THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
VOL 38 • NO. 6 • ISSUE NO. 409 • JUNE 3, 2023 CIRCULATION: 5,800 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

Rockridge Residents Unnerved by Increase in Daytime Attacks, Car Break-Ins

by Judith Doner Berne



More than 100 Rockridge residents turned out for a street-side meeting to discuss the recent uptick in neighborhood crime.

Photo: Anna Marks

News that the Oakland Police Department (OPD) arrested nine suspects, ages 12 to 17, for a recent assault and robbery spree that hit Rockridge and 13 other Oakland neighborhoods had to give Rockridge resident **Amanda Karl** some hope. Despite that, as of this writing, it's unclear whether her assailants were among those rounded up.

Karl was out for a walk on an early May morning, holding her newborn baby in a front-facing carrier. At about 8:30am, she was heading up Lawton toward the Hudson Bay Café for a cup of coffee and planning to return a bag of books to the Rockridge Library.

Two teenagers, a boy and a girl,

Eyes on Rockridge, see page 8

Cole Hardware Tenders a Rare, Old-Fashioned Brand of Customer Service

by Skip Fogarty

The public health emergency may be over, but a stroll along College Avenue reveals a few too many empty storefronts.

"Foot traffic and business results along the avenue have been trending downward each of the last three years," reports **Rick Karp**, the second-generation proprietor of Cole Hardware. "Covid triggered a mass migration to online shopping, and that's been a killer for many small businesses."

The original store opened on Cole Street in San Francisco in 1920, hence the name, Cole Hardware. The business was purchased by **David Karp** in 1961. Now overseen by Dave's son Rick, Cole has four locations in the city (the SoMa store on 9th Street closed late last month), plus the College Avenue location that opened in 2014. Rick's son, also named David, is a third-generation owner and serves as company president.

Rick, who worked at the original store as a teenager, tells Cole history this way: "My dad was aiming to retire, but he saw a chance to open a

Cole Hardware, see page 4

A Summary of RCPC's May Town Hall

Home Sharing and Renting Units to Essential Workers

by Casey Farmer, Chair, RCPC Board of Directors

On Monday, May 15, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) hosted a virtual Town Hall about home-sharing services and programs which support homeowners seeking to rent out a bedroom or ADU. This Town Hall is part of an RCPC series on the topic of housing. Below is a summary of the programs discussed (see Rockridge.org for links to slides and video).

Oakland Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program



Mission: To assure the availability of quality housing for low-income persons and to promote the civic involvement and economic self-sufficiency of residents and to further the expansion of affordable housing within Oakland.

How it works: Property owners get their properties approved (adhering to Housing Quality Standards) and execute a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with Oakland Housing Authority (OHA). A large portion of the rent is paid directly by OHA to the property owner.

RCPC May Town Hall, see next page

RCPC May Town Hall *continued from front page*

What's included: housing inspection, platform to connect with Housing Choice Voucher participants, and ongoing technical assistance.

Service fees: NO cost to landlord or prospective tenant.

Bonuses:

• Up to $2,250 in apartment repair reimbursement in order for the unit to meet Housing Quality Standards; paid after the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract is executed.

• $1,000 leasing bonus (once lease is signed with tenant and HAP contract is executed with the OHA).

• Re-rent bonuses for landlords who re-rent to new participants after a move-out (two months of OHA rental assistance is paid if re-rented to a Housing Choice Voucher holder within six months).

Website: http://www.oakha.org/PropertyOwners/Pages/Becoming-a-Section-8-Landlord.aspx.

Contact: Teela Carpenter, Assistant Director of Leased Housing at TCarpenter@oakha.org.

Home Match

front porch Home Match CREATING COMMUNITY

Mission: Building community, one home at a time.

Home Match is a shared housing program that provides free, personalized services in the Bay Area.

How it works: Home matching — When two or more people live under the same roof and share common living areas such as a kitchen.

• Share your home: Turn an available room in your home into an opportunity to earn income, save money, and create new social connections. Your home can make all the difference to a fellow community-member facing a difficult housing market.

• Find your home: Benefit from an affordable home in the community you love. As a supportive homemate, you can often empower people who wish to age-in-place, optionally helping with household activities in exchange for a small reduction in rent (note: caretaking is not permitted).

What's included: Housing inspection, intake process, background checks, sample lease agreement, income verification, providing homeowners with potential match tenants (selection is solely made by the participants) and ongoing support.

Service fees: NO cost to home provider or home seeker.

Website: https://frontporch.net/community-services.

Contact Rachel Matthews, Program Manager at RAMatthews@frontporch.net.

TRiO Plus (Teachers Rooted in Oakland Plus)

TRiO Plus

Mission: Confronting educational inequity by securing housing that is more affordable for Oakland teachers so our kids stop paying the price for our broken housing system. We believe a marketplace for discounted housing can institutionalize affordable housing not only for educators, but also other underpaid public employees, and not just in Oakland, but statewide. So we built it: The TRiO Plus Affordable Housing Marketplace.

How it works: Property owners connect with staff for a briefing and housing inspection, then list their property on the TRiO Plus Marketplace, then match with teachers seeking housing. Ongoing technical assistance is available.

Service fees: NO cost to landlord or teachers.

Website: https://www.trioplus.org/

Contact: Andrew@Trioplus.org for property owner assistance. ■

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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All letters must be limited to 350 words and are published at the discretion of the RCPC. 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.**

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

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Celebrate Summer at Rock-N-Stroll

by Jody Coley, Rockridge District Association

This summer, Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll continues its free live music, store sales, and fun-filled themes on the second Saturday of each month along College Avenue. The events take place between Noon-4pm and showcase local bands as well as dozens of attractions for both adults and kids.



Rockridge Market Hall celebrated Bastille Day with cheese tastings at last year's event.

At Rock-N-Stroll's **Taste of Rockridge event on Saturday, June 10**, visitors can sample foods and beverages, enjoy pop-up vendors, and find specials for dining out at select restaurants and cafes. For example, Belly (with balloons for kids) will have free taco samples, and several bars will offer tastings including The Golden Squirrel Pub's margarita sampler. Market Hall Foods will hand out samples of delicious cheese, charcuterie, prepared dishes from their kitchen, and Spanish specialty products — all available for sale.

Even retailers are getting into the theme… The DG Collective is hosting a Sip 'n Shop with wine and snacks and an in-store raffle for gift certificates to a local business. And the new Soma Art + Space will be hosting a band called Spill the Wine. The Yoni Temple will host pop-up vendor From Fayeeza with high-tea boxes, picnic boxes, and creative pastries and sweets. And you won't want to miss Cole Hardware's storewide sale of 20 percent off, or the Rockridge Library's "Kids Go Mandarin" Storytime for kids ages 1 to 6 at 10:30am.

Art Bizarre

Coming on July 8th, Rock-N-Stroll once again brings neighborhood and local artists to the sidewalks and shops of College Avenue for an Art Bizarre — showcasing creative works to view and for sale. This art event is the brainchild of Rockridge resident, Marcy Reed.

"In my wedding vows, our officiant talked about 'gravity,' about bringing the people into your life that give it weight, depth, and substance, and about actively building the community in which you want to live. I notice gravity daily in our neighborhood's beautiful plants and yards, in the little libraries full of art and books, in the gifting of garden bounty across fences, and in the coffee and home-baked goods alongside stories shared on porch steps.

"As an event producer and theatrical stage manager who is passionately rooted in this neighborhood, I felt compelled to volunteer with the Rockridge District Association and to help bring the gravity seen in our streets every day. It is an exciting opportunity to uplift our community and let it shine. I can't wait to see you there," said Reed.

Market Hall Foods commemorates Bastille Day with a big, French-themed food festival and samples of a large spread of French cheeses, charcuterie, and prepared foods from their kitchen and bakery — plus French pantry items for the home cook.

Once again, the Rockridge Library will host a special Storytime for all ages, and a Drag Queen Storytime with Per Sia, at 10:30am. And, the new Love + Chocolate shop will be celebrating its soft opening after months of teasing us with free samples (see article on page 14).

The Rockridge District Association is currently accepting applications for artist pop-ups. The deadline is June 10. All ages are welcome to showcase their visual art. For info and details, visit www.RockridgeDistrict.com. ■

***July 8:** Art Bizarre*
***August 12:** Pup Promenade*
***September 9:** Scavenger Hunt*
***October 14:** Fall Fest*

All events are free, all ages are welcome. Visit RockridgeDistrict.com for schedule.



Cole Hardware, from front page

second location in the city." Rick was in grad school, but his father decided to leave the decision about expanding the business to him — provided he'd come help run things. "So that's how I got roped into the hardware business. It's been 50-some years now."

About the Rockridge location, Karp says: "We never intended to cross the Bridge, but we were pitched a lease opportunity that we couldn't pass up. The business district association and a community-minded landlord convinced us that a hardware store would be a great addition to the neighborhood. So, we dove in."

Neighbor **Emma Bilsky** recently discovered the store. "We just moved to the area and Cole has already become a staple for us. They carry everything and have such a neighborly vibe. We're big fans."

Karp says the store is "holding up pretty well" compared to their other locations. But sustaining their unique set of customer services and personable staff is threatened by declining in-person shopping. That's a shame because Cole offers a rare, old-fashioned brand of service.

"We hire smiles," Karp explains. "We look for friendly, conversational folks." Several of the 20-some Oakland employees have been there since the store opened. "We encourage what I call 'positive dinnertime conversation' with our customers. We want everyone who comes in to walk out happy."

Indeed, that seems to be happening. Seeking testimonials about Cole on Nextdoor and Facebook, well over 100 replies came back and 98 percent were glowing positive reviews.



Photo: Cole Hardware

Cole associates Dave, Tamara and Thirsel gather under founder Dave's favorite motto.

Regular customer **Carrie Sullivan** says, "I've been shopping at Cole Hardware since I moved to the Bay Area almost 30 years ago. It's the best. Fantastic, personalized service, great selection, always friendly and welcoming."

Speaking to staffers, one gets the sense they support one another, enjoy their jobs, care about customers, and typically stay with the company for years. (Thank you, Jonathan, Kia, and Dave.) It probably helps that the company offers full benefits to its associates.

Store manager **Leo Sepulveda** started as a cashier at the Mission Street store in the city when he was in high school 14 years ago. "It's a great company and provided a career path for me. I love the camaraderie and everyone I work with."

Sepulveda outlined some of Cole's hidden perks that might surprise you: Happy hours with wine and chocolate. Sidewalk barbeques. Knife sharpening. Key cutting. Paint matching. "We're also part of the Happy Returns program," says Sepulveda. "Customers can drop off their returns to other retailers and we pack and ship it."

Another neighbor, **Gloria Valoris**, carries on about Cole's services. "It's a fascinating store with an eclectic stock, but it's so much more. Their staff must be the best-trained group I've encountered — anywhere." She also noted that Cole offers disaster preparedness resources and referrals to local contractors, and will recycle batteries, light bulbs, and old paint.

Adding even more value to Cole's business model is their Nonprofit of the Month program. Customers can choose to make micro-donations to selected organizations by allowing cashiers to round up their purchases to the nearest dollar.

How do they choose recipients? Karp explains, "We get input from everyone, and tend toward environmental causes and pet-related agencies. It maybe amounts to a few thousand dollars a month, but for a small nonprofit that can be a significant boost."

Looking ahead, Karp says: "If we can convince more folks to quit scrolling on the couch and start strolling into our stores, we'll be OK." Please clip their generous coupon and give the Cole team a chance to exceed your expectations — and bring your dog in for a treat!

Skip Fogarty is a freelance writer and editor who's lived in Rockridge for 25 years. Got a story idea for Skip? Email editor@rockridgenews.org. ■



RCPC

Prominent Rockridge Development Site for Sale

by Ken Rich, RCPC Land Use Chair

A large piece of land located in the center of our community at 6230 Claremont Avenue has come on the market. This former American Red Cross location, directly across Claremont Avenue from Safeway, is about one acre in size, and the site currently includes an existing building with offices, including medical, and a surface parking lot.

The offering touts residential as the most likely use, saying, "The site benefits from being both close enough and far away from the U.C. Berkeley campus to attract a multitude of renters." Current zoning permits "rooming units" which essentially describe dormitory housing, along with more traditional apartments.

The site certainly does seem to offer an opportunity for housing development in the heart of the community in a transit-rich location. It will be interesting to watch the progress of this sale, and the Rockridge Community Planning Council will monitor it closely and stay abreast of input from the community.

I would note that while most traditional residential development projects don't "pencil out" financially at the moment, a student housing project, if that is what is ultimately proposed, may have better economics because student housing tends to be more densely occupied, providing more rental income per square foot for the developer as compared to traditional apartments. Stay tuned. ■

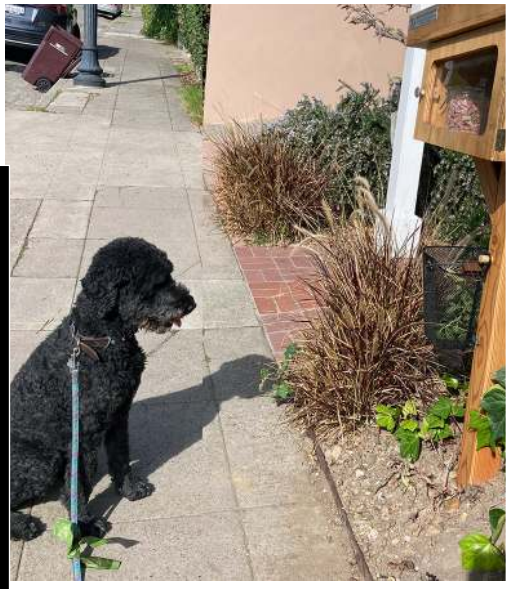
Land Use Committee Meeting

RCPC's Land Use Committee Meeting will be held:

Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 7:30pm, via Zoom.

The meeting is open to the public.

Use Zoom link: bit.ly/3c0r6X0
or email: landuse@rockridge.org.



This is Olive, a four-year-old labradoodle. She is an old soul. This is her favorite library for her studies. Olive loves popcorn, she's happy to eat anything given to her, but her favorite is popcorn. You can find Olive searching for libraries, going to Lake Temescal, and playing with her family. She loves calling Rockridge her home.

editor@rockridge.org.







Deep Medicine Circle Rooftop Farm Cultivates Food Justice

by Judith Doner Berne

If you have a couple of hours and want to help combat food insecurity, you could volunteer to plant, mulch, weed, transplant, or harvest — whatever is needed — at the Deep Medicine Circle (DMC) Rooftop Medicine Farm. It grows atop the Logan residential/retail building at 51st and Telegraph, anchored by, but not affiliated with Whole Foods Market.

Volunteering is pretty much the only way to see this inspirational, one-acre roof farm with expansive views east over Rockridge, south to downtown Oakland, and west to San Francisco. It's not a public garden, but it fulfills a very public purpose: growing healthy food that is donated and delivered to area food hubs and partner agencies serving minorities in Oakland and San Francisco.

In Oakland, that includes POOR Magazine's Sliding Scale Café in East Oakland, Moms 4 Housing and People's Programs in West Oakland, and the UCSF Children's Hospital Food Farmacy (located just down the street). It also donates to Wahpepah's Kitchen at the Fruitvale BART Plaza, which specializes in indigenous cuisine.

The Deep Medicine Circle views farming as medicine. That's its reason for being, according to founder, **Rupa Marya**, a UCSF physician, activist, writer, mother, and composer. Her husband, **Ben Fahrer**, a farmer and educator, designed the roof-top garden. The farming program, they say, "reframes farmers as ecological stewards whose care directly supports human and planetary health."

"Our purpose is to address food insecurity and heal the land," says farm harvest manager **Meredith Song**. The agency's two farms — this one an urban rooftop, and the other 38 acres in rural San Gregorio — are both located in territories once held by indigenous peoples.

Both sites are staffed by farmers whose practice of caring for soil, people, seeds, and water is led and informed by people impacted by colonialism, according to DMC. "The organic food grown through these practices is liberated from the market economy to address the manufactured crisis of hunger, which was unknown in these territories prior to colonization."

Up on the roof, row upon row of what appear to be perfectly planted organic vegetables emerge from the soil in two long, rectangular plots that span either side of the building's rooftop. Song recited their extensive list of crops: lettuces, mustard greens, chard, kale, spinach, bok choy, cabbages, tomatoes, peppers, and squash. She followed with the root crops: turnips, beets, carrots, leeks, scallions, and shallots. Herbs are grown as well. Although they concentrate on vegetables, a strawberry patch broke that barrier. "Last year we tried watermelon. It did surprisingly well."

Wednesdays are harvest days, and in spring that means 100 to 300 pounds of the garden's bounty are delivered to its food partners, says Song. In summer and fall, that bounty increases to between 500 to 800 pounds. The harvesting and

Rooftop Farm, see next page





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The Rooftop Medicine Farm features row upon row of organic veggies and herbs as soil appears to meet sky. *Photos: Judy Berne*



"It's a beautiful view," says farm co-manager Meredith Song, with Rockridge and the Oakland Hills as her backdrop.

Rooftop Farm, from previous page

distribution are the rewards for Song, field manager **Victoria Chavez**, and two full-time crew members.

"A lot of people who volunteer here live close by," says Song. "We also hold volunteer events for companies. We've hosted Apple employees a couple of times."

Song, who lives close enough to the garden to walk to work, is a native Minnesotan who got involved in food justice during her college days, then worked at several Midwestern farms. Part of her job is supervising the volunteers. **Claire Elizondo**, a DeAnza Community College student who arrived from Sunnyvale, was there for credit toward her political science class. **Tom Boisvert**, a techie who recently moved from San Francisco to take a job in Emeryville, didn't have as far to come. "I live in the building. I literally came right upstairs. I don't even miss San Francisco," he says. "Plus, I can see it from here."

Public volunteer hours are Thursdays from 1pm to 4 pm. To sign-up for the seven spots available each week, visit their website at www.DeepMedicineCircle.com. ■



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eyes on Rockridge

Continued from front page

came up from behind and knocked Karl to the ground. When she attempted to stand, they grabbed her purse, containing her credit cards, phone, and the bag of books. As they held something up near her face, "I thought it was a gun," Karl said. It turned out to be a pink pepper sprayer which, luckily, malfunctioned. It would have affected her baby as well. "I'm horrified whenever I think of it. I didn't struggle," Karl said. "The baby slept through it." But as the teens took off, running toward Clifton, she began to scream.

"I heard screams outside," said **Celia Camargo**, who had just walked back from a swim in the Temescal Pool. "Are you okay?" she asked as she brought Karl inside. "I just wanted to know what I could do for her."

Karl borrowed a phone to call her husband, at home with their preschooler. Camargo then drove her home. "I'm pregnant right now," Camargo said. "It's still jarring. I'm going to be more careful. My husband ordered pepper spray."

What further infuriates Karl is that the assailants used her credit cards for fast food, one order delivered by DoorDash. "I'm focused on two individuals willing to pepper spray a three-week-old baby so they can eat from Taco Bell and McDonalds (on Telegraph)."

"It was reckless," said Karl, an attorney who represents employees, including sexual assault survivors, against business corporations. "There needs to be some accountability."

She's grateful to supportive neighbors and the OPD officer, who came within a half hour. "I felt taken care of," she said. But it took persistence to re-contact OPD to pass on the credit card information that she still hopes will tie them to the assault.

You might think that incident triggered the neighborhood meeting initiated by **Nancy Morton** at the corner of Manila and Clifton the next night. Or, maybe it was the assault and robbery of a young couple near that very intersection the previous Sunday afternoon, when they were reportedly jumped by four people in two cars.

But Morton, with her neighbor **Vennessa Hasten**, had already decided to call a meeting, influenced by other reports of local crimes that were multiplying on Nextdoor. "We as citizens should be informed. We're not getting an accurate picture." They hoped for solutions since "We've got a lot of smart people in our neighborhood."

"These are all your neighbors," she told the crowd of more than 100 residents who showed up despite the raw weather (for the Bay Area) and a Warriors playoff game that evening. "In the end that's what we've got — each other. The City and police can't keep us safe, so we need to come up with solutions we can present to the City."

Neighbors came because they said they want to feel secure in their homes, to park their cars without fear of a break-in, and to walk Rockridge streets in safety. As one resident put it: "It's like a candy shop right now." Although she was referring to the car break-ins, it could just as easily apply to the assaults and robberies. Both types of crime continue to plague Rockridge, along with other parts of Oakland, as of this writing.

According to sentiments expressed, added security will require more 911 operators to answer calls as they come in; more immediate police response to ongoing crimes; and an ongoing police presence, both in the neighborhood and along College Avenue.

Several people spoke about the importance of pressing the district attorney to implement restorative justice. That would require juveniles, who often aren't prosecuted, to face the person(s) they assaulted, provided the victim(s) agree.

Two veteran OPD officers, Rockridge business district operations manager **Chris Jackson**, and District 1 Councilman **Dan Kalb** spoke and answered questions. Each stressed the importance of reporting every crime since police are assigned to neighborhoods based on those statistics.

Kalb noted Oakland's difficulties in hiring and retaining 911 operators and recruiting and training more police, but he said he would suggest to OPD that police sit in their cars in the

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page

Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 7pm, in the Rockridge Library's upstairs conference room. It will be a hybrid meeting, so those who prefer to attend remotely can do so.

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

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


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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

neighborhood while writing up their daily reports. He dismissed one resident's proposal that the current private patrol be armed. "I'm against armed security. It can have unintended consequences."

"I found the meeting insightful and revealing," said **Beth Johnke**. "I was not aware of the muggings. I thought we were meeting because of the broken car windows and catalytic converter thefts. So, it was eye-opening and disturbing to me — especially since I often walk by myself."

Morton is working on forming neighborhood committees to answer the prevailing question: "What can we do now and go about getting it?" But along Boyd Avenue, one block has already acted. "We've had a lot of car break-ins and catalytic converters stolen," **Claudia Carlson** said. "It's escalated and now they are taking our insurance and registration information," which she fears may be used for identity theft.

At the block meeting, neighbors agreed to take common-sense measures such as turning on porch lights, installing cameras, and reporting every crime. They created a code word, Carlson said, to say if someone needs to run to the nearest house in case of trouble. And it was suggested that, "If you see something happening from your house, make a bunch of noise." They also have created a website to match any neighbor who wants an escort, to College Avenue for instance, with someone who can walk them there and back — and they are investigating hiring a security service for their block.

By coincidence, as Carlson was walking to her house, "loaded with groceries from Trader Joe's, a woman stopped me on the street. 'You should be careful,' the woman warned." It turned out to be Karl, who doesn't want others to experience what happened to her. "Most days," Carlson said, "I go walking at 6am. I carry a personal alarm on a lanyard and pepper spray in my pocket." ■

Safety Tips from Neighbors

Report ALL crimes. High-crime areas get more attention from the police.

Emergency Numbers:
Call 911 from cell
Call (510) 777-3211 from landline

Non-Emergencies, call (510) 777-3333

Fire & Medical Emergencies: (510) 444-1616

• Carry pepper spray and a whistle (or other loud noise device) at all times. Cole Hardware on College has ordered more whistles and pepper spray (thank you, Brooke Levin).

• Leave your porch lights on when you go out, or, if at home, sit on your porch and stay alert. If you hear a whistle, respond by making lots of noise or intervening in any way you can while staying safe.

• Stay alert while walking in the neighborhood — don't wear earbuds or talk on the phone. Don't wear lots of bling. Leave your purse at home and keep personal items in deep, preferably hidden, pockets. Keep an expired credit card and a minimum amount of cash on hand to give to any potential mugger.

Vennessa Hasten compiled a list of those who signed up at the May 4th gathering at the corner of Miles and Clifton. To get on this list and receive further information, register with NorthOaklandNeighbors@gmail.com. ■

Ten Years On: "Safer Rockridge" Needs Your Help

by Josh Aycock

In September 2013, a brazen mugging of 20 people standing at the casual carpool line took place at Hudson and Claremont. This event catalyzed a grassroots campaign that led to online crowdfunding by 650 residents, and the creation of the local nonprofit Safer Rockridge. The organization collects donations to fund a private patrol service and to support public safety in the neighborhood. Currently, the organization draws financial support from 200 households (most donations are at the suggested $30/month level) as well as area businesses.

The patrols, which are unarmed, aim to provide a visible presence that deters crime, and do not racially profile. They primarily serve as "eyes and ears" but have enabled several arrests and helped residents disrupt or de-escalate crimes in progress.

A statistical analysis conducted by economist and Safer Rockridge founder **Paul Liu** found that the patrols decreased robberies and burglaries by as much as 30 percent.

Since 2018, Safer Rockridge has partnered with Intervention Group, Inc. (IGI), a local, African American-owned business serving many neighborhoods in Oakland. IGI uses highly visible, branded, black patrol vehicles staffed by unarmed professionals with experience in neighborhood patrolling.

Any neighbor within the patrol area (contributor or not) can call the IGI dispatch center 24/7/365 at (877) 272-8765 to request that a vehicle be dispatched to provide support. Financially contributing members can access additional services including vacation watch (extra attention while you travel), home alarm response (IGI serves as the initial point of contact), and occasional escort (e.g., BART to home during patrol hours, currently Mon-Fri, 3pm to 10pm).

Safer Rockridge is in urgent need of volunteers and financial support to respond to the historically high levels of crime in the neighborhood. Its board has received considerable feedback since May 1st indicating that the community wants Safer Rockridge to play a larger role. In response, the nonprofit would like to expand patrol hours, and potentially, to help coordinate with neighborhood watch groups; however, the board needs more support to make that happen and is asking volunteers and financial contributors to step forward.

Josh Aycock is a local resident, father, and volunteer board member at Safer Rockridge. For information, on how to contribute, volunteer, or provide feedback, please visit www.saferrockridge.org or email saferrockridge@gmail.com. ■

Pat Nolan — A Life Across the Decades

By Edward Guthmann

For 35 years, I had the best next-door neighbor on Earth. **Pat Nolan**, who died February 18 at the age of 91, was one of the gentlest, most generous people I've ever known. Always a smile, a friendly wave and a chuckle. Each Christmas she'd make me a Christmas wreath for my front door and share some holiday desserts she'd baked. If my washing machine broke down, she'd volunteer hers — and always told me that in doing so she felt a lot better.

Pat moved to 5426 Shafter Avenue in 1960, and for three years before that she and her husband, Bud, rented an apartment in the fourplex next door. Sixty-six years on the same block.

Bud, who died in 2005, could top that: He was born in 1930 and grew up around the corner at 5455 Boyd Ave. Except for two years in the Army, he lived his entire life in a one-block radius.

"When Bud was growing up, College Avenue was *the* place," Pat said in a tape-recorded conversation in 2005. "I mean, it was a great place. The only time you went to downtown Oakland to shop was to get school clothes, because everything else you could buy on the Avenue."

Pat and Bud remembered the Key System streetcar that took commuters down Claremont and across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco. They remembered the Chimes Theater where the double bill changed twice a week; the eight-lane bowling alley where East Bay Booksellers is now located; a Woolworth's in the Cole Hardware building; and a U.S. Post Office where Sukko Thai now stands at College and Lawton.

And they remembered the mid-1960s when hundreds of Rockridge and Temescal homes were demolished to make room for the Grove Shafter Freeway and BART tracks.

"It had such a horrendous impact," Pat said. "It was kind of like being in a war zone when they started tearing down the houses. For blocks and blocks, there were just foundations left. The businesses on College Avenue went down the tubes. It was a real feeling of loss."

Hundreds of families fled the neighborhood, many relocating to the Contra Costa suburbs. Only in the late '70s, Pat said, did Rockridge start to thrive and sparkle again. And yet, "There wasn't the variety of shops that there'd been before — bakeries, a stationery store, just kind of homey things. It became more upscale."

Pat was tall, 5'10." She had a soft voice, an easy manner, and a talent for accepting and welcoming people exactly as they are. She was a devout Catholic who sang in the church choir for decades, an excellent cook, an avid reader, and a skilled artist who created custom greeting cards on her computer.

She was born Patricia Havey on May 22, 1931, and raised in St. Paul, MN. She graduated from the University of Minnesota, and in 1953, feeling curious and adventurous, she and a friend took a train and moved to California. They rented an apartment in San Francisco and Pat quickly found work at Capwell's department store in downtown Oakland. That's where she met her husband, Bud.

"I was in women's sportswear and he was in the boys' department," Pat recalled. "I saw this fellow in the employees' lunchroom and I thought, 'I wonder who that is.' And then he finally got up his courage and came over and asked me to go out with him. I said, 'But I live in San Francisco.' And he said, 'That's ok.'"

Pat and Bud were married in 1957 at St. Theresa's Catholic Church,

Pat Nolan, see next page



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Pat and Bud Nolan lived on Shafter Avenue for over 60 years.

Pat Nolan, from previous page

where Bud had been an altar boy in the 1940s. When their son Mike was born in 1961, Pat quit Capwell's and became a full-time mom. She volunteered on school councils and various committees, and organized field trips and events.

"Our house was like a hub when I was growing up," said Mike, who lives today in San Leandro with his wife, Hillary. "There were lots of kids in the neighborhood and my mom thought nothing of loading up the car with 10 kids and taking us all to the beach or Pee Wee golfing."

To a lot of Mike's friends, Pat was like a second mom. "I remember kids would be distressed and come over to our house instead of going home," Mike said. "I realized after a while, 'I guess I've got to share my Mom…'"

She was a person of tremendous faith, Mike said. "That was the core of her existence. She really resonated with the church." Every Sunday, Mary Ellen King, Pat's close friend of 60 years, came by her house and drove Pat to the 10am service at St. Augustine's Catholic Church on Alcatraz Avenue.

"We just had a very loving relationship over many years," Mary Ellen said. "I don't know that people have those kinds of friendships anymore, and I don't know that people live as long as we did."

When I saw the televised 90th birthday tribute to Carol Burnett recently, it occurred to me, not for the first time, that Pat resembled Carol Burnett. She wasn't funny that way, but she looked a tad like Carol and had the same unaffected air and lack of pretension — a genuine warmth and essential goodness.

Pat Nolan, a true gem. ■

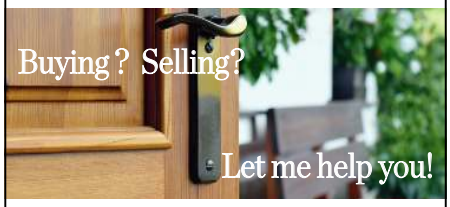


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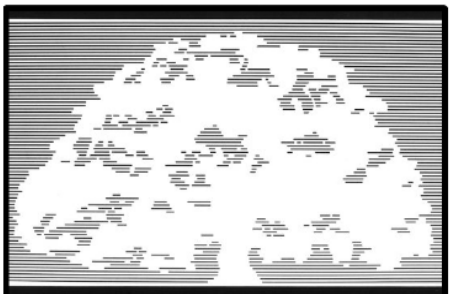
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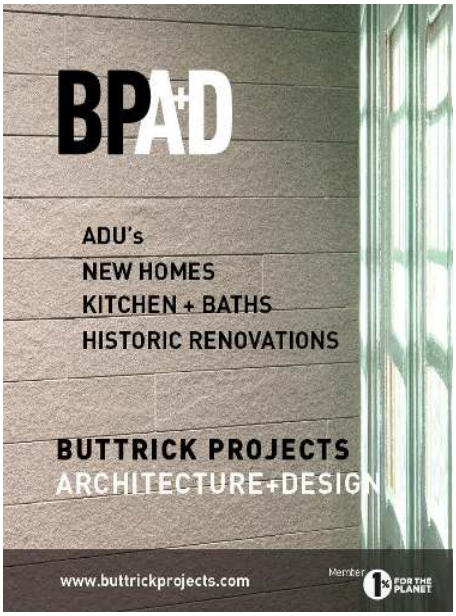


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AC Transit Wants to Hear from You

by Jean Walsh, AC Transit Director, Ward 2

Greetings, neighbors. My name is Jean Walsh and I am proud to serve as your representative on the AC Transit Board of Directors, where I represent more than 300,000 people in Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Piedmont.

Like other transit agencies, AC Transit saw a huge drop in ridership because of the Covid pandemic. But ridership is on the rise; we are currently approaching 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

One thing we know is that travel patterns have changed. That's why AC Transit is conducting a full-service redesign.

The Realign project is an opportunity to analyze current bus services from top to bottom and to understand the habits, needs, concerns, and priorities of community members so we can update the bus network with the goal of better serving riders.

The first phase of Realign, through June 2023, involves an online survey to help us understand what's important, identify priority destinations, and weigh key trade-offs. Later this year we will gather additional community feedback on different scenarios, with a new service plan expected to launch in August 2024.

Whether you're able to take a survey, join AC Transit at an upcoming event, participate in a workshop, or attend a public hearing, your feedback is critical. It will help us understand how well our bus service is meeting travel expectations, and to realign service to better meet the needs of the community. ■

TAKE THE SURVEY

Robust public transportation is essential for our community, our economy, and our environment.

Take the survey and learn more about how to get involved, visit:

www.actransit.org/realign

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OUSD Ends Teacher Strike and Walkout

by Carol Kasparek

On Monday, May 15, at 1:20pm, a bank of television cameras lined up at the podium in the McClymond's High School Library for the formal announcement of the end of the eight-day Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) teachers' strike.

School Superintendent **Kyla Johnson-Trammell** described features of the settlement between the district and the Oakland Education Association (OEA), characterizing the results as a boon to students, teachers, and their families. The agreement must still be voted on by the OEA, reviewed by the Alameda County Office of Education, and then go back to the OUSD for final approval.

The $70 million package includes salary increases and funding for new positions. Teachers will receive a 10 percent raise retroactive from December 1, 2022, with a one-time $5,000 stipend. Wage freezes have been removed, allowing for increases up to 22 percent. "Common Good Agreements" were included as a separate part of the settlement.

Counselors and performing arts instructors will be hired. Johnson-Trammell says that the district wants to "drive families into schools with enriching programs and support." All agreed that mental health investments that fully serve students needs be implemented.

The District and the OEA committed to allocate resources for unhoused students, explore granting reparations through the formation of a task force, and re-examine the impact of closed schools. Johnson-Trammell addressed questions about paying for these features and acknowledged that tough decisions will have to be made in light of declining enrollment. "The math needs to make sense; we need to remain solvent." She emphasized a commitment to stability, ongoing engagement, and building trust with staff and parents. ■

Scenic Streets™ of Oakland

Now the Work Begins

by Robert Firehock

The return of wet weather affected Scenic Streets' work in two different ways. Trash pick-up was down and pruning was up. It appears there is less trash during rainy periods, and there is certainly more robust growth of the landscaping.

Our theory on the trash is that people keep their windows rolled up on rainy days, deterring them from littering — now that the rain is over, we expect our trash load to go up. The growth spurt surprised us a bit since the soil is rather poor on the ramp, but it's real and noticeable. In the end, it means more pruning and weed whacking to keep the ramp orderly.

For those of you who don't know us yet, we are Scenic Streets of Oakland, a loosely organized group of volunteers operating as a nonprofit association under the auspices of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation. Our mission is to make a small but hopefully meaningful contribution to community beautification in our own Rockridge neighborhood.

We meet on Wednesday mornings at the Claremont/Hudson on-ramp to Hwy 24 and spend an hour or so picking up litter and spiffing up the plantings. We operate under a permit from CalTrans for the ramp work that includes an approved landscaping plan. We dropped our prior efforts on the Claremont off-ramp due to complications from the adjacent homeless encampment.



Carol and Robert after a recent Wednesday's ramp clean-up.

We also wander over occasionally to the trees around the De Vita site (next to the DMV) and to Vicente Street where the City of Oakland has given us permission to attend to several street tree plantings.

We need your help. While Wednesday morning volunteers are always welcome, we'd also love to enlist a few people willing to contribute fresh ideas and commit to sharing leadership responsibilities.

If getting your hands in the local dirt and engaging with a nice group of neighbors on mutual projects suits you, and you have some time to contribute to your neighborhood, please get in touch with Lee at lee.scenicstreetsoakland@gmail.com. ■

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Chocolate Shop Plans To Open in Mid-July

Love + Chocolate is happy to report that their new Leonidas Belgian chocolate shop is on track to open in mid-July. This family-owned business will be opening at 6309 College Avenue and is currently undergoing a complete transformation from the former tap-room into a proper European chocolate shop. **Kristy Lincoln,** who owns the shop with her husband Kent, says you can look for them to have a soft opening by the July Rock-N-Stroll event scheduled on July 8th.

"We are so excited to be coming to Rockridge. The community has been so welcoming at our pop-ups and now we are very close to opening and actively hiring," says Lincoln. "It's a great job for locals of any background who are looking for flexible part-time hours. We will teach you everything you need to know — it's such fun to work in a chocolate shop." (See job announcement on next page for details.)

The store will be open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm, and Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Once open, it will offer a wide variety of fresh Belgian chocolates made with all-natural ingredients and 100 percent cocoa. Customers can come in and buy just a few pieces off the chocolate counter or build a customized gift box. Kent and Kristy also plan to hold several free community chocolate tastings once they are officially open.

Sign up for their e-newsletter at www.loveandchocolateshop.com. ■

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Market talk: Long term 'mortgage' rates averaged 6-6.5% in May. Debt ceiling negotiations and Feds commitment to stall inflationary pressures by increasing short term lending rates, combined with soft employment figures could be precursor to a late summer recession. The Feds have an aggressive target of 2% inflation. Inflation has gone from 9.1% to 4.9% in 10 months due to 10 consecutive Fed rate increases. Continuing the pace of rate increases too quickly may add to economic volatility.

Sold: 2523 Etna, 4Bed 2Bath, ~2500sf brown shingle 'fixer' a block off College Ave in The Elmwood. 8 offers.

Coming soon in Rockridge:
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June Awareness: Alzheimer's, Men's Mental Health, PTSD, Oceans, Juneteenth, Pride, Cancer Survivors, Safety, Pets

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June 2023 Events at the Rockridge Library

For Children:

Storytime Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30 am

Chess Club: Wednesdays, 6/7-7/26; 4pm

Build, Make, Play: Drop-in crafts Thursdays, 6/1-7/20 at 4pm

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm

Summer Reading Program

Special Events: Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm.

Firelight Shadow Theater 6/6.

Insect Discovery Lab 6/13.

Unique Derique Music & Stories 6/20.

Ricky Roo Puppets 6/27.

Other Special Programs:

Kids Go Mandarin Music and Stories; Saturday, 6/10 10:30 am.

Little Explorers Farm Animals; Thursday, 6/22 2:30-4:30 pm.

Kamishibai-Making Workshop: For people ages 8 and up who like to write, draw, and tell stories; Fridays, 3:30-5 pm in June & July. Contact Erica to register for this series of 6 weeks of hands-on work at esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org.

For Teens

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 6/14; 4-5 pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library. Every 2nd Wednesday in the TeenZone. New members welcome.

Henna for Teens: Wednesday 6/7; 3-4 pm, ages 12-18. More programs over the summer!

For Adults

Rockridge Book Club every 2nd Saturday. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book.

Summer Reading Program

Please check our calendar online for events throughout the city, and stop by to find out more about prizes.

Summer Volunteers

Rockridge Library needs volunteers ages 11 to 16 to help with our Summer Programs in June and July. Please contact Stanley at slamontagne@oaklandlibrary.org or stop by the Children's Reference Desk.

All Oakland Libraries are closed Monday, 6/19 for Juneteenth, and Tuesday, 7/4, for the Fourth of July. Find more information at www.oaklandlibrary.org/events. ■

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 July is June 22** (available June 3). Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. For info, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

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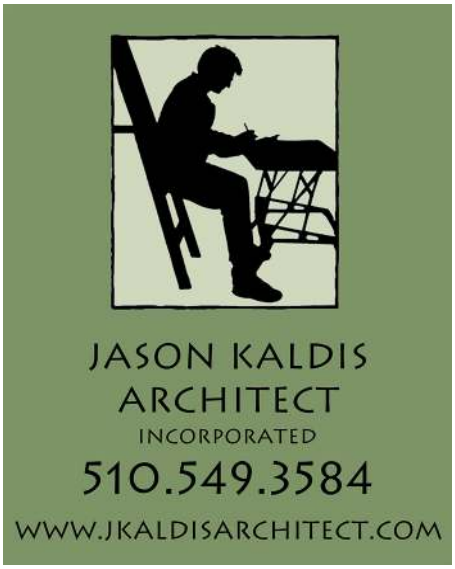
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5/4/2023	3	1	361 Alcatraz Ave	$1,625,000	$1,495,000	28	$1,575,000
5/5/2023	2	1	488 Clifton St	$795,000	$795,000	28	$1,000,000
5/5/2023	2	1	427 61st St	$1,095,000	$1,095,000	11	$1,860,000
5/8/2023	3	1	5767 Mendocino Ave	$1,399,000	$1,399,000	10	$1,935,000
5/12/2023	3	2	6236 Rockwell St	$2,095,000	$2,095,000	0	$2,250,000
5/15/2023	3	2	5768 Vicente St	$1,195,000	$1,195,000	11	$1,641,000
5/16/2023	4	3	5822 Buena Vista Ave	$2,995,000	$2,795,000	33	$2,750,000
5/16/2023	3	2	5408 Bryant Ave	$1,895,000	$2,000,000	32	$1,975,000
5/18/2023	2	1	5876 Birch Ct	$1,195,000	$1,195,000	16	$1,575,000

Homes sold in May closed 16% over the asking price on average.

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