THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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

✲ SAVE THE DATES ✲ RCPC / JCC East Bay JOINT TOWN HALL

Join the Rockridge Community Planning Council and the Jewish Community Center on **February 7, at 6pm** for a Town Hall Meeting at the Rockridge Branch Library. You can also join via livestream; however, there will not be an opportunity to ask questions online.

Registration is required: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87277077537. For more details, visit https://jcceastbay.org/communitycampus/.

March Town Hall (Date TBD)
Learn from experts how we can make sure that new housing built in Rockridge includes units affordable to a wide range of Oakland residents.

Did you miss the Jan. Town Hall: Community Input on The Ridge?
See video and more at rockridge.org.

RCPC Board Elections Planned for April

by Ben Friedman, RCPC Election Officer



Are you a resident of Rockridge wondering how to help serve our community? Six seats are up for election to the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Board, scheduled for **Thursday, April 20 and Saturday, April 22**. Now is the time to think about whether you may be interested in running for a seat on the board for a two-year term.

Board members are elected at large by our entire community. Board membership is an excellent way to gain a deep understanding of social, civic, and economic issues relevant to our neighborhood and our city.

Board Elections, see next page

A Double-Shot of Attention Makes for a Proper Cuppa' Coffee

by Carol Kasparek

Upon entering Ain't Normal Cafe, customers find a space filled with super-local and international creations. Owner **Faunus Lucas** has carefully chosen the made-to-order drink menu, the array of bagged coffee, specialty brewing equipment, wine, and to-go house-made snacks. For him, every product should be "approachable" while offering something special to the customer.

His years in service jobs, which included a stint at the Bartavelle Café in Berkeley, prepared him for the hard work of running a retail brick-and-mortar establishment — non-stop hard work if one intends to

Ain't Normal, see page 4



Illustration above by Alex Theodoropulos. Lettering and graphic of the espresso machine by Bud Snow.

RCPC

Board Elections in April

continued from front page

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

Membership on the RCPC Board involves a significant commitment of time and effort. Among the most basic activities are board meetings (held monthly), Town Hall meetings, and committee meetings. Meetings are currently held via Zoom but may be resuming in person. Board members are expected to participate in at least one committee, and in planning and organizing Town Halls and community events — including the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour fundraiser. For an individual Board member, the typical time commitment is about 10 to 12 hours per month, varying with circumstances.

The RCPC needs your help as we strive to help our community thrive as an inclusive and vibrant neighborhood. If you love Rockridge and wish to promote the health, safety, and quality of life of our neighbors while providing leadership and representation of neighborhood interests, this spring's election is a great opportunity to get involved.

chair@rockridge.org

Candidates must meet the criteria for membership (at least 18 years of age and maintain a principal residence within Rockridge boundaries as defined by the RCPC bylaws, available at www.rockridge.org/boundaries/).

For info about board service, email RCPC at election@rockridge.org. ■

Don Kinkead, founder of *The Rockridge News* and delivery Marshal in Lower Rockridge for many years, needs a rest and he hopes that someone will pick up his route. Here's what's entailed: 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. Route details as follows:

MARSHAL: 8 drops to 5200 Blocks

We're still looking for someone to replace **Ellen Koch** 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. We will find a substitute for February but, after that, if no one signs up Birch Court residents will not get *The News*, and what a shame that would be. Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. The bundle will be delivered to the Block Captain's front porch. Let us know if you are able to sign up to be Block Captain for this route:

Route 05A: From 5850 Birch Court to College Avenue

Newsletters are delivered to front porches on the first weekend of each month, except August. To volunteer, contact Susan at (510) 547-3855; smontauk@gmail.com.

The Rockridge News

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

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

Newsletter Subscriptions

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

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

Display Ad Deadline for MARCH 2023: February 16, 2023

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.*

College Preparatory School Used Book Sale Returns to Campus

The College Preparatory School's renowned used book sale is returning to campus. Join fellow Bay Area book lovers on Saturday, **March 25 and Sunday, March 26** to find out why this is a not-to-be-missed event.

Thousands of used books for adults, teens, and children will be on sale — including many recent and popular titles in excellent condition. Various media, vinyl, puzzles, and a small selection of vintage/antique books will also be for sale. Most books are priced from $1 to $3, with some special books priced slightly higher. Sale hours are Saturday, 10am to 4pm; and Sunday (featuring $5 bags) from 10am to 2pm.

The event takes place at The College Preparatory School's Buttner Auditorium, 6100 Broadway. For more information, call (510) 652-0111, or email Bookfair@college-prep.org. ■

Nuthouse at The Golden Squirrel — *Now Twice the Fun*

Nuthouse at the Golden Squirrel (5940 College Avenue), a comedy show in the heart of Rockridge, is now hosting shows twice a week: Wednesdays at 8:30pm and Saturdays at 8pm. Nuthouse hosts a rotating lineup of some of the best comics from aroud the Bay Area and beyond — and tickets are always free.

The show is produced and hosted by internationally unknown comedian Clara Bijl (Edinburgh Fringe Festival, SF Sketchfest, Cobbs, Punchline) along with Oakland resident and cheese sandwiches enthusiast, Daniel Lewis (2022 East Bay Comedy Competition, Alameda Comedy Club).

For information and to purchase advance tickets, visit to https://nuthouse.eventbrite.com/. ■



Sampson is a 10-year-old pug. He lives on Keith. He loves food and walking to Frog Park with his one-and-a-half-year-old human sister, Grace. He's never forgotten a store on College Avenue that's given him treats, and reluctantly puts up with dressing in funny costumes.

editor@rockridge.org



CollegePrep
A private high school in Oakland

The College Preparatory School is a vibrant day school for grades 9-12 in Oakland's Rockridge neighborhood. At College Prep we believe in the foundational importance of scholarship, the value of dialogue, and the need for academically curious young people to belong to a kind, creative, diverse, and joyful community. We challenge our students to engage deeply in learning, appreciate one another, and grow into adults who are intellectually adventurous, ethically sure-footed, and generous of heart and spirit.

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Ain't Normal, from front page

be opened every day, as he is now. "I've always wanted to have a retail shop," says Lucas. "When you say you want to do something, you get pushed into whatever direction that takes you."

Initially, he served drinks and food at his partner's art exhibit opening at Growelry, in San Francisco. Lucas showed up at the next event with an espresso machine in hand. "We served third-wave coffee drinks (meaning paying attention to the origins of the coffee with sustainability and fairness in mind) in the same vein as we do now at the cafe." The catering business was dubbed "Ain't Normal" after a friend's nickname took off.

When the pandemic hit, his corporate event catering business evaporated, and the landlord of the space at the corner of Miles and College contacted him when the previous tenant left. Lucas quickly launched into a six-month remodel. He knew to prepare exclusively for take-out as pandemic restrictions increased.

When the doors opened to the public in October 2020, Caltrans work on the adjacent parklet began. "We didn't know anything about the construction," he remembers, as the sledgehammering ensued. Now complete, Lucas uses this new outdoor space for additional customer seating.



Historical note: The building currently occupied by Ain't Normal Cafe is the original site of the Rockridge Library, pictured here c. 1930.

On a recent rainy afternoon, Lucas gave an impromptu tutorial on the roasting differences throughout the world, the optimal selection of multi-roasts, the variety of roasting styles for a brick and mortar, and the importance of "resting" the roasted beans for optimal flavor. Every coffee requires a different level of care. FYI: Barn Coffee roasted in Berlin is at peak potency two to three weeks after roasting — perfect timing for the Ain't Normal shelf where coffees that come from single-person-run roasteries share space with established global companies.

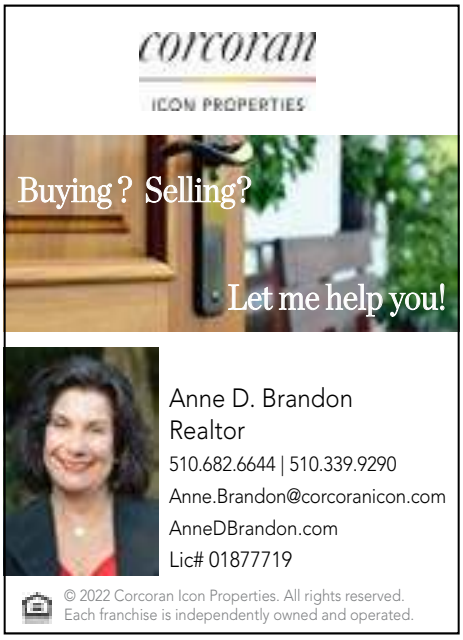
According to Lucas, every roaster in every region has a characteristic flavor profile and rest time. Their goal is to make the "proper cup, or fit," for each customer. "We work to teach the customer how to talk to us about coffee. We need to have a conversation about the flavor you want: smoky, chocolatey, full-bodied, high acid or low acid. We have something for everybody."

The cafe has developed a distinctive wine selection as well, available by glass and bottle. He seeks out local, small-production wineries. Again, any selection is preceded by a discussion of what the customer wants and the characteristics of each offering, because, he says, "I want people to drink wine here."

Food options were recently added to the café menu. Self-taught as a cook, Lucas began with a friend's scone recipe and then added the dishes he enjoys to a daily menu. The catering business has returned in force. The name Ain't Normal now seems prescient.

"I don't know what it would have been like to open in normal times," Lucas reflected. "We're always more optimistic when we start things …. I have more empathy for people who start things because it's really hard." With his crew of 13, Ain't Normal works to be consistent and find out what each customer wants. "We need to be there for them." ■





LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Unconventional Options for Development

The Rockridge community should be lauded for advocating for affordable housing. But what is "affordable"? The U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) defines that as paying no more than 30 percent of household income on housing — including utilities. Any percentage above that is considered being "rent burdened." Market rate housing in Rockridge does not provide affordable housing. The table below shows October's average rents for apartments in four recently built apartments (the Logan, Baxter, Idora, and 47Hundred) as compared to the City of Oakland Area Median Income (AMI). Clearly, an AMI household is significantly over-burdened in these buildings — and adding utilities makes the burden even greater.

Household Size/ Bedrooms	Monthly Income	Average Rent	Rent Burden
1 Person/1 BR	$8,329	$3,317	40%
2 Persons/1BR	$9,521	$3,317	35%
2 Persons/2BR	$9,521	$4,058	43%

But who earns AMI? Certainly not a teacher in Oakland public schools, whose salary is under $5,750/month — 70 percent of AMI. A teacher living alone in a 1BR unit in one of these buildings would have a "severe" rent burden of 58 percent, and even more once utilities are included. But a teacher also makes too high an income to qualify for subsidized ("affordable") housing, which is mostly restricted to households earning less than 60 percent AMI.

The amount of such housing we build is constrained by the public funding available. Because of this, in the recent eight-year Housing Element cycle, Oakland met only 35 percent of its affordable goals. But at the same time, we developed 174 percent of our market rate goals. Critically, we only met three percent of our moderate goals — the housing we most need. How do we build this housing?

As previously noted in *The Rockridge News* (see article "What Is Land Cost? Why Should I Care," by Stu Flashman, June 2021) conventional development practices cannot provide such housing. Therefore, we need unconventional approaches to reduce costs and risks. What might some of these be? Development costs are made up of hard costs (actual labor and materials needed to build the building), soft costs (permits, legal, marketing and insurance, design, engineering, and developer fees, etc.), and land cost. While technological improvements hold some promise to reducing hard costs, it's not going to be by an order of magnitude.

Reductions in soft costs are also limited. And as we know, land costs, particularly in Rockridge, are high. But what if we can reduce land costs by essentially eliminating the sale of the land and finding alternate ways to incent property owners to team with developers to re-develop or add to their properties by exchanging up-front profits for long-term payments?

Other Financing Options

Land Trusts, and modification of the trust idea, are promising. With Land Trusts, the Trust controls the land. Residents own a share of the building and pay monthly on a long-term ground lease, thus building some equity. Development costs are financed through conventional mortgages and possibly some subsidy.

Local volunteer architect/engineer/developer teams could assess under-developed property along College Avenue. Promising properties could then be shopped to developers. But instead of selling, owners would place their properties in a trust and receive monthly lease payments. Hundreds of units could be added this way. Portland, OR, has used this approach.

Social-Purpose Real Estate Investment Trusts could provide financing for such projects. Neighbors invest in developing the property, and owner and investors receive modest dividends from lease payments. Here in Oakland, a form of this is already happening to provide housing for teachers. Social REITs have also been formed locally.

New requirements for the State Housing Element will put pressure on Rockridge to develop affordable and moderate housing. All the more reason that our large opportunity sites (CCA, BART, and The Ridge) provide their fair share of affordable and moderate housing. The current CCA proposal currently does not — but switching to a trust-based project just might. Together, the three main sites offer the possibility of hundreds of units of moderate-income housing.

Larry Mayers
Coronado Avenue

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Reflecting on another year gone by, I have immense appreciation for our local community, friends and clients! I've been fortunate to enjoy managing 172 real estate transactions in 94618 & 94609 out of 389 total East Bay transactions. I'm grateful to have 97% of business coming from referral based only sources. Thank you!

COMING SOON:
4 Bed 2 Bath ~2400 sqft, 1 block off College, brown shingle, large level yard, Price TBD

February is awareness month for: The Heart, Donors, Cancer Prevention, Black History, Social Justice, Random Kindness, Library Lovers, Chocolate, Being Laugh-Friendly

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COMPASS

Claremont Middle School Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser Returns to Rockridge

by Diedre Poletiek

The Rockridge Community is invited to attend the Claremont Middle School's 13th annual Pancake Breakfast, hosted by the Masons at the Masonic Temple on **Saturday, February 25**. The hearty menu includes a full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, fruit, coffee, and tea. It's also a rare opportunity to tour the interior of the historic Masonic Lodge in the heart of Rockridge.

The lodge is located a few blocks from of Rockridge BART, at 5449 College Avenue (between Forest and Hudson). With three seating options (8am, 9:15am and 10:30am), there's room for everyone — but get your tickets early for your desired seating. Amazing raffle prizes will be offered at each seating.

All are welcome to enjoy this fun community event. Advance tickets are $12 each (no service charge for online reservations); free for children under five (no ticket required). Tickets purchased at the door cost $13 (on a space-available basis) and can be made using cash, check, or credit card. ■



Artwork by Emma Cofod

Credit card or PayPal payments are accepted for online purchases. Visit www.ClaremontMS.org/Pancake for tickets and details.

Note: If you buy your ticket online, you'll have the option of printing it out, but no need, your name will be on a guest list when you check in on site.



Rockridge Resident Opens Bagel Shop with a California Twist

by Susie Wyshak

Toppings on both sides of a bagel? "Why not?," muses Poppy Bagels owner **Reesa Kashuk**. This twist on the traditional bagel reflects Kashuk's eclectic approach to baking at her newly opened shop in the former Doña Tomas location at 5004 Telegraph. And it solves the age-old conundrum of split-bagel eaters — finally, toppings everywhere.

Growing up in Manhattan, bagels were a part of the Kashuk family culture. Weekends kicked off at Bagel Bob's, Bagel Buffet, or Murray's Bagels. After college in Maine, Kashuk explored a career in psychology, leading to hostess work at a Michelin-starred restaurant, then world travel including a nine-month stay in Argentina.

In 2015, a bagel yearning took hold. Kashuk decided to try her hand at her perfect bagel: chewy (but not too doughy), a bit crusty with micro-bubbles on top, and savory with an undertone of maltiness. Most importantly, according to her parents, "bagels should not be too big."

The batch was terrible. In the coming months, Kashuk kept trying. "Through trial and error, I got to know the dough," she says. Her friends tried the bagels. They began to place orders. "They started thinking of me as the bagel person."

The Road to Bagel Bliss

While working full-time as an account exec at Goodby, Silverstein & Partners (creators of "Got Milk?"), Kashuk would wake up early, bake bagels at home, then deliver orders to people who ordered via Instagram or sell at pop-ups in cafes around the City. First 50 bagels. Then 80 bagels. All boiled, one bagel at a time. Orders streamed in from people she hadn't heard of, so Kashuk launched an

Poppy Bagels, see next page

Poppy Bagels, from previous page

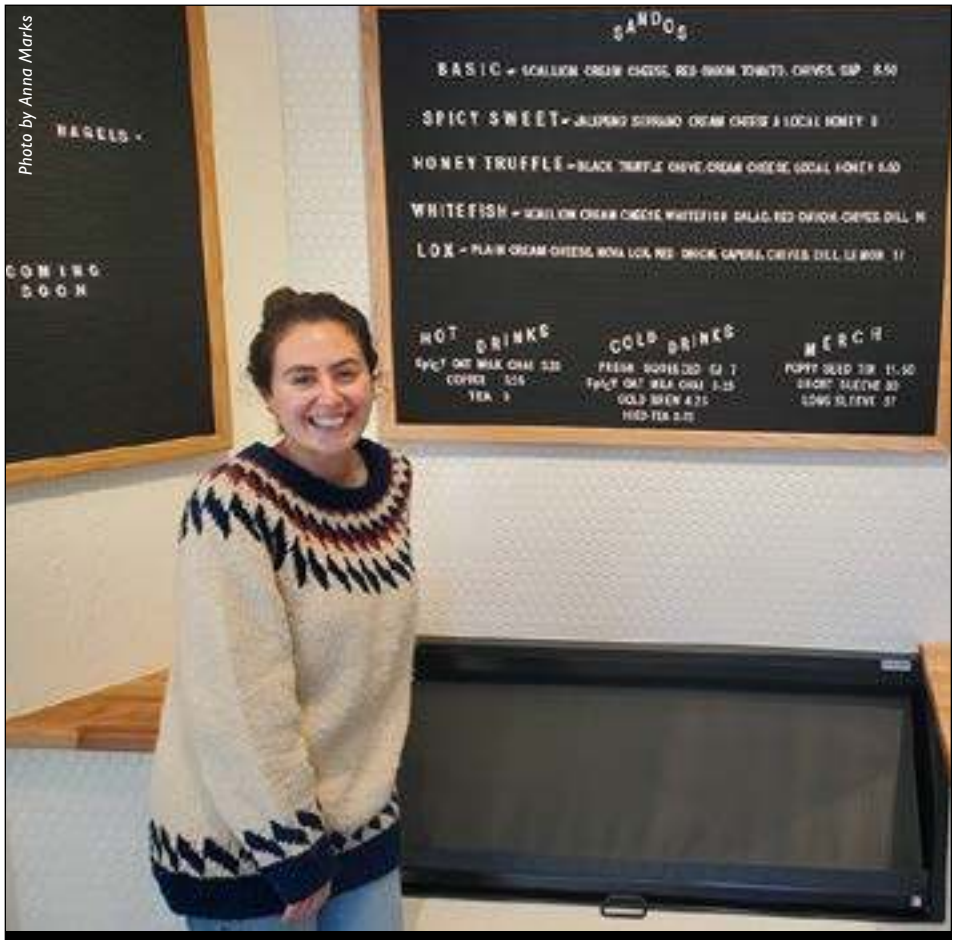
online store to help her pandemic-era business thrive.

In 2020, she quit her job, moved to Rockridge, got into an hourly commercial kitchen, and continued with local deliveries — and the business kept growing. Then, the Grand Lake Farmers Market accepted Poppy Bagels in March of 2021. Customers lined up for bagel sandwiches made to order on the spot.

"With four people we were still understaffed. It was fun but not sustainable," she recalls, noting her time at the shared kitchen often began at 2:45am. "It was a lot of schlepping" like building a restaurant every time they set up for the farmers market.

Kashuk's vision for Poppy is "authentic bagels with a California twist." Local and seasonal ingredients such as beet and poppy seed cream cheese might top a hand-rolled, salt and cracked black pepper bagel. The summer lineup includes combos such as local heirloom tomato, Jalapeno serrano cream cheese topped with local honey, and salmon roe with cucumber. Organic flour and award-winning Sierra Nevada cream cheese reflect Poppy's dedication to sustainability.

A brick-and-mortar bagel shop would allow for more baking flexibility and week-long community connections. With coaching from the S.F. Renaissance Center and a business plan, Kashuk raised enough funding from several sources: $150,000 via SMBX; friends, family, her own savings; a grant; and a no-interest loan through the Hebrew Free loan program.



Owner Reesa Kashuk adds a California flair to New York style bagels.

More important than local, organic, seasonal, or even expansion, is Kashuk's goal to be part of the fabric of the community. Think farmer's market vibe in a bagel shop experience. She looks forward to seeing regulars and knowing their "usual" order.

Beverages include ethically-sourced medium-roast drip coffee from Kashuk's friend at Superlost in New York, teas, a spicy oat milk chai, and fresh squeezed OJ. Indoor seating includes 16 stools.

Follow @poppy_bagels on Instagram for hours and updates. Mention Rockridge News to get a free coffee with a $10 purchase during February.

Susie Wyshak is a local real estate agent and nationwide bagel obsessive; she recalls the day Noah's opened. ■

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Rockridge Has its Own 'Kennedy Compound'

by Judith Doner Berne

eyes on Rockridge

The Kennedy Compound, made famous during the Camelot Era, consists of three houses on six acres of waterfront property in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. But, perhaps, three consecutive houses along Auburn Street and one down the block, owned by **Norma Wynn** and her family, can be viewed as Rockridge's version of the Kennedys' campus.

"It's all the relationship with the neighbors" and a willingness to make major changes to the interiors that allowed us to live next to each other, explained Wynn. "Each house had serious issues."

Wynn, who turned 92 on January 17, and her husband **Jimmy Wynn** moved into the house next door to her daughter and son-in-law, Laurie Williams and Allan Zabel, and their three daughters, Rebecca, Naomi, and Hawa, 20 years ago.

At the time, Norma recalls, her daughter was appalled at the state of the house's interior. "Luckily, Laurie has a lot of creative imagination, and her father-in-law was a builder."

Granddaughter **Rebecca Zabel**, now a Kaiser pediatrician, and her husband, **Tim Mulshine**, bought the house on the other side of Norma seven years ago where they are raising Kieran, age 6, and Emmett, age 2, two of Norma's three great-grandchildren.

"I was pretty young when my grandmother moved next door," Rebecca said. "So, I grew up with a multigenerational family among a lot of supportive adults. I wanted that for my kids." A bonus is that her in-laws live only a mile away.

Another granddaughter, **Naomi Zabel**, and her husband lived down the block for a time but needed more space. That house is now a rental. And **Hawa Zabel**, her adopted granddaughter from Sierra Leone, is currently living in the ADU in back of Wynn's house.

"They (all three families) are all great neighbors," said **Judy Weiss**, who with her husband, **Stuart Swiedler**, has lived across the street for 30 years. "Norma's remarkable. She's physically very active, has always got projects going on… and is such a good cook."

Wynn, a native New Yorker, was born in the Bronx and grew up in Manhattan where her dad had a candy store in the days when "he didn't want my mother to work." After graduating from Hunter College, she married and had two children, Laurie (as mentioned above) and **Gary Williams**, who are both attorneys. She divorced and remarried **Jimmy Wynn**, who died in 2012.

While getting her master's in education at Hofstra College, she lived and worked as a full-time reading teacher on Long Island. She tells a sweet story involving Jimmy, who liked to fish, coming home with more mackerel than they could possibly eat.

"Take them to school," she recounted him saying. "Give everybody a fish." Each of her 20 fellow teachers went home that day with a newspaper-wrapped fish.

The couple first retired to Orlando, Florida, but then followed her children to the Bay Area (Gary and his family now live in Palo Alto). Norma joined the Claremont and then the

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page





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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

Chabot Canyon Racquet Club, where she plays tennis twice a week. She has been playing tennis since she took it as an undergraduate physical education class in college.

"We call her the captain of the Monday game," said **George Krevsky**, a Rockridge resident who regularly plays doubles with and against Norma. Not only does she organize the game, but "she's certainly the best player on the court," he said. As someone who is 92, "she sets the bar very high."

Norma's routine also includes regular Canasta games, hour-long walks at least twice a week, often at Lake Temescal, and shorter neighborhood walks — sometimes with a family member and the family dog, a Jack Russell mix named Luci. She has a weekly appointment with a personal trainer and an after-school (Chabot Elementary) date with Kieran Mondays and Thursdays, where "we do puzzles, we play cards."

"It's hard to believe that so many people aren't paying attention. The possibility of losing your democracy is something you really have to think about."

Yet, she is forthright about the fact that "old age is difficult. I can't believe I got this old," she said with a wistful smile. She finds the world "more frightening now than even during World War II when my brother went off to war. It's hard to believe that so many people aren't paying attention. The possibility of losing your democracy is something you really have to think about."

Her New Year's wish was for good health as she continues to take many precautions to evade Covid. Indeed, the Covid lockdown further cemented their family ties. "My daughter and her husband began eating dinner with me every night," which continues to this day. "We share the cooking." And Norma re-equipped her pristine backyard with extra umbrellas, heaters, and a fire pit so family, and even her Canasta group, could comfortably gather out-of-doors. "We did a lot of outside entertaining."



Photo by Judy Berne

Norma Wynn (front right), daughter Laurie Williams (front left), and granddaughters Hawa Zabel (back left) and Rebecca Zabel live within an arm's reach of one another.

Even when Laurie and Allan travel, as they did to Patagonia in December, "she calls daily, and a grandchild is assigned to me every day. I'm getting a lot of attention." And not content with front door access, a future project is to connect all three of their backyards.

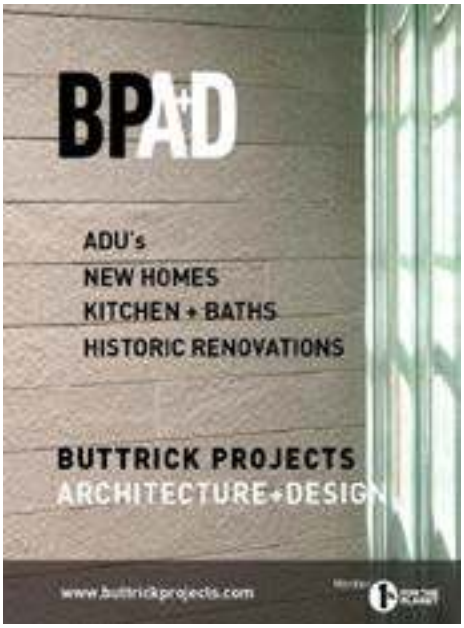
"Her family really does take care of her," said Elaine, who was a caregiver for Norma's husband for several years. The two became "life-long friends" and walking buddies. "Norma is an amazing, wonderful person," Elaine said. "She's taught me so much about life, giving, and generosity."

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









Chabot Elementary Annual Auction & Gala

by Lily Martins & Shaudi Bazzaz

New Year's is over but don't put away the sequins and glitter. Chabot Elementary is holding its annual Auction & Gala on **Saturday, March 25, at The Bridge Yard in Oakland**, where we will teleport to the glamorous '70s.

It's donations big and small from the community that make the Auction & Gala special every year — and this event is Chabot's biggest spring fundraiser. All money raised supports enrichment education including art, music, media, and the library, as well as student support for small group specialists and equity and inclusion programming. This year, they anticipate district-wide budget cuts that make the generosity of the community particularly essential.

How can you help? Do you have a talent or trade like sewing or woodworking that you're willing to offer up for the Auction? Do you have access to a vacation home or Airbnb that could be donated for a weekend getaway? Many local merchants have already contributed as it's a great way to promote your business while supporting local public schools.

Are you a business owner who can donate a special item or service? Visit chabotelementary.org/pta/auction_gala/ or email auction@chabotelementary.org to have your company highlighted as an official sponsor of the auction. ■

Event Announcement:



Rockridge resident **Collin Pine** will be reading from his book, *The Garden Next Door,* at the Ruth Bancroft Garden & Nursery during the annual Pollinator and Friends Day festivities on Saturday, April 8th. To hear more about Pine's upcoming events, follow him on Instagram @collin.pine. ■

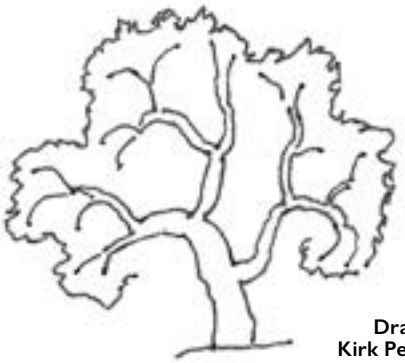
LOOK AROUND

Sycamores

by Kirk Peterson

Sycamore trees (also called "plane trees") grow across North America and Eurasia. In 17th c. England a natural hybrid between *Platanus acerifolia* (eastern US and Canada) and *Platanus orientalis* (Balkans to Iran) produced the world's most commonly planted street tree; the London Plane. There's one in front of my office near College Avenue and Broadway, and they are all over town.

The California sycamore, *P. racemosa* (see below), grows mostly in our coast range canyons and bottomlands, from here into Baja. Old specimens can have a very picturesque broad form, like one located on Stanford University's campus that measures over 10 feet in circumference. There are two young ones located on the west side of the 5100 block of Telegraph.



Drawings/ Kirk Peterson

Sycamores can live for centuries and tolerate urban pollution, heat, and heavy pruning. Weathered or soot-stained bark flakes off continuously to reveal cream-colored new bark.



Sycamore leaves are large and have five lobes, rather like maple (acer) leaves, and turn yellow, orange, or brown before dropping in the fall. The large round seeds hang from branches, two or three to a stem. As the climate get warmer, the sycamore will help keep us cool. ■

Sign Up Now: Ride for a Reason Supports Public Schools in Oakland and Alameda

The 15th Annual Event Takes Place on April 22, 2023



Emerson PTA President Edward Frank with a check from last year's ride.

Since 2009, parents, students, teachers and community members have ridden from Oakland Technical High School to the State Capitol building in Sacramento to support public education. The bike ride began as a protest against the deep budget cuts to Oakland Unified School District and all California public schools during the Great Recession.

Ride for a Reason has since grown to include hundreds of riders and has raised close to $1.5 million for 12 public schools in Oakland and Alameda. Last year's ride was a record-breaking event with more than 350 riders participating and raising close to $230,000.

Despite recent increases in state funding, our public schools still face critical budgetary challenges, not only for enrichment programs but also to support basic needs. All our participating schools serve students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and many have very limited fundraising capabilities. Beneficiary schools include local schools Emerson Elementary, Claremont Middle, and Oakland Tech and Oakland International High Schools. The schools use funds for library books, sports equipment, after-school programs, science equipment, and staff salaries for counselors, librarians, and reading specialists.

The event is staffed by close to 75 volunteers, and after expenses are covered, 100 percent of the proceeds go directly to the schools. Riders can choose fully supported rides of distances of 45, 68 or 109 miles (for the shorter rides, cyclists take a bus to the starting point). For additional information or to sign up, please visit: https://rideforareason.weebly.com/.

To join the course, volunteer, or for more info, please email Jessica de Jesus at R4RSchools1@gmail.com. ■

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Red Cross Blood Donation Center Now Open

The Red Cross Blood and Platelet Donation Center opened on Tuesday, January 10, at 5450 College Avenue in Oakland. The existing Oakland Red Cross Blood, Platelet, and Plasma Donation Center located at 6230 Claremont Avenue will remain open on a modified schedule until later this year when blood collections will cease and additional days of operation will be added to the College Avenue location.

The Red Cross is following FDA blood donation eligibility guidance for those who've received a Covid-19 vaccination. If you've received one or more of these vaccines, bring the vaccine card to your next donation. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are also required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization. For additional information, visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross. ■

Rockridge Library Needs Teens, Now

by Carol Kasparek

Librarians are so smart, they know that to make the public library more welcoming to teenagers, their best move is to ask teenagers what would make them feel welcome — behold the Teen Advisory Board.

Every Oakland Public Library (OPL) location has a designated space for teens. Larger branches, like the Rockridge branch, have a Teen Librarian and formal process for teens to regularly contribute to library operations. The Rockridge Teen Advisory Board (TAB) meets monthly to bring people together to support each other in their learning, plan programs for other teens, and advise leadership on the needs and interests of younger visitors.

Sharon McKellar is the Supervisor for Teen Services for the OPL system. The teen focus began 18 years ago for the purpose of "supporting teens in their own development," according to McKellar. Participation in the TAB "enhances leadership skills as well as skills for success in work and college."

Each location creates events and programs for its community. The OPL website lists special events and programs throughout the system. Some groups have made bracelets for a nonprofit while others have formed activist groups for civic engagement. TABs are not directly involved in the selection process, however their recommendations "are taken very seriously" by professional librarians.

The Rockridge Branch TAB has created digital content on its website specifically for teens. With Rockridge Teen Librarian **Liz Soskin**, the group has helped design the teen space and developed proficiency in resumé and grant writing. Board games and card games happen on weekdays in the teen space — and watch for craft pop-ups, as well. ■

Rockridge Library's
Teen Advisory Board
has opening for 2023

The **Teen Advisory Board** meets every second Wednesday of the month at 4pm in the TeenZone at the Rockridge Library, located at 5366 College Avenue.

See the Rockridge Library Facebook page or OPL website for application information at https://oaklandlibrary.org/teens/teen-leadership/.





Rockridge Branch Library February Events

For Children

Storytime:
Every Thursday and Saturday; 10:30 am

Read to a Dog:
Every Thursday at 4pm

Chess Club:
Every Wednesday at 4pm

Valentines Making Drop-In:
Tuesday; 2/7, 3:30-5pm

Intergenerational Origami Drop-In Workshop:
Tuesday, 2/21, 3/21; 6:30pm, &
Tuesday, 3/7; 4pm

For Adults

Rockridge Book Club:
Saturday, 2/11; 3:30pm – 4:30pm

Join the Rockridge Book Club every 2nd Saturday for a lively discussion. February's book is *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner. Call (510) 597-5017 for info and a copy of the book.

Check out our new Seed Library. Seed packets are ready and waiting for you to take them home. Bring your extra seeds to share. Questions? Contact us at (510) 597-5017.

Intergenerational Origami. All ages are welcome (see description above).

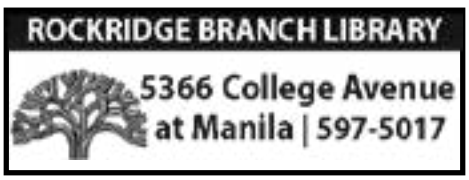
For Teens

Teen Advisory Board:
Wednesday, 2/8 & 3/8; 4-5pm

Join the Rockridge Library Teen Advisory Board (see story on previous page). Every 2nd Wednesday in the TeenZone. New members welcome.

After school, on weekdays:
Pop-up crafts, card games, and board games happen in the TeenZone.

Note: All Oakland libraries closed on Monday, 2/20 for Presidents Day. ■



Learn the Basics at the Junior Carpenters' Club Workshops

by Jack Soares, Friends of the Oakland Tool Lending Library

Want to learn Basic carpentry skills and make a hanging planter, birdhouse, or toolbox in the process? Well, if you're between the ages of 6 and 14, you're in luck. Thanks to the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) and the Friends of the Oakland Tool Lending Library (FOTLL), the Junior Carpenters' Club workshops will be presented on four successive **Tuesdays in March, 4pm to 5:30 pm, at the Rockridge Library.**

Up to 24 Junior Carpenters will learn a bit about the history of tools (fun fact: Homo Habilis, Latin for "handyman," inhabited parts of sub-Saharan Africa from about 1.5 to 2.5 million years ago). The group will also be introduced to some basic hand tools and tool safety.

During the first session, under the watchful eyes of experienced volunteers, budding carpenters will practice using tools by building "Tool Trolls," which are made of corks, with bits of wire as arms and legs, bottle caps may become hats, or crowns and thumb tack eyes may complete the look.

In the second workshop, Junior Carpenters try their hands at a more complex project: a birdhouse. Participants will be given the parts, pre-cut by FOTLL volunteers. Some may decide to stick with the basic design, while others may decide to use their imagination to customize the project, perhaps adding a multi-colored coat of water-based paint.

In the third workshop, participants will construct wooden toys. Inspiration will be drawn from samples shared by FOTLL, and the Junior Carpenters can choose from bins full of wooden blocks, dowels, wooden wheels, nails, screws, and miscellaneous bits and bobs to make cars, boats, airplanes, tops, animals, and all sorts of other things. And then comes the paint option.

During the fourth and final workshop of the Rockridge series, the Junior Carpenters will make their own wooden toolboxes. The concepts taught reveal how interesting and useful things can be made from salvaged and recycled material." Pallets and fence boards that might otherwise have been headed to the landfill are cleaned and cut into parts for toolboxes, birdhouses, wooden toys, and other projects," says a FOTLL volunteer.

FOTLL is recruiting volunteers to help with the Junior Carpenters' Club workshops, and for its first and third Saturdays of the month Tool Sales. Email FriendsoftheOaklandTLL@gmail.com. ■

Four consecutive Tuesdays;
4pm–5:30 pm; 3/7, 3/14, 3/21, & 3/28.

Sign up at the Library's Children's Desk; call (510) 597-5017; or send an email message to esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org.

Class is limited to 24 children, ages 6-14.

Adult partners/volunteers are welcome, and are required for kids under eight years old.



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

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

7:30pm to 8pm:
Neighborhood discussion and 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.

How to Find Homicide Numbers for Oakland

by Karen Ivy, Secretary, Greater Rockridge NCPC

Early in January, a local resident asked me where he could find a daily record of homicides in Oakland, year to date. I suggested he subscribe to the city's Nixle account and get the weekly crime report, but he said he'd had trouble with that and wanted a daily listing. So, I searched Google for homicides in Oakland and got a lot of news articles.

I found a blog that claims to do this, https://oaklandmofo.com/blog/oakland-homicide-count-is-rising. The site flashed a popup asking if I wanted to get emails every time there's a new homicide, and they claim to update it two or three times a week. On January 8, it said 2023 had one homicide (which I think was low as a week later it stated there were two). When the resident tried to subscribe to the blog, he got an error message saying the link was broken.

Oakland Wiki's entry on homicides is not current; the latest annual numbers are for 2021. It says, "The following homicide statistics come from the FBI Uniform Crime Report. Each city is required to submit official crime statistics to the FBI annually. It is often recognized as the 'official' numbers, but one thing to consider is that crime reports and data can change, so these numbers reflect homicide statistics when they were submitted to the FBI for that year." The UCR system was recently replaced and details on the issues this caused are explained in this Time Magazine article: https://time.com/6159812/fbi-crime-stats-data/

A Google search for "Oakland homicide statistics" doesn't even find the City webpage listing weekly crime reports, but it can be found at: OPD Police Citywide Weekly Crime Reports (https://bit.ly/3XJDk8t) This site is handled for Oakland by box.com, which wants you to sign up, but you don't have to do so. The latest citywide weekly crime report I got from Nixle was dated 1/9, but as of January 12, the folder for 2023 was empty.

As reported in the November 2022 *Rockridge News*, since mid-2021 there have been serious delays in making crime reports publicly available. This just looks like more of the same. If you want daily reports on homicides in Oakland, you probably need to compile them yourself from local news reports: try the East Bay Times, or the S.F. Chronicle. Or subscribe to Nixle.com for OPD and they will mail them out promptly.

For meeting details and information, visit the Greater Rockridge NCPC at www.rockridgencpc.com. ■





RN Classifieds

List your 36-word message here for only $22 (phone number counts as one word). Make check payable to RCPC, and write "Rockridge News Classifieds" in the memo line. **The deadline for March is Feb. 16** (available Feb 4). Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. For info, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

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January Sales Dry Up

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
1/6/2023	3	1.5	5918 Taft Ave	$1,449,000	$1,449,000	99	$1,400,000
1/11/2023	3	1	5223 Coronado Ave	$1,049,000	$1,049,000	79	$1,340,000

• Average price per square foot is $1,042.98
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