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THE Rockridge News

VOL 38 • NO. 1 • ISSUE NO. 404 • JANUARY 7, 2023 CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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

✲ SAVE THE DATES ✲

RCPC / JCC East Bay: TOWN HALL MEETING

Please join the **Rockridge Community Planning Council** and the **Jewish Community Center** on **Tuesday, February 7, from 6-7pm** for an RCPC Town Hall meeting on the JCC's plans. At the meeting, JCC East Bay representatives will share their current plans for the campus, highlights from the community survey (see page 9 for a few of them) and important findings from the recently conducted traffic study.

This event will take place at the Rockridge Library and will be simulcast via Zoom, webinar-style. A link will be available a few days before the meeting at www.jcceastbay.org/community campus. ■

RCPC Board Elections in April

Wednesday, March 1, 2023, is the deadline to declare your candidacy for the 2023 election to the Rockridge Community Planning Council's Board of Directors. The Annual Meeting and election will be held on **Thursday, April 20**, with alternate polling on **Saturday, April 22**.

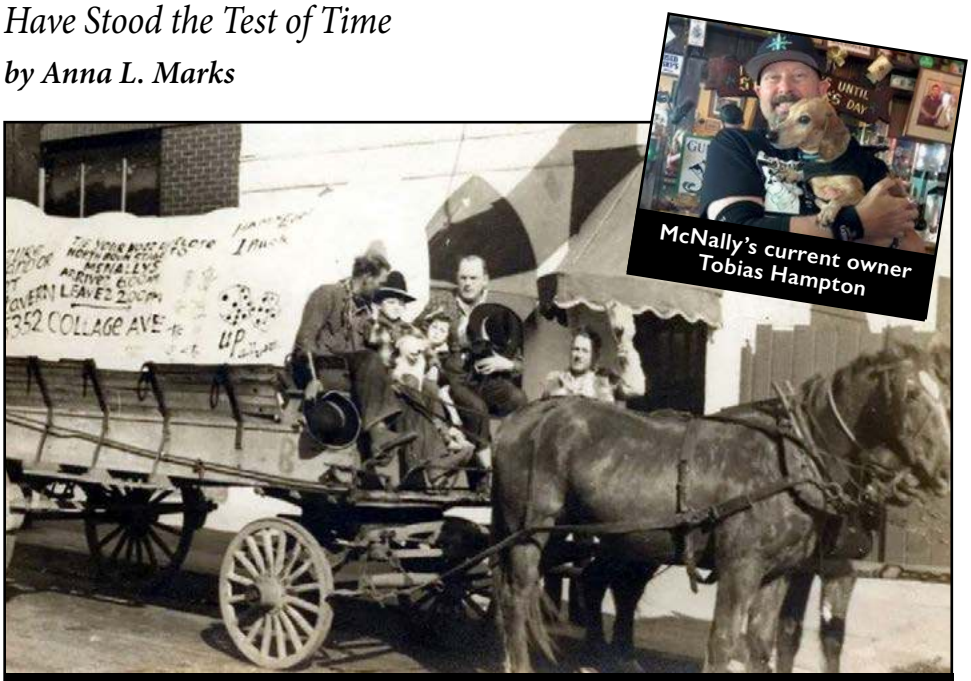
Six board seats will be up for election. Any person 18 years or older whose principal residence is within the RCPC boundaries (see Rockridge.org) is eligible to stand for election. Candidates will be asked to provide documentation of eligibility (a driver's license or utility bill with a Rockridge address will usually suffice).

Board Elections, see next page

Some Things Change, Some Things Stay the Same

Rockridge Welcomes New Businesses and Celebrates those That Have Stood the Test of Time

by Anna L. Marks



William Joseph McNally emigrated from Ireland in the early part of the last century. He is pictured here with his son and others during a St. Patrick's Day celebration held shortly after the pub opened in 1933.

The holidays are over, but there are still many things to celebrate here in Rockridge, including the upcoming 90th anniversary of **McNally's Irish Pub** at 5352 College Avenue. **Tobias Hampton** purchased the bar 16 years ago, at age 40, with business partner **Max Young**. The two began working together in the mid-1990s at the Highball Lounge in San Francisco. After working his way from bartender, to manager, to general manager, Hampton knew his next step was ownership and started looking.

Young took him for a drive over the bridge in February 2007 to check out McNally's when it was up for sale. "We pulled up, it was stormy, windy, raining, and we walked in. The fireplace was going, it was warm and cozy, and I thought, 'this could work.'"

The pub originally opened in 1933 and Hampton believes it was the first bar in Oakland to get a liquor license at the end of Prohibition, much to the dismay of the church across the street at the time that fought its opening (hence the bar's church-like windows) — and they have been serving one of the best Irish coffees ever since.

Over the years, there have been four owners. First, it was **Bill McNally**, then **Pat Burmingham**, "a real imposing man, real tough. He passed away last year, unfortunately. I always really loved him; he was a great guy, and I know his kids," says Hampton. Burmingham sold it to **Sean Cahill**, and Hampton and Young took it over from him.

Avenue Updates, see next page

RCPC

Board Elections in April

continued from front page

For additional information about RCPC board service, contact election@rockridge.org. To declare candidacy, send a statement of intent to run to chair@rockridge.org by 11:59pm on **March 1, 2023**. Late submissions cannot be accepted. ■

Avenue Updates, from front page

Tobias commutes from San Francisco every day from his rent-controlled apartment in the city and thinks Rockridge is "a hidden gem in Oakland." There is an apartment upstairs that Bill McNally used to live in, but the old building has no heat other than the fireplace, so now it serves as an office.

The venue has a bumper pool table from the 1950s (look up "bumper pool" in Wikipedia and you'll see it), dart boards (experts should bring their own darts), a back room that hosts a comedy show most Tuesdays, and an outside "smoking shed."

Old-timers recall when John F. Kennedy stopped by during his presidential campaign in 1960, ordered a beer (rumored to be a Budweiser), and talked to the crowd. "Most of the stories have been passed down from person to person." Hampton still has the stool Kennedy sat on and plans to hang it on display at some point.

The pub opens every day at 2pm, or earlier for specific sporting events. Originally from Seattle, Hampton opens early for any of the Seahawk games, and at 10am on NFL Sundays. The pub participated in Rock-N-Stroll by hosting a dog rescue where several dogs got adopted, and, on a recent Saturday night, they held a "Rock-the-Ridge" rock-and-roll performance.

"I've seen a lot of regulars, I've seen a lot of people meet here, get married here. Then they have kids and I don't see them again until the kids are older. Now the kids come in. We want to be that place where people can come and feel at home, enjoy the fireplace in the winter months, and enjoy themselves," says Hampton.

The Graduate's 60th Anniversary

Another local bar, The Graduate, turns 60 this year. Owner **Javad Parsa,** who is also co-owner of the building, bought the bar 15 years ago. "People who come have known this place a long time, they know we will take care of them."

Parsa, originally from Iran, was also the previous owner of the Claremont Diner that he operated for 10 years. The diner was sold five years ago and was replaced by series of new restaurants under four different owners. The now 84-year-old is happy that the current owners are doing well.

Rockridge Cafe's 50th Anniversary

The Rockridge Café is also celebrating a milestone anniversary — 2023 marks its 50th year on College Avenue. Owner **Bill Chung** and his wife **Jean** (Jean passed away last May) opened the restaurant in 1973, and the cafe has been a staple in the neighborhood ever since.

"I want to express my deep appreciation for my dedicated staff who supported the business over the years, including during the pandemic. Especially to my late wife Jean who worked alongside me and brought up our two wonderful kids but could not be with me to celebrate our 50th anniversary."

Chung always loved to cook, and was trained in Chinese cuisine in Taiwan where he first met his wife. His family left Taiwan when he was 25 years old and moved to Berkeley. After leaving graduate school in the early '70s, his friends introduced him to College Avenue.

The cafe has served as a meeting place for local politicians and as a *de facto* office for this newsletter in its early days… and over the years, it has become a neighborhood hangout. Chung feels honored to have continued to serve the community.

"Small business takes hard work

Avenue Updates, see page 4

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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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.

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

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

Display Ad Deadline for FEBRUARY 2023: January 17, 2022

Advertising rates are $28/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (**after noon**), or email joellis1@hotmail.com. Email Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com for information regarding classified ads.

Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, *its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.*

The Year Ahead in Housing and Land Use

by Ken Rich, RCPC Land Use Chair

Happy New Year to all. In 2023, the Rockridge Community Planning Council Board will be continuing its efforts to promote dialogue and education around the hot topics of housing, affordable housing and development. The development proposal at the California College of the Arts site will be going through approval hearings sometime later this year. We will also be staying very involved in what's next for "The Ridge" site at Broadway and Pleasant Valley after the recent withdrawal of Home Depot's proposal. In addition, the Jewish Community Center's (JCC) proposal for the Dreyer's site will continue to involve the community in its planning process.

RCPC Town Hall Series –
First quarter tentative schedule:

On January 25, from 7:30pm to 9pm (see Rockridge.org for link) we will be expanding our monthly RCPC Land Use Committee meeting into a virtual town hall to kick off efforts to create a community vision for The Ridge. Join us to discuss a future that includes housing and other uses for this critical site, and how we can get there.

On February 7, from 6pm to 7pm, we will host a Community Town Hall to discuss the JCC development at the Dreyer's site.

March Community Town Hall (time and date TBD). Learn from experts how we can make sure that new housing built in Rockridge is affordable to a wide range of Oakland residents.

Visit rockridge.org for up-to-date meeting locations, Zoom links, and other information on these events. ■

CORRECTION:

Our apologies to **Stuart Swiedler** who was mistakenly given credit for the photos of the Sacramento Northern trains pictured running down Shafter in last month's column, Eyes of Rockridge (pages 8-9). The top photo was taken by **Tom Gray**, ca. 1950, the bottom photo by **Reginald McGovern** in 1948.



Meet Bodhi, a 7 to 9-year-old pittie, who lives on Lawton. He was found on the BART tracks, delaying the morning commute on September 27, 2017 (his story was picked up by the *AP*). Adopted by Todd and BethAnn, who didn't know about his "BART dog" fame, Bodhi quickly learned to be a family dog — gentle, goofy, and always ready for a treat. You can find him on daily neighborhood walks or hiking in the hills.



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KELLERWILLIAMS Luxury

Avenue Updates, from page 2

and patience. Someone once said, 'one has to like food and people to open a restaurant.' I try to make a living and enjoy it at the same time. The cafe strives to provide decent food, reasonable prices, and excellent service. I have lived in Rockridge for over 45 years and look forward to many more happy years to come," says Chung.

Barney's 45th Anniversary

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers first opened in 1978 on Piedmont Avenue. Since then they've opened nine other burger restaurants, including the shop at 5819 College Avenue, which opened in 1988. "Our menu has expanded so that everyone who walks in can find something they'll love," says owner **Hamed Mohammadbagher**, "We are grateful to still be winning awards, but we are most proud of becoming a tradition for the families and friends in our communities. You can have delivery, or pick up and enjoy Barney's anywhere you go."

Zachary's 40th Anniversary

Leandra Schuler, the current COO of the employee-owned establishment, loves to share the story of how **Zach Zachowski and Barbara Gabel** made their way west from small-town Wisconsin. The two spent several years in Chicago where they developed a love for deep-dish pizza, and in 1983, found themselves in the Bay Area with the dream of opening their own Chicago-style pizza restaurant, with a California twist.

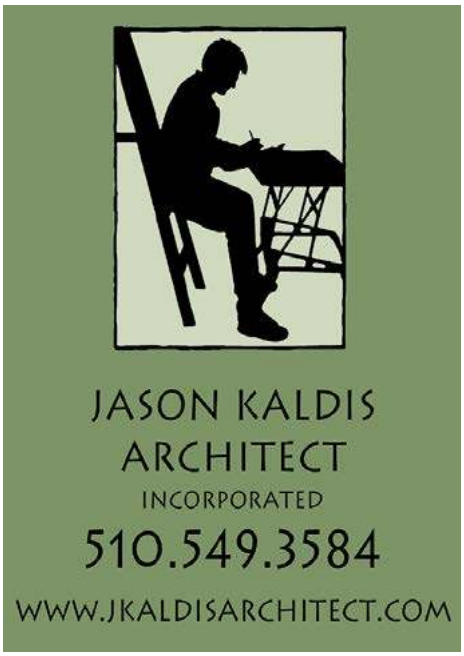


This photo was taken of founders Zach Zachowski and Barbara Gabel shortly before they opened Zachary's pizza parlor on July 25, 1983.

In their search for a location, they came across a funky little lampshade shop in Rockridge. As luck would have it, the lampshade shop owner was ready to retire, and soon their vision became a reality. After much planning and a lot of jackhammering, Zachary's opened its doors on July 25, 1983, at 5801 College Avenue.

In 2003, the two owners sold the pizzeria to their employees. "We are now 100 percent employee-owned with decades of experience on our team, and continue to carry the love set by our founders for making delicious pizza and providing a warm easy-going restaurant vibe for our customers," says Schuler.

"We don't like Rockridge, we love it. It's been our home for 40 years now. We appreciate the lively mix of neighboring businesses and the residents and we have come to know — and we're proud to have earned over 225 Best Pizza Awards."



Merchants in Motion

Boichik Bagels Expands

Boichik opened its flagship store at 3170 College Avenue only a few months before the pandemic hit, yet remained open throughout by adding delivery and online ordering with pickup, and by quickly moving into wholesale. "We're actually much stronger because of what we went through," says owner **Emily Winston**.

Customers continue to line up down the block, partly due to a lack of room inside the store, as Boichik plans for expansion. A new plant will be opening soon at the Town & Country Shopping Center in Palo Alto. Once it opens (hopefully this February), the bulk of the operations and equipment will be moved there, including a new, larger mixing machine and new rolling machine that will turn out up to 12,000 bagels an hour.

Upon completion of the plant, Winston plans to revamp the interior of the College Avenue shop to allow for a bit of internal seating as well as room for a small event space — and bring back the pastry program (black & white cookies, rugula). She is actively looking to open at least five more locations around the bay.

Much of this expansion has been made possible through a crowdfunding campaign with over 400 people participating. "We raised over one million dollars in loans, and the investors get an interest payment every month. Instead of borrowing money from a bank and paying a bank 7.5 percent interest, I'm paying my customers," says Winston.

GoldenBug Moves Across the Street

Emily Goldenberg, who opened her children's shoe store more than five years ago, moved her shop across the

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Raise the Roof:
House lifting

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

Have you ever come across a home like this and wondered what on earth is underway (see photo below)? It is the process of house lifting, and it starts by taking the existing main floor of a home, inserting two steel beams below the full length of the house, and setting the beams onto stacks of 6x6 lumber called "cribs," which are then hydraulically jacked up to add an additional story to the home. The house remains intact on the stacked cribs while the foundation and framing are being completed. The cribs and beams are then removed to allow the rest of the work to continue.



House lift underway in Rockridge

House lifting is a method of preserving a home's features versus tearing it down and stripping away its unique qualities. Some traditional Craftsman characteristics are difficult to recreate due to the lack of availability of skilled craftspeople or the lack of materials needed to match the original features. Elements like trim from old-growth trees, built-ins, ornamental plaster, and similar details are difficult and/or expensive to recreate.

This process allows the front of a home to maintain its original aspects such as bay windows, porches, and entryways, and thus, upholds its commonalities with neighboring homes. At the same time, the rest of the home can be modernized to accommodate a newer, open-layout concept.

Ian Read, an architect and former carpenter, has worked on house lifts since 2001. He is an expert, and, in addition to completing one of his own such projects in downtown Oakland, he has designed and constructed a handful of home lifts in Rockridge over the past 20 years. His Oakland-based firm, Medium Plenty, has designed a current project on Miles Avenue.

Read describes the restoration process as a "chiropractic adjustment to erase decades of movement." Since many of the homes in Rockridge are 1920-era bungalows, when they are lifted, doors or windows often no longer open properly, or following a lift, they magically open again — this is a common issue.

As homes naturally shift over the course of 100 years due to earthquakes or naturally from the differing weights of the materials, all house lifts require adjustments once construction of the new first floor is complete, such as plaster cracks in corners. Read has seen projects like his endure harsh weather just fine, and even earthquakes with only minimal movement.

Why lift your home?

According to Read, "It allows you to add space to your home while maintaining its character." Many projects can double the usable space, allowing homeowners to grow their families while remaining in their preferred walkable neighborhood. Some homeowners need additional space to work from home, or to accommodate in-laws or guests when their lot size won't allow for an addition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Prop. 13 also factors into the value of lifting a home versus moving. Purchasing a new home can often mean an increase in property taxes, which may be more than the cost of lifting a home for renovation. Some homes have been raised to create multiple units, such as a small condo project with an upper and lower unit (it should be noted that the cost of

Raise the Roof, see next page

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ACRE Restaurant is Now Open for Business

by Anna L. Marks

ACRE Restaurant is now officially open for business at Oliveto's old location at the corner of College and Shafter Avenues. When we profiled the restaurant in our September 2022 *Rockridge News,* we did not know that their pizza program would be led by Rockridge-born **David Jacobson** *(see photo on right)*, who grew up only three blocks away. Auspiciously, the restaurant opened on December 19, Jacobson's birthday.

"The opportunity kind of fell out of the sky. Over this past summer, I won the grand prize at the Real California Milk Pizza Contest. Soon after, I catered a party at an acquaintance's house and a friend put me in touch with Dirk (the owner). It feels like I'm part of the generation pioneering our own identity in the pizza world."

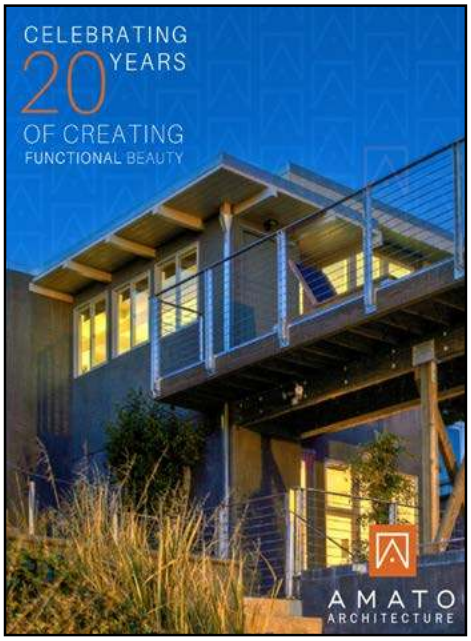
Jacobson noted that most pizza places that call their dough "slow fermented" do a 72-hour fermentation. At ACRE, he is doing a super-long, 100-hour slow fermentation, so "it tastes less like flour and more like beer." He tailors his recipes to work with the same stone hearth that previously existed in Oliveto.

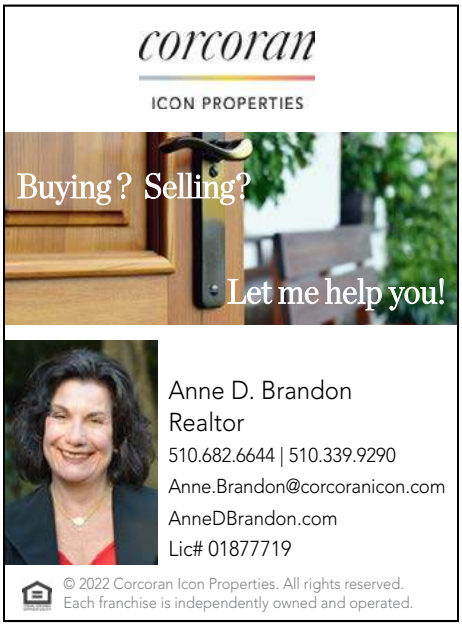
"I've been playing with several different flours from Central Milling. We wanted the crust to get some crisp and structure so you can easily pick it up and eat it like an East Coast style, have it retain its softness on its interior, similar to a Neapolitan style, and have the flavor of a slow fermented



dough characteristic of the West Coast. I think we got all three. I'm a pizza dough nerd at heart, but the chef in me takes fresh, high-quality ingredients seriously, especially in an area where they are so abundant and accessible," says Jacobson.

ACRE is open upstairs daily, from 5pm to 9:30pm (with a 4pm happy hour). The Cafe is open daily from 11am to 9:30pm. ■





Raise the Roof, from previous page

purchasing a condo unit is significantly more affordable to first-time homebuyers than purchasing a single-family home).

For homeowners needing to upgrade their foundations, there are definite cost savings in the form of the "dried in shell" of a new first floor — a minimal cost on top of foundation improvements. However, this would not include the cost of upgrading utilities or the finishing costs of adding a new story. How long does this type of project take? It depends upon the home itself and the extent of the upgrades being made. On average, homeowners can expect six months for design work, and one and a half years for construction.

Homeowners seeking to get a house lift should get estimates from a general contractor who will work in partnership with an architecture firm on the design. Costs will range depending upon the state of your home (which may or may not require reinforcing before lifting), moving overhead wires, allowing for variances due to the proximity of a neighboring property, or other factors.

If you're thinking of lifting your home, you'll need to consider where you want your main living space to be. If some rooms are shifted to the second story, be sure you are okay with the living quarters now being on the first floor. Or, maybe you'll want to upgrade your kitchen as well as remodel the entire home.

House lifting is not a new phenomenon. "People have been moving and lifting homes for over a century," said Read. "It's a great option, but do your research to make sure it's right for your home and your desired improvements."

You can you see house lifts in Rockridge on Colby Street, Miles Avenue, Canning Street, and elsewhere around the neighborhood.

Have you lifted your home and want to share your tips with interested homeowners? If so, send an email to editor@rockridge.org. ■

Avenue Updates, from page 4

street to 5520 College (the ground floor of the recently renovated Clover apartment building). Twice the size of the old store, there is now more inventory, including kid's clothing. They will continue offering in-person shoe fittings for children.

"I love how friendly the Rockridge folks are," says Goldenberg. "We've had so many people, from neighbors, to customers, to fellow shop owners, stop in and congratulate us on our new space. We love the connections we have here and feel very rooted in this community. All told, GoldenBug will be a one-stop-shop for children's shoes and apparel."

New to the Neighborhood

Market Apparel

Market, a "fashion destination," has recently opened at 5914 College Avenue. It has been owner **Jennifer Rego**'s lifelong dream to provide affordable designer clothing to meet the lifestyles of a diverse audience, and offers a curated lineup of ready-to-wear designs.

"Rockridge has always been a favorite spot for me to come and shop. The neighborhood is adorable, and the fantastic restaurants and strong sense of community really appealed to me. If you are looking for just a great new pair of jeans or a special cocktail dress, Market has something for everyone," says Rego.

DG Collective

Devan Gregori opened her clothing shop in December of 2022 at 5540 College Avenue. Gregori was born in San Francisco and moved to Rockridge two years ago after graduating from U.C. Berkeley. While living in the neighborhood, a chance encounter at the Rockridge Improvement Club (RIC) led her to find retail space in the newly-renovated Clover building… and the support didn't stop there.

"It's been heartwarming — it's community driven," says Gregori. "The person who built my retail counter, I met at the RIC too. My dear friend, Jen, who owns Westwind Succulents next door, her plants are also for sale. Her husband is building all of my garment racks."



Devan Gregori of DG Collective designs affordable clothing for diverse lifestyles.

All the clothes in the store are her own designs, and the leather goods and jewelry are from other local designers. "It's a place to let local creativity thrive. As I expand, I'd love to do more collaborations with artists."

Coming Soon

Starter Bakery

The company's first bakery and cafe is slated to open at 5804 College Avenue towards the end of this month, according to owner **Brian Wood**. The pastry team is in the process of finalizing the menu, and they are busy creating new and enhanced items that will only be available at the cafe.

"We are looking forward to becoming part of the Rockridge business community. We're counting down the days and excited to meet our neighbors," says Wood. They are also hiring for the bakery and have both full and part-time positions available. Interested potential employees can send a note to info@starterbakery.com to get the process started.

40 years

Pavé Fine Jewelry, 4596 College Ave., was founded in 1983 by award-winning designer, Michael Endlich.

Cuttin' Up on College, 5811 College Ave., is a family-run beauty/barber shop, and owner Maryanne has been cutting hair since 1983.

45 years

The Burrito Shop, 5359 College Ave., currently owned by Jose Ortiz, has been on College Avenue since 1978.

Rockridge bids a sad farewell to the following establishments:

The Great Wall Chinese Food
Smitten Ice Cream
Noodle Theory
Happy Trails

Avenue Updates, see page 8

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Love + Chocolate

Kristy and Kent Lincoln will soon open Love + Chocolate at 6309 College Avenue, next door to Southie's. The family-owned business already has a shop in Walnut Creek. "My husband, Kent, and I opened the shop five years ago after we quit our jobs to try to find something to do together."

Customers can expect to see Leonidas Belgian chocolates and a wide variety of other European treats like toffee, shortbread, marzipan, and petit fours. "We have gorgeous gift boxes and all our chocolates are made with all-natural ingredients. There are no artificial colors, flavors, or fillings in any of our chocolates."

Popups during November and December gave neighbors a taste of what's to come. They hope to be open by March. Follow them on Instagram @loveandchocolateshop to stay up to date on their progress.



Love + Chocolate owers Kristy and Kent Lincoln



Poppy Bagels

The space vacated by Doña Tomas in Temescal will soon be occupied by Poppy Bagels, assuming all goes well with the permitting process. According to owner **Reesa Kashuk**, the shop will offer counter service along with a handful of tables and stools for people who would like to stay and enjoy their food and drinks at the shop.

"Poppy Bagels was born out of a combination of homesickness and desperation; I began daydreaming about owning a bagel shop within about two weeks of moving to the West Coast (from NYC) when I couldn't find any bagels that reminded me of home. I am not a trained baker, so I just started experimenting with recipes when I wasn't working, and one thing led to another."

Undeterred by two bagel shops located within a mile radius, Kashuk feels she brings something new to the table, and says all the bagels will be rolled by hand and boiled in malt.

"We will stick to the classics, but also have more fun with our toppings — inspired by all that California has to offer. We source our cream cheese from a nearby dairy, purchase many of our toppings from a local spice shop, and will rotate seasonal specials."

Bring your kids…they plan to give away free mini bagels to youngsters. ■







Jewish Community Campus: Survey Update

by Melissa Chapman, Chief Executive Officer, JCC East Bay

As of December 16, 2022, 81 neighbors had filled out the Rockridge community survey. Following is a small sample of the responses so far:

• 71 percent are most excited about having a values-based community organization in the neighborhood.

• 85 percent would like to attend cultural events on the new campus.

• 74 percent would like to attend adult education classes or lectures.

• 69 percent said they would like to attend health and wellness activities.

Many respondents expressed concerns regarding traffic mitigation. We've been working with transportation experts Fehr & Peers to study traffic and parking patterns, and are exploring possibilities and solutions. We hope to share these findings and more at February's Town Hall.

The survey will remain open until ***Friday, January 20th at 1pm*** *at www.jcceastbay.org/communitycampus.* ■

Oakland Tech PTSA Seeks Auction Donations

by Leslie Ayers

Oakland Tech's annual auction is the biggest fundraiser of the year and supports activities beyond the school budget including athletics, the arts, and field trips. The PTSA relies on the generous donations from local businesses to fill its auction catalog with an array of products, services, and experiences that appeal to the 300-plus bidders who participate each year. Local businesses are encouraged to donate by the first of February using this link: https://oaklandtech.schoolauction.net/auction2023/donate_items/new.

Learn more at auctionsponsors@OaklandTech.com. ■

Preparing for Earthquakes, One Block at a Time

by Carol Strickman



Neighbors on 62nd hold a meeting on earthquake preparedness.

Looking for a New Year's resolution? How about resolving to do something in 2023 to better prepare yourself and your family for an earthquake? You could tackle a big project like retrofitting your home, a medium-sized project like installing an automatic gas shut-off valve, or a low-cost do-it-yourself project like storing adequate water or taking a first aid class. The block on 62nd Street between Colby and Hillegass has rededicated ourselves to such efforts now and into the new year.

For one thing, we are forming teams to respond to a serious earthquake. Our First Aid Team is scouting out locations for a pop-up first aid station. We've gathered boxes of first aid supplies and equipment — and we are developing protocols to provide urgent medical care to injured neighbors.

Our Search & Rescue team is gathering equipment for our first responders and developing a training for its members. Our Hazard Reduction/Utilities team is updating our block map that shows the location of each home's gas, electrical, and water shut-off valves. We will be making sure that everyone knows how to turn off these utilities. Other teams include a Communications Team, Child Care, Psychological First Aid, Food, and an Incident Command Center team.

We have also distributed family questionnaires to give us important information such as out-of-area contacts, names and ages of children and their schools, and pet descriptions, as well as special skills or needs. Finally, we will continue organizing group activities. Last year, we had a block gathering to go over earthquake preparedness basics.

This month, our First Aid team will be offering a disaster first aid class to our block, and we're hoping to hold a practice exercise in the spring. We are basing our activities on Oakland's CORE program materials and trainings, which many of us have attended.

Experts tell us that there will be a major earthquake in the Bay Area; it is just a matter of time. Here in Rockridge, we are within a mile of the Hayward fault. We can all prepare for the inevitable, one block at a time.

Have questions or need assistance with organizing your block? Email carol.strickman@gmail.com. ■

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A Mighty Landmark Felled by Disease

by Skip Fogarty

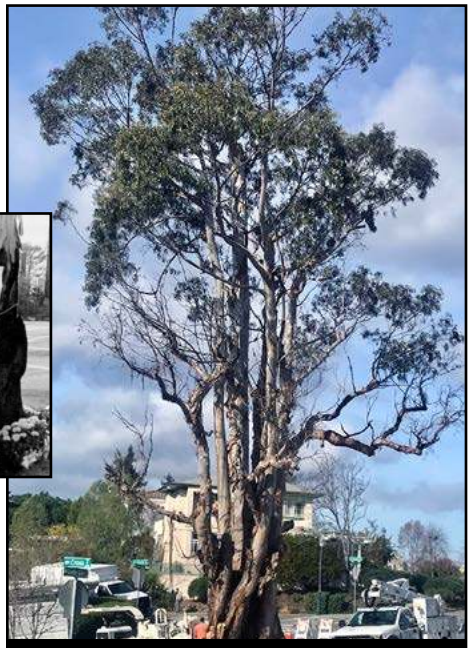
Standing sentry for well over a century at an Upper Rockridge intersection, the "Big Tree" was brought down last month. The tree was located in the middle of where three streets converge — Cross Road, Acacia, and Golden Gate Avenues. Locals are saddened, but a neighborhood group has mobilized to explore a suitable replacement on the site, including a potential memorial to the venerable eucalyptus that meant so much to so many.

Best estimates are that the blue gum eucalyptus was about 120 years old. It has served as a landmark, Halloween gathering place, a meet-up spot for local kids, a bus stop, and a beacon of hope and renewal following the 1991 firestorm.

"It's difficult to capture the sense of place and permanence that the tree gave to the neighborhood," says longtime Golden Gate resident **Louise Comfort**, who lost her home in the firestorm. "The big tree was a poignant symbol of survival. Damaged, yes, but still standing and reassuringly familiar to all who were struggling to cope."



Dan Scannell remembers that, "In the '70s, the tree was where the *Oakland Tribune* would drop off newspapers for the afternoon paper routes. Mine was on Acacia. Sad to see the landmark tree go. After the firestorm everyone put up notes on the tree about lost and found pets, trying to get hold of relatives, and so on. The tree was the only thing left in the neighborhood besides chimneys."



Days before its demise, and what remains of the venerable eucalyptus.



"I loved this tree and the 'restored and renewed' message that was on it for a long time after the fire," recalls **Marisa Holland Kelley**. "As a survivor, I found the message empowering and the tree to be a cornerstone as the community rebuilt itself."

Following the fire, City arborist **Tod Lawsen** took inventory of damaged and dead trees throughout the burn zone and found that the eucalyptus was seriously scorched but very much alive. He has kept a careful and caring eye on it ever since, periodically driving by and assessing its health.

Lawsen recently observed several large orange-colored blooms known as "sulfur fungus" growing near the base. This fungus indicated the tree was

Landmark Tree, see next page

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Landmark Tree, from previous page

afflicted by brown cubical rot, making it brittle and susceptible to decay and failure. The damage fom the 1991 firestorm created an open wound, making way for disease to take hold. This diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by two independent arborists.

Once notices were posted that the tree would be removed, a group of neighbors petitioned the City's public works department and organized a meeting with City councilperson **Dan Kalb** to discuss new possibilities for the site. City staff initially suggested leaving an 8-foot stump in the street. Neighbors pushed back and asked that the tree be cut to ground level to make way for something new on the site. The transportation department then proposed placing plastic traffic barriers to guide vehicles through the complicated junction.

Given those choices, neighbors said they'd prefer the stump, and asked the City to leave more height and more of a tree-like structure. What is left, temporarily, is about 15 feet high and includes remnants of several limbs.

"I think what remains has a certain nobility," says neighbor **Sophia Wang**. "It's sculptural in its own majestic way." For now, the stump serves as a visual divider, marking the several intersecting avenues.

The transportation department's ultimate engineering solution for the intersection remains undecided. In the meantime, Wang and other concerned neighbors have distributed a survey that has elicited about 60 suggestions, including a memorial bench, an artistic carving of the stump, a boulder with plaque, and a mature native tree.

"We were told that there is no money in the City budget for an immediate replacement," reports neighbor **Rhita Williams**. "But Dan Kalb said a new budget cycle in April might offer some funding. That gives us time to explore more permanent solutions."

Email rockridgeterraceneighbors@yahoo.com with questions or suggestions about the intersection. ■

Our beloved founder of *The Rockridge News*, **Don Kinkead**, is resigning his position as Marshal for one of our lower Rockridge areas for a well-deserved rest. We need someone to take his place as soon as possible. Here's what being Marshal entails: You pick up your box at the bundling venue (always at a convenient house in lower Rockridge) the first Friday or Saturday of the month and deliver the bundles to your district or block captains.

• MARSHAL: 5200 Blocks – 8 drops

Thanks go to **Ellen Koch** for her service as Block Captain of Route 05A/Birch Court. Ellen will be spending a good part of the year in Chicago to be with her new grandson, so, we are looking for a volunteer to take over her route beginning in February, 2023. Let us know if you will be able to sign up to be Block Captain for:

• Route 05A: From 5850 Birch Court to College Avenue

Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. The Route 05A bundle will be delivered to the Block Captain's front porch. Newsletters are delivered to front porches the first weekend of each month except August.

To volunteer, contact Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com; 510/547-3855. ■





Report from the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

by Karen Ivy, Secretary, Greater Rockridge NCPC

Last month, the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) held its last public meeting for 2022. Our speaker was Deputy City Administrator **Joe DeVries**, head of Neighborhood Services. To start the meeting, OPD Sergeant **Alain Manguy** answered questions in lieu of Community Resource Officers, who, under Chief Armstrong's crime plan, are still assigned to Violence Prevention. Sergeant Manguy made one especially important point: don't leave "live" electronic devices (laptops, phones) in your car — the thieves now have a device that can detect and find them, even if they're hidden from sight.

DeVries laid out the 2023 plans for Neighborhood Services, which has moved from Oakland Police Department to the City Administrator's office. Since much of what Neighborhood Councils do is not directly related to local crime, he sees this move as very positive.

Neighborhood Services has lost some people to retirement and others to promotion. Two promotions have been approved by HR, so DeVries now plans to fill three Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC) vacancies in this fiscal year, and another in fiscal 2023-24. With these new personnel, they hope to expand NSCs to more districts; they've been so short-handed that they focus on those districts with the most violence (which do not include Rockridge). Two new supervisors include **Araina Richards** for East Oakland, and **Angela Moore** in North and West Oakland (Moore was formerly Rockridge's NSC).

Neighborhood Council participation has been very uneven citywide during the pandemic. To improve this situation, Neighborhood Services plan to have a staff retreat this month to establish goals, the biggest of which is to increase participation.

They're currently working with a device called the "Meeting Owl Pro" that should allow for hybrid meetings — some people attending in person and some via Zoom. We hope their plan to buy these devices and loan them to neighborhood meetings survives the recently disclosed budgetary problems.

The Greater Rockridge NCPC is very interested in getting back to in-person meetings and has reserved the Rockridge Library conference room for February 9, its first meeting of the new year. We hope to set up the Owl program soon, but until that is in place, we've asked our email list members which type of meeting they prefer. We've also asked for opinions on meeting start times. For years our meetings began at 7:30pm, but a few years ago, the City asked us to move the time a half hour earlier.

If you would like to voice an opinion on either of these issues, please email secretary@rockridgencpc.com.

Visit https://tinyurl.com/y7r5qmbz for the full report of NCPC's December 2022 meeting. ■

The NCPC meets on the 2nd Thursday of even numbered months.

The next meeting will be held at the Rockridge Library: February 9, 2023, at 7pm,
(pending further notice)

7pm to 7:10pm: Introductions

7:10pm to 7:30pm: Oakland Police Dept. (OPD) Status Reports, beats 12Y and 13X

7:30pm to 8pm: Neighborhood discussion and Oakland Police Q & A, including new priorities

Zoom link (if Owl App works out):
https://tinyurl.com/y7r5qmbz

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





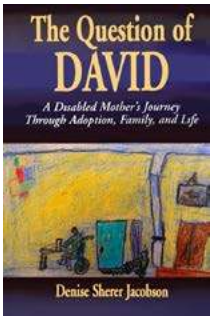
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Rockridge Authors Abound

by Carol Kasparek and Gary Fine

Rockridge is home to a diverse group of authors. Below, we feature several writers whose books describe their work to create open, nurturing spaces, and an awareness of the beauty around us. Meet the authors down the block.

The Question of David



Denise Sherer Jacobson is the author of *The Question of David: A Disabled Mother's Journey through Adoption, Family and Life.* She and her husband, Neil, were both born with cerebral palsy. You may have seen them whizzing around Rockridge in their electric wheelchairs.

Their journey to the neighborhood began on the other side of the country. Denise was born in NYC. At age 16, she attended Camp Jened (aka Crip Camp) in upstate New York. The summer camp created a free-spirited environment for teenagers with disabilities, empowering them to work together, organize, and take action. Several campers moved to the West Coast, worked for disability justice, and prompted the passage of the American with Disabilities Act. The Academy Award-nominated documentary "Crip Camp" depicts this history in which Denise and Neil are featured (see *Rockridge News*, May 2020).

Re-united after they both moved to Berkeley, they got married and bought a house in Rockridge in 1983. They did not think they would have the opportunity to adopt an infant until one fateful day when a phone call came telling them about a 6-week-old boy seeking adoption. Denise's book tells a deeply personal story about the adventures and challenges of a disabled couple raising a child. "I wanted people to understand that what I feel is what everyone else feels," she says.

Her daily routine found her reflecting over a mocha at Hudson Bay Café, the Rockridge Café, or the Edible Complex. "I love going deep …staying in that mode and realm to write." Jacobson knew she had found her happy ending when her son said he felt lucky to have grown up with his parents and their perspective of the world.

Denise has just finished a manuscript focusing on her first summer at Camp Jened. Her working title: *And Then I Found Myself.* "Growing up, people saw only my disabilities, they never saw me." As she stated at the end of the film, "Could you ever have imagined where we would go?"

(Editor's note: David Jacobson is now running the pizza program at ACRE Restaurant, see article on page 6.)

The Garden Next Door



The roots of **Collin Pines**'s book, *The Garden Next Door*, came from various life experiences. Pines developed his children's book by using "trees as tools" after a stint with the Cameroon Peace Corps. He went on to receive an Environmental Science degree from Allegheny College and found himself connecting neighborhoods in San Francisco as a journalist through an innovative blog.

He and his husband moved to Rockridge in late 2017, and loved the walkable neighborhood. Pines did not love the "realtor's sod" backyard. Native vegetation and pollinator favorites gradually filled the space, so he chose plants that attract a wide variety of pollinators — soon discovered by insects, birds, and squirrels.

During the pandemic, a friend began an Indie Press house and asked Pines to be its first author, saying, "I know you're creative, I know you can write." Pines chose the intentional transformation of his neighorhood patch as his subject to inspire children and their parents to explore their immediate environment, because "You don't need a national park or botanical garden to view the world around us with wonder."

He partnered with illustrator **Tiffany Everett** to produce bright, scientifically accurate images that would educate young people and adults. In the book, the children discover the power of gardening for all forms of life and convince their parents to "bring a little nature to their backyard. A tiny garden can make a big difference."

Signed copies of *The Garden Next Door* are available at East Bay Booksellers and Mrs. Dalloway's. Pines recommends Oakland Pollinator Posse and Master Gardeners for insights on how to transform your own piece of the neighborhood.

Authors, see next page

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Authors, from previous page

Tomato Chases Waterfalls



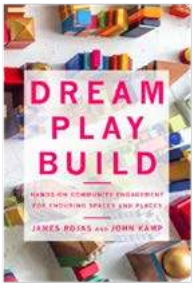
"We're all walking around with a story", says **Kania Edelberg,** co-owner of Funky Furniture at 5391 College Avenue. Part of her personal story is displayed in her children's book, *Tomato Chases Waterfalls*, with lush illustrations by **Andrea Rodriguez**.

The title came from a nickname for Edelberg's mother, "Hot Tomato," and the importance of water in her life. Her father was a park ranger in Hawaii, interweaving time on the land with time on the water as he surfed the waves on Maui. Her mother showed her she could find her voice in the stillness of mountains, rivers, and lakes. Edelberg studied environmental science and set a goal to visit every national park… she is on number 56.

Edelberg wanted to bring the inspiration and wonder she felt outdoors to others, most importantly, children. Rodriguez used her daughter as the model for Tomato, and made it come to life. The book came out "better than I envisioned," offering readers a vision of what they would discover outside. "The more you walk, the more you see," she says.

Visit Edelberg at Funky Furniture to request a copy of the book. She also will provide valuable direction on how to sleep overnight in a park in the Florida Keys surrounded by lighthouses and a lagoon. As readers of the book have learned, if they wander, "you can find things."

Dream, Play, Build



James Rojas and **John Kamp** published their book, *Dream, Play, Build: Hands-on Community Engagement for Enduring Spaces and Places,* in February 2022. They have been growing their national consulting business since moving to Rockridge in 2016 (see June 2022 *Rockridge News*).

With common objects including blocks, buttons, and string, they guide groups to access early memories to articulate their desires for their dream neighborhood. In this childlike state, participants collaborate to produce imaginative designs and environments that meet the needs of the entire community.

Planners using the method said "they had the most fun they've ever had" in community outreach with great guidance for development. Planning website Planetizen deemed it one of the best planning books of the year.

Rojas explains, "being childlike can create an experience that is fair and fun. We want to give people tools to make change." ■



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12/13/2022	4	3.5	5922 Acacia Ave	$2,900,000	$2,900,000	35	$2,800,000
12/14/2022	3	2.5	6269 Chabot Rd	$2,399,000	$2,399,000	13	$2,800,000
12/15/2022	3	3	403 63Rd St	$1,295,000	$1,295,000	24	$1,450,000
12/19/2022	3	2	5300 Shafter Ave	$1,095,000	$1,095,000	7	$1,375,000
12/20/2022	4	2	406 62Nd St	$1,395,000	$1,395,000	11	$1,950,000
12/21/2022	3	3.5	6421 Benvenue Ave	$2,699,000	$2,499,000	52	$2,200,000
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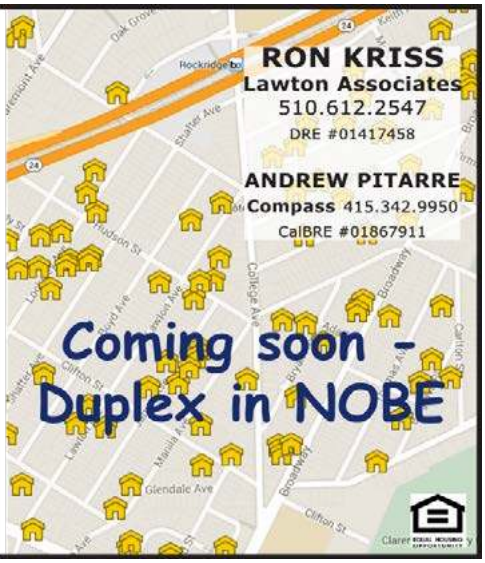
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