history in Rockridge. Some long-time residents remember their parents' and grandparents' kitchens with Wedgewood stoves. In the oldest houses, the original stove was most likely wood burning, and, without refrigeration available, perishable food was stored in a "cooler" which consisted of a screened cabinet open to the outdoors on the north side of the house.

Today's Rockridge kitchens have come a long way — new colors, sustainable materials, energy-saving appliances, and ample storage and workspaces are all features of the kitchens on this year's tour. And every kitchen on the tour conveys the Rockridge spirit of good food, warmth, and hospitality.

The 2022 Tour has many interesting and different styles of homes and kitchens — a beautiful large historical home, a storybook home, homes that include a complete remodel, and homes in which only the kitchen has been remodeled. Some kitchens are brightened with pops of vivid color and unusual surfaces for counters and backsplashes. Several use highly sustainable materials. There is an English Tudor home that incorporated vintage structures into the design and a tiny garden cottage — these are just a few of what will be on view.

Challenges faced by many of the homeowners included inefficient use of space and placement of appliances, lack of convenient storage, and cramped work areas. Others felt closed off from the garden or the rest of the house and wanted the kitchen to be more integrated into the family living areas. A solution common to

Kitchen Tour, see next page

Kitchen Tour, from front page

several houses on the tour was to rethink the interiors — converting the many small rooms in a typical craftsman to larger rooms to allow for a smoother traffic flow between the kitchen and the rest of the house.

Not sure you'll remember the many amazing ideas after taking the tour? Don't worry — Kitchen Tour guests will receive a copy of the comprehensive Tour Brochure, describing each kitchen and listing resources for those contemplating a remodel of their own. Docents with knowledge of the remodels will also be on hand to answer questions about each owner's goals and challenges. No matter what you have in mind for your kitchen, you'll find the design and construction professionals who can make it happen for you.

The 2022 Rockridge Kitchen Tour tickets are now available online for $47, plus service fee (until Sept. 30). Tickets will also be available for sale on the day of the tour for $55, plus service charge. ■

To purchase advance tickets online, visit RockridgeKitchenTour.org or scan the QR Code below.

Last Call for Docents

The Rockridge Community Planning Council's Kitchen Tour committee is looking for a few more volunteer docents for **Sunday, October 2nd**, at the RCPC Kitchen Tour. Docents have the opportunity to tour several of the houses in advance of the event during orientation, and on the day of the event. Plus, all docents get to tour the other houses when not on a scheduled shift. It's a great way to meet new friends and help your community at the same time. To volunteer, contact docents@rockridge.org. ■

RCPC Notice:

Board Seat Available on the Rockridge Community Planning Council

Are you interested in serving your neighborhood? The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) is run by a 13-member board of directors representing the Rockridge community on development, transportation, and quality of life issues. The board now has an open seat, which will be filled by board appointment until April 2023 (the appointee could then opt to run in the April 2023 board election).

To apply, email a short letter to chair@rockridge.org expressing your interest in the role, confirming primary residence within RCPC boundaries, and summarizing your background. Inquiries must be submitted by Sunday, Sept. 18, 2022. ■

CORRECTION:

In the June 2022 issue of *The Rockridge News*, Annette Floystrup's article, "Rockridge Bids Final Farewell to California College of the Arts," stated that Peter Selz was a kinetic artist and sculptor. This was incorrect; he was an art history professor and curator. Thank you to our reader, Aileen Frankel, for catching that mistake.

Missed an issue of *The Rockridge News*?



Visit rockridge.org and download a digital copy today — in color with hotlinks to resources on the Internet.

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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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.

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Rock-N-Hunt — for Scavengers of All Ages

by Jody Colley



This is Boots. She is a 6-month-old Whippet that is full of energy and loves meeting anyone. You can find her most mornings outside Cole Coffee or Boichik Bagels on walks with her family, Andrew and Shelby.

The Rockridge District invites clue sleuths, trivia lovers, and anyone looking for a fun way to spend a day to join the annual **Rock-N-Hunt on Saturday, September 10, from 11am to 7pm**. The event is free for all ages.

The scavenger hunt will take place during Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll — a monthly event that brings free outdoor live music, sidewalk sales, popup vendors, kids' crafts, art shows, and other fun activities for the whole family every Second Saturday. Participants can enjoy browsing the local wares, fine dining, sweet and savory treats, and delicious drinks as they canvas the neighborhood during the hunt.

Each individual, team, or family, will get a list of clues (items, challenges, or riddles) that must be found during the allotted time. All clues can be found along College Avenue, between Broadway and Alcatraz Avenue, at public-serving businesses including retail shops, restaurants, bars, gyms, cafés, churches, and libraries.

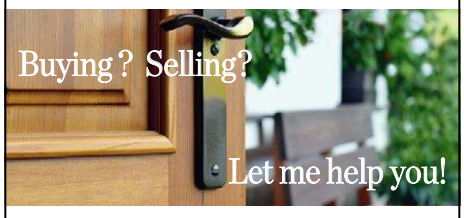
The goal is to find as many items as possible. Anyone who finds at least one clue has a chance to win a prize because each correct discovery counts as a raffle entry into a drawing for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd prize packages — ranging from $400 to $100 in gift cards. Participants will need a digital camera or camera phone to capture their discoveries.

Take BART or the AC Transit #51 bus line to the Rockridge Station and you're at the center of the event. Public bike racks are located throughout the district. More information on Rock-N-Stroll can be found at www.RockridgeDistrict.com/rocknstroll. ■



(Left to right) Sarah Han, Marketing Manager at Market Hall Foods; Caitlin O'Neill, Olympia Provisions representative; and Juliana Uruburu, Retail Director of Market Hall Foods.

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Schaaf Town Hall, from front page

from Upper Rockridge. **Karen Marker** and **Andy Wolpert** biked over, hoping to alert City officials to the dangers of crossing Claremont Avenue at Chabot Road without a traffic light.

After an introduction by **RCPC Chair Casey Farmer**, Schaaf praised City workers for going beyond their usual duties during the pandemic, and noted, "We resisted a president who wanted to come for our immigrant community."

Anticipating that the bulk of the questions would center around crime and homelessness, and following a weekend of three murders in Oakland, she readily acknowledged, "Things are not as good as they should be."

In answer to questions on speed-limit enforcement and late responses to break-ins, Schaaf said: "Keeping our police department staffed is one of the hardest tasks. We have the fewest police per crime than any other city in the country." OPD currently has 683 officers. "I have tried to get to 800," she said, citing difficulties in hiring and competition with San Francisco.

"I feel like everyone's gunning for me," said a single-unit landlord. "It's time for people to get back to work and pay their rent." While thanking him for housing others, Schaaf wasn't entirely sympathetic. "We are in a moment where we need extreme compassion," she said. "California housing is completely broken. As the mayor of Oakland, I see it as our most pressing problem. Homeless camps are our most soul-scathing challenge. We have tripled our shelter beds but it's not enough."

Heather Dodge, who described herself as a cyclist and parent of two public school students, asked for the Slow Streets program to be revived. Schaaf said some slow streets may be reinstated.

"I'm very much opposed to the Home Depot" that is proposed for the years-long vacant corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley, said **Jan Klingelhofer**. "It's not needed or wanted" and asked for help from the city. Schaaf said that it is a zoning issue and advised "a little political pressure."

The mayor urged residents to volunteer, donate, or join an organization dedicated to Oakland's progress.

To help Oakland thrive, visit https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/how-you-can-help-oakland-thrive. ■



An Open Letter to the Rockridge Community From Stuart Flashman

After 15 years of service with the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), I am submitting my resignation from both the Board of Directors and the Land Use Committee. I feel that the Rockridge Community deserves an explanation of why I am doing this.

When I joined RCPC's Board of Directors in 2007, I was (and still am) a community-oriented land use and environmental attorney. I saw that Rockridge was facing challenges, including the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore Project, two major Safeway projects, and many other development proposals. I felt I could help RCPC deal with these issues. As a resident who valued Rockridge's community, I offered my help.

Over the past 15 years, I think I have helped advance RCPC's goal of preserving and enhancing the Rockridge community. For the past three years, I have focused on a Rockridge Housing Study. It looked at how Rockridge might help address the pressing need for more *affordable* housing (there is already a surplus of market-rate units).

In this year's RCPC board election, a "slate" of candidates, running under the title "Inclusive Rockridge," narrowly succeeded in gaining a majority on the board. Since taking office, that majority has charted a very different direction for RCPC — a direction neither mentioned in the campaign nor discussed with the community.

The housing study had shown that building new affordable housing in Rockridge would be challenging. Unconventional approaches would be needed. Instead, the new board's philosophy seems to be "all housing is good housing." As an example, the board is supporting the proposed CCA project, which would add 500 units of high-density market-rate housing with only a thin (50 units) veneer of moderate-income units. It also wants high-density, primarily market rate,

Open Letter, see next page

RCPC Land Use Update — Ken Rich, Chair

We are following the Calif. College of the Arts (CCA) development proposal, the Home Depot proposal at the Ridge, the Jewish Community Center (JCC) proposal at the Dreyer's site, and the progress of the City's Housing Element *(see update on page 10)*.

Regarding Home Depot, back in April, RCPC wrote a strongly worded letter to our City and state representatives expressing our severe concern about the proposal. We continue to monitor its progress and will remain in communication with the City. The application is currently in a queue waiting to be assigned to a planner.

We plan to invite JCC representatives to a town hall in the coming months.

As always, to keep abreast of developments, watch this space and attend the RCPC Land Use Committee, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm, on Zoom, for now. Please go to bit.ly/3c0r6X0 for Zoom link.

Additionally, I would like to reflect on Stu Flashman's letter (printed in this issue). I refer readers to Annette Floystrup's comprehensive summary of his notable contributions to our neighborhood in the July 2022 issue of *The Rockridge News*.

When Stu handed the baton to me as Land Use Chair earlier this year, he mentioned to me that he thought his views on housing in Rockridge were not that different from those of the majority of newer board members, and I believe that is true on the large strokes. I think we all agree that we want Rockridge to be an inclusive, welcoming place for all kinds of folks, from all kinds of backgrounds with all kinds of income levels. But facts, details, and finances do matter and that is where I and several of my fellow board members are taking a little bit of a different road than Stu does in his letter.

Here are a few examples:

First, there is, unfortunately, no "unconventional" approach to creating affordable housing that has any record of success in California. Why? Because affordable is astronomically expensive to build. Most affordable housing that we see in the Bay Area is already under "communal nonprofit ownership" as Stu terms it; in fact, this is the conventional model. Even so, it costs at least $400,000 in public subsidies to build each unit of affordable housing. At those prices, it would take a hundred years just to build housing on the few sites currently available in Rockridge. Well, why not wait a hundred years then? Because we are in a housing crisis that is directly connected to our climate crisis and directly connected to the history of racism in this country.

Second, as I have written before in *The Rockridge News* and discussed at the RCPC Land Use Committee, market-rate apartments, while certainly not inexpensive, are far more affordable than our craftsman houses. A lot more families, reflecting a much more diverse population, could afford to call Rockridge home in a new two-bedroom apartment as compared to those who could buy one of our single-family houses. For the math on this, please see my earlier article in *The Rockridge News* (bit.ly/3zZbL0G).

Third, despite a lot of mythology to the contrary, building market-rate housing does bring down overall rents. There is more and more research available on this, including a recent study from UCLA that finds, in general, that new "market-rate housing makes nearby housing more affordable across the income distribution of rental units" (bit.ly/3AtfYuY).

Fourth, no housing policy we promote in Rockridge is even remotely likely to result in our craftsman houses being largely subdivided or demolished in favor of condos. The economics don't, and probably never will, work that way. If you don't believe me, please see Stu's article on page 12 of the July 2021 *Rockridge News* (bit.ly/3AuT6LO).

For these reasons and others, I believe that many on the RCPC Board agree that we have a moral imperative to welcome new housing at all income levels to our neighborhood. I certainly do. But I, for one, also believe we should always be working to increase the number of units that are deeply affordable.

Stu forgot to mention that the RCPC Board has not yet taken a position on the CCA proposal; however, they have written a letter (bit.ly/RCPC_CCA_LTR) to the developer telling them that we want to work together to increase the number of affordable units and also to deepen their affordability. Similarly, as we embark on the long road toward bringing housing, and not Home Depot, to the Ridge site, we will have the chance to seek the resources to make that project as affordable as possible. ■

Open Letter, from previous page

housing on other available sites in Rockridge. With no community input, it seeks to have Oakland's new housing element push to up-zone Rockridge to higher density, especially near the BART station.

Rockridge is at a crossroads. The new board's direction of following the market will push home prices ever higher. Eventually, it seems likely that, driven by speculation, homes will be subdivided into condos and then replaced by higher-density condo buildings. Rockridge would become a mini-San Francisco. A less conventional approach, emphasizing communal nonprofit ownership of existing and future housing, as has been done elsewhere, would promote permanently affordable homes. That would be much harder, but better for the community. I will not be a party to the new board's unilateral choice — hence, my resignation. ■

LAND USE COMMITTEE Meeting Notice

RCPC LUC meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 28, 2022, at 7:30pm, via Zoom.**

The meeting is open to the public. To attend, check rockridge.org for Zoom link, or email: landuse@rockridge.org.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Questions Remain at CCA

Has it really been five years that Rockridge has been debating residential development on the former Calif. College of the Arts (CCA) campus? The first proposal in 2017 evolved from six stories to 19 stories, market-rate units only. Following heated community opposition, Emerald Fund, the developer, redesigned the site. This latest iteration is a significant improvement (see 5212Broadway.com), but key questions remain for the developer, the landowner, the City, and CCA.

Only ten percent of the 510 units would be "affordable," and only for moderate-income persons (i.e., family of four earning $157,075). No units would be available for lower-income residents. The price CCA will reap from the sale is unknown. CCA benefitted from more than 100 years of tax exemptions because it provided community service to Oakland. If it lowered the land price, could there be more lower-priced units?

The plan for building up to 90 feet (eight stories) exceeds all neighboring multiunit apartment buildings, even on Broadway where they are limited to 65 feet limit. While much has changed in the design, but the buildings still appear rather industrial, monolithic, and boxy. Rockridge has a consistent residential style that should be respected.

The CCA owners said they wanted to honor the school's arts legacy. However, this legacy will exist mostly as a few artifacts from the old campus, and the ground floor of one historic building for public arts usage. The other historic building is slated for commercial use. How can there be a significant arts program without adequate space?

The traffic, of course, will increase, as it will for any project. There is only one narrow exit on Clifton (used by Oakland Tech students); three traffic lights between Clifton and Pleasant Valley; and no way for vehicles to head north due to current road configurations. Should the City consider roundabouts as a way of keeping the traffic flowing? Is there adequate fire engine access?

The proposed park acreage keeps shrinking. Will the 97 trees slated for removal be replaced as stated? Will the park still function as a green oasis for the neighborhood as it has for more than 100 years? Remember, the MacArthur BART apartments were approved for eight stories, but 25 stories were built. This was possible in part because the EIR included the higher alternative. The CCA's EIR also includes an alternative — for 21 stories. The EIR and hearings by City commissions are expected in the fall.

Myrna Walton,
Upper Broadway Advocates

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To Build a Farm, Start with an ACRE

by Anna L. Marks

Alice Waters is generally credited with originating "California Cuisine," and it was her protégés that went on to solidify the "foodie" trend of local restaurants creating menus that integrate seasonal organic produce delivered daily from local farms.

Within a short, 15-year period after Chez Panisse first opened, legions of chefs and restaurateurs embraced this concept in the bourgeoning Bay Area food scene. This notable group included **Maggie and Bob Klein**, who launched Oliveto in Market Hall on the corner of College Avenue and Shafter in 1986.

"We were there for 35 years, we grew up with the neighborhood, and we also grew up with what was a significant food movement. It really started in Northern California. We spent a lot of effort making that part of what Oliveto was all about," said owner Bob Klein.

Recently, the Kleins realized their Rockridge restaurant had become an institution that needed a fresh start and decided to relinquish the reins to the next generation. The couple determined chef **Dirk Tolsma** to be the best person to continue bringing the strong relationships they had forged with farmers and growers to the table.

"The thing about institutions is, they're dusty, and they're not a place of innovation. We always tried to be innovative, but we were stuck with that model. I like seeing some new energy, some new ideas coming in — and the roots are there," said Bob Klein.

A native Californian from the Central Valley, and now an Oakland resident, Tolsma learned his craft at the Napa Valley Cooking School. He worked in various locations in Sonoma and Healdsburg, and at Sebastopol's Eloise where he found "the food was rustic, but beautiful."

"It was squab, it was bone marrow, it was tarts. This is the restaurant where I really learned how to act in a kitchen, how to cut things, how to simply cook,

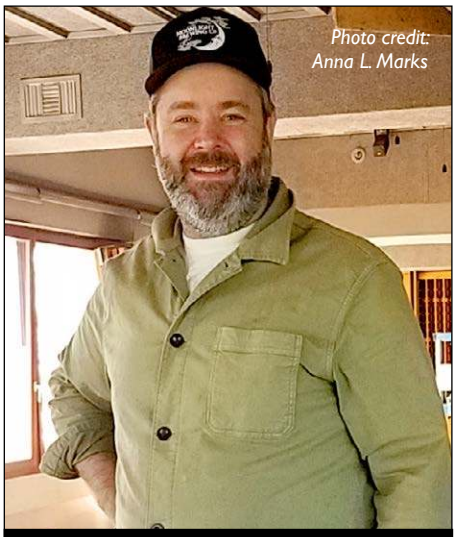


Photo credit: Anna L. Marks

Chef Dirk Tolsma says **ACRE Restaurant** will be "a front row seat to Rockridge."

thinking about the flavors of each element. At that point, I started to see it as a lifestyle and something that I wanted to dig into. That was a big turning point for me," said Tolsma. He continued honing his skills at San Francisco's Grand Café, which had "one of the grandest and most beautiful dining rooms in the city."

ACRE Restaurant co-owners Tolsma and managing partner Pete Sittnick (Land and Sea Restaurant Group) plan to honor Oliveto's legacy by maintaining its familiarity and relationship with Rockridge neighbors, and by continuing to serve upstairs and downstairs — but with a bit of a twist. While some items will be unique to each menu, there will also be a bit of a crossover.

The downstairs café will focus on wood-fired pizzas, a "classics-inspired" cocktail list, and wine bar. Upstairs will focus on the rotisserie, and, in the popular Oliveto tradition, seasonal favorites will make annual repeat appearances alongside year-round staples. But Tolsma insists that if you want to order pizza in the upstairs dining room, go ahead and order it.

"We want to bring the downstairs and the upstairs a little closer together. Downstairs will serve raw seafood — ceviches, crudos, and fresh oysters on the half shell. Upstairs will be a little bit grander, but playful and fun. We'll play around with porchetta, for instance, in the rotisserie, the earth oven that we have upstairs. We want you to feel as comfortable on a Tuesday when you just feel like some wine and

ACRE, see page 14

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Vintage Eyewear Frame Shop Looks To the Future

eyes on Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

Ray Ascher, who has owned Phoenix Optical located for 20 years at 5519 College Avenue (after 20 years in Berkeley), has followed in his family's footsteps. But his path has been anything but straight.

"They put me to work every summer, starting when I was 11 years old," the now 79-year-old said of his mother and aunt who, in 1931, opened Fine Arts Optical in a downtown Detroit office building where they sold eyeglasses of their own design. "But I had no interest in being in that industry."

"They were pioneers, said Ascher. "They made glasses into a fashion accessory, manufacturing them in France," where he still has many of his frames made today.

As a teenager, when his mother created new designs, he persuaded her not to toss out the frames that were no longer in style. Those vintage frames are now the models for the eyewear that he designs, manufactures abroad, and sells to his customers and to companies worldwide today.



"We basically manufacture every single style back to the 1930s."

But let's follow Ascher's winding path to Rockridge. He spent a year at UCLA before transferring to Michigan State hoping to become a veterinarian. When he didn't get into veterinary school, he switched to pre-med, studying chemistry at the graduate level and worked with polymers.

He was plucked out of his chemical engineering class ("I had a reputation in grad school") and challenged to find a way to lighten the weight of the proposed Renaissance Center — the pet project of Henry Ford II that he hoped would, but didn't, revive Detroit's economy.

"They relied on the design that their architect John Portman used for Atlanta's Peachtree Center," Ascher said, "but they didn't take into account that the concrete used in that structure was too heavy for a site on the Detroit River. I developed a system that significantly reduced the weight of the building."

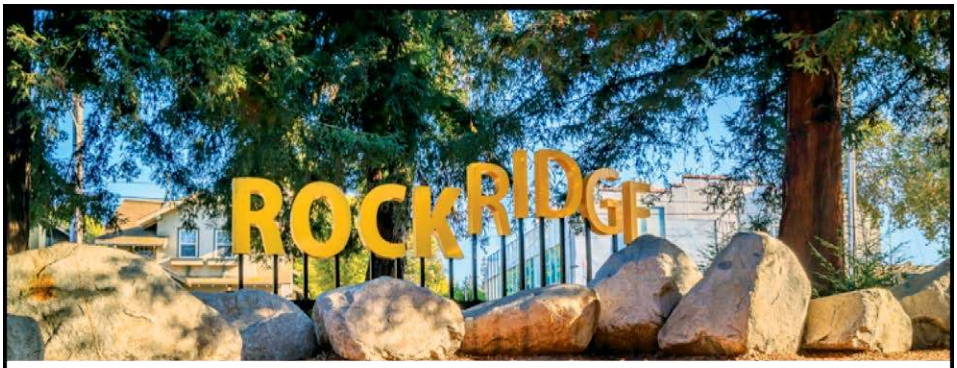
Next, the Egyptian government came calling, with a similar problem as they planned a new hotel (Sheraton) along the Nile River in Cairo. "They told me I could go to medical school there," as his polymer system was implemented, Ascher said. He, his then-wife, and their children moved to Cairo.

Once enrolled, Ascher gravitated toward eye surgery. Although he performed several operations, his training was interrupted after three years when his mother died. Returning to Detroit, he joined his aunt in running their optical store. That included filling prescriptions for the Kresge Eye Institute and working with them on low-vision patients. Then he branched out.

Phoenix Optical is the last of a network of 38 Fine Arts Optical stores that Ascher purchased or opened, ran for years, then either sold or closed. "We basically manufacture every single style back to the 1930s," he said. That includes cat's eyes, shadow boxes, and his most expensive product — genuine horn-rimmed frames made from water buffalo and yak.

For years, Ascher traveled to both Inner Mongolia and Africa to hand-pick the multi-colored and white horns. Now, health problems restrict

Ray Ascher, see next page



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Phoenix Optical owner Ray Ascher traveled to Africa and Inner Mongolia to get the horn for the glasses he manufactures and sells.

Ray Ascher, from previous page

his travel, so an agent does the buying. An animal lover (remember, he wanted to be a veterinarian), he said the horns come from food stock. "We would never use an endangered species."

He once had a ranch in Clayton, California, but now settles for two dogs and a horse, Buck, that he rides with some difficulty. He thought that after heart surgery he would never ride again. But he is determined to live a life of quality, rather than quantity. "I'm on borrowed time," Ascher said. "I bought my last sports car. And on my bucket list is to take my kids — two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren — to Maine for a lobster fest."

Ascher continues to have eyeglass frames manufactured, although he has an inventory of thousands because he hopes a daughter will take over the shop. "I want to make sure she has enough stock." And, he is bequeathing to his daughter their store manager Tina Sullivan. "Tina was a lucky find for me," Ascher said. Sullivan agrees: "Ray and I are a match. I want to be here for the rest of my life."

"There's no place like it," said **Helen Herzberg**, who drove in from Castro Valley to pick out a new frame. "I used to go to their Berkeley store."

"This was a great move," Ascher said. "Rockridge is a fantastic place, although I am disappointed in the amount of crime." He eats at Belotti, thinks Cole Hardware "is a great addition," and has his hair cut at Right Angle.

"He's the sweetest guy, just a really caring person," said **Francisco Spinelli**, Ascher's barber, who directs clients who admire his glasses to Phoenix Optical. "They go beyond, and really take care of their clients."

"What I love is his (Ascher's) real sense that glasses are as important a part of what you wear as a suit," said long-time customer **Daniel Boyarin**, a religion historian and professor emeritus at UC Berkeley. "I have had a commitment not to wear plastic on my body," he said. "He has an appreciation of my aesthetic values."

[Full disclosure: As a result of my interview, I discovered that Ray Ascher and I graduated from the same Detroit public high school four years apart, and that his uncle was my chemistry teacher.]

Questions or suggestions? Email judyberne@att.net. ■

ROCKRIDGE NEWS: College Avenue Delivery Route Available



Thanks to **Kathleen Winzeler** for her service as Block Captain and delivering *The Rockridge News* to businesses along College Avenue. Winzeler has to give up her route but it should be easy to fill as it offers the opportunity to window shop while you walk the route. Please let us know if you will be able to sign up to be Block Captain for the route below.

Route CAv1: Businesses and apartments along College Avenue, from Claremont Avenue to BART.

Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. The bundles are delivered to their front porch the first weekend of each month (except August). To volunteer, call (510) 547-3855, or email Susan at smontauk@gmail. ■

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Frog Park Celebrates 20th Anniversary at Creek to Bay Day

Creek to Bay Day is coming up, and everyone is invited to participate at Frog Park. Creek to Bay Day is a day of watershed cleanups, education, and commitment to practices to keep our city and water clean, from creek, to bay, and beyond. In addition, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the park. Please bring your family, friends, and neighbors who enjoy Frog Park.

RSVP to chair@frogpark.org so we know if you'll be joining us...hope to see you there. ■

Where: Big Frog, near Hardy Street

When: Saturday, Sept. 17, 2022, from 9am – noon.

9am to 11am:
Creek to Bay Day park clean up

11am to 12pm:
Frog Park 20th Anniversary Celebration

How: Games, face-painting, arts & crafts, refreshments and more.

Who: A gathering of everyone who helped create and continues to maintain Frog Park, … and you!

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Update: August Town Hall

Oakland Housing Element

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

On Thursday, August 18, Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) hosted a zoom Town Hall on the City of Oakland's Housing Element. Planning Department staff gave a presentation on the process, shared the community input to date, answered questions, and solicited feedback from the Rockridge community.

As required by the State, Housing Elements must show how the City plans to meet the City's projected housing needs (known as Regional Housing Needs Allocation) at four different income levels. If such plans are not in compliance, cities are subject to penalties and loss of eligibility for grant opportunities for housing. Once approved, the Housing Element will exist from 2023 to 2031.

The Planning Department will announce proposed zoning changes that would promote housing construction by early October. RCPC will share these changes in the *The Rockridge News* and at www.Rockridge.org.

The Town Hall presentation and meeting recording are posted online at www.Rockridge.org. ■

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IN MEMORIAM

Meredith Kaplan

(January 9, 1938 – June 28, 2022)



Meredith McGovney Kaplan died on June 28 at her home, surrounded by family, following a battle with multiple system atrophy, a degenerative illness.

An avid hiker who loved the natural world, Meredith was for many years a superintendent with the National Park Service where she planned the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in Arizona and California, and the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail in Hawaii.

Meredith served on the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) from 1994 to 2001, wrote much of the text for the RCPC Kitchen Tour brochure for many years, and served as a Marshal for *The Rockridge News* distribution.

She qualified as a Master Gardener and volunteered at the Master Gardener plot at Lakeside Park. She was a longtime volunteer at the Alameda County Food Bank and the Daily Bread Project. She was a dedicated member of the Weekly Wanderers — a women's hiking group that explores the Bay Area's urban and wilderness trails.

Meredith is survived by her partner Peg Henderson; her children Sarah Kaplan, Esther Kaplan, Sharon Kaplan, Rachel Lanham, and Kate Henderson; her grandchildren Lilia Diaz, Dalton Lanham, Lola Lanham, and Alma Barreda Kaplan; and her many dear friends, nieces, and nephews. ■

RCPC Awards Grant for Garden Project

by Robin McDonnell, RCPC Vice Chair

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has funded a grant proposal to enhance two pocket gardens. The funds will be used to support the acquisition of professional landscape consultation and planting advice. The gardens are located on the corner of Miles and Hudson, and on the corner of Locksley and Forest.

Voluntarily, **Patrick Cullinane**, age 79, has been developing and maintaining the two gardens for almost a decade. On a weekly basis, the gardens are visited, watered, trimmed, and updated. For the garden at Miles and Hudson, a neighbor allows the use of their water for the garden; water is carried weekly to the other garden.

When the Miles and Hudson Garden was damaged by a tree removal effort, neighbors contributed $300 to purchase new plantings to refresh the garden. At the Locksley and Forest site, the neighbor across the street contributed plants for the garden and helps with maintenance.

When Cullinane is traveling, neighbors help maintain the gardens. On many occasions, a passerby will express appreciation for the color and beauty the gardens bring to an otherwise empty space. It is now time for the garden to benefit from a professional assessment and recommendations for an ever-changing environment, and to install the most appropriate plants.

"It is exciting to allocate funds for such a special project that will enhance the neighborhood," said **Casey Farmer**, Chair of the RCPC. "This is exactly how the Kevin Faughnan Grant program is meant to be used."

For information on how to qualify for RCPC's Kevin Faughnan Grant program, send an email Robin McDonnell at info@rockridge.org. ■

New Principal Starts at Oakland Tech this Fall



Photo credit: John Sasaki/ OUSD

District 1 welcomes **Martel Price** as Oakland Tech's new principal. Price worked at Tech for many years after graduating from another OUSD school. He follows in his family's footsteps — his father was an assistant principal at Tech years ago. ■



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ADUs and Brews: Recap of a Successful Event

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

On July 24, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) sponsored a vendor fair for Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) architects. The Golden Squirrel, located at 5940 College Avenue, generously hosted the gathering. Dozens of residents attended, mingling with five vendors with vast experience building in Oakland and Rockridge.



Since 2017, State laws have been enacted to make it easier for property owners to build these types of units — whether within existing structures like converted garages, or as free-standing cottages in your backyard.

ADUs are one way to address the region's housing crisis and are often used to house elderly family members, temporary au pairs, students, or as multi-use home office/guest accommodations. ADUs are less expensive to build and rent compared to other options that often cause essential community members to be priced out of the rental market.

Attendees left with tools and information, and had the following to say:

"All of my neighbors have done something and I'm ready to build an ADU," remarked one guest.

"When it comes to idyllic walkable neighborhoods, It was a diverse group of attendees who discussed everything from small garage conversions to adding multiple backyard cottages. A young couple with a newborn to a woman looking out for her 102-year-old mother, we saw the full range of old and new," said ***Kevin Casey****, Founder, New Avenue Homes (newavenuehomes.com).*

"We believe ADUs are a great solution for alleviating the East Bay's housing shortage and providing homeowners with a source of rental income. It was great to talk with homeowners about their plans to build new units. Some of them were very supportive of Co-ADUs, our plan to build affordable standardized batches of ADUs for teachers," said ***Charlie Boyd****, Project Manager (www.co-adu.com).*

"Amato Architecture is thrilled to be celebrating 20 years of creating functional beauty with the majority of our work being in Rockridge. We love this special community and were thrilled to educate and assist residents in building an ADU. The Oakland codes can be confusing, and we pride ourselves on navigating the permitting process and developing attractive designs that provide solutions and good value," said ***Rebecca Ivans Amato****, Principal Architect (amatoarchitecture.com).*

"Ten years before the trend caught fire, people started hiring us to design distinctive multipurpose, multigenerational backyard cottages on their residential properties. Our motto is 'Elevating Backyard Living,'" said ***Carrie Shores Diller****, Principal Architect at Inspired ADUs and Member of the City of Berkeley's ADU Task Force (www.inspiredadus.com).*

"Some people jump right into calling contractors to get bids (these notoriously go over budget). Others start rough drawings of their ADU only to hit roadblock after roadblock with their local jurisdiction. We believe there is a smarter way," said ***Steve Edrington****, President, Adapt Dwellings (adaptdwellings.com).* ■





Comings and Goings on the Avenue

by Anna L. Marks

A flux and flitter of change is afoot along College Avenue — here are some recent updates.

Tacos 2 Die 4



Carlos Moreira Nieto, owner of Peruvian restaurant Pucquio (5227 College Avenue), is launching Tacos 2 Die 4 at the same location. They held a "soft opening" in August and are now **open for lunch Tuesday to Friday, 11:30am to 2:30pm**.

"This taco shop is a playful way to show our passion for food on another scale — more comfort, more casual, yet still delicious," said Nieto.

Specialty tacos include Pescado (local rock cod, spicy aioli, slaw, cilantro); Chicharron (confit of pork belly, yam, onion); and Faux Suadero (slow cooked beef, radish, cilantro).

"We've been serving Oakland for nine years. We've tried many concepts for lunch, but we never get the response from our community that we expected. This is our way to say, "I think this is what you'd like."

Stranded Records



Stranded Records has relocated from the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood to 5488 College Avenue (the site previously occupied by Pretty Penny/ Hello Vintage, and, before that, by Saturn Records). They also have stores in San Francisco (Valencia Street in the Mission) and a NYC shop located in the East Village.

"We moved [from Piedmont] to Rockridge because the space is much bigger. College Avenue has more foot traffic and we're now two blocks from BART. Plus, it's close to home for me, I've lived in Rockridge for the past 10 years," says co-owner **Steve Viaduct**.

Stranded carries both new and used records, specializing in jazz, international, folk, and classic rock, and loves to buy used collections. "We don't see a record shop as a retro business. Music is always necessary," Viaduct asserted. The store is now **open daily from 11am-7pm**.

Coming Soon

Starter Bakery will be moving into the location vacated by Julie's Pizza, at 5804 College Ave.

"We are very excited about becoming a member of the Rockridge community. We have completed our designs and we are awaiting permits so we can begin construction. Construction will most likely take at least three months, so we are still a bit away from opening our doors," said **Frankie Whitman**.

ACRE Restaurant is planning to open mid-October at Market Hall *(see story on page 7 of this issue)*.

Sad Goodbye

Rockridge is sad to say goodbye to **Hank and Frank Bicycles**. They closed the Rockridge location (6030 College Ave) at the end of August after 36 years. The shop has been an Oakland business since 1925. One of the owners said the store is closing due to staffing and financial issues, and a lack of good police response to break-ins. Their Lafayette location (3377 Mt. Diablo Blvd) will remain open. ■

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NCPC MEETING

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council
meets on the 2nd Thursday of even numbered months.

The next Zoom meeting will be held on:
October 13, 2022, at 7pm,
(pending further notice)

For Zoom link, visit:
https://rockridgencpc.com

To suggest meeting topics, send an email to:
chair@rockridgencpc.com.

ACRE, from page 7

oysters, as much as when your friends are visiting, or it's your birthday."

The menu was inspired by Tolsma's travels in France, Italy, and Spain, with an emphasis on well-priced, small plates made with locally sourced ingredients. "We're going to utilize a lot of local and regional products — Starter Bakery breads, Monterey Bay squid, Santa Barbara spot prawns, and Llano Seco pork (Llano Seco is one of the last intact Mexican land-grant properties in the state). We are currently working on a dish I call 'An American in Provence,' and it's the flavors and memory of walking along the water and spending the day just lazily hanging around Marseille."

The private dining area will continue to host parties of up to 35 people in an enclosed private space, and there will also be a clustered, intimate seating area for 15-20 people. Even more exciting, however, will be the new upstairs bar. The Shafter side of the restaurant, overlooking BART, will be a happening after-hour spot for those looking to meet up with friends or to have quick drink before going home.

"I'm thrilled to be giving this beloved destination new life. ACRE will be firmly rooted in Oakland, showcasing the best of local purveyors with simple and delicious food. It's going to be food you want to eat, and eat often," says Tolsma.

ACRE is scheduled to open mid-October, assuming all goes well with the last of the permit process. Downstairs will be open all day, from 11am to 9pm (no breakfasts, at least to start); upstairs will be open from 4:30pm to 9pm, but hours are subject to change based on community feedback. ■

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The deadline for October's issue is Sept. 22, 2022 (available Oct. 8). Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131.

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

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7/6/2022	2	1	5771 Ayala Ave	$1,050,000	$1,050,000	27	$1,050,000
7/7/2022	4	2	6652 Dana St	$1,895,000	$1,895,000	14	$2,600,000
7/13/2022	5	4	5964 Margarido Dr	$2,495,000	$2,495,000	8	$3,500,000
7/14/2022	4	3	5244 Boyd Ave	$1,195,000	$1,195,000	12	$1,825,000
7/18/2022	3	2	5340 Broadway Terrace	$815,000	$815,000	9	$995,000

Homes sold in July closed 24% over the asking price on average.

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