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



Oakland "Tech Techies" build amazing sets for the school play, "Romeo & Juliet."

Oakland Tech Performs "Romeo & Juliet," A Modern Take on a Timeless Love Story

by Rafael Davis

Welcome to Verona Beach, California. Here, in the summer of 1963, the Montagues and the Capulets battle for dominance over the sunny boardwalk while their children make eyes at one another. It's a tale as old as modern theater — Romeo & Juliet. The play, put on by the Oakland Tech High School drama program, opens **November 16th and runs through the 18th.** Shows begin at 7pm on all three days, with an additional 2pm matinee performance on Saturday the 18th.

The play is set primarily on the fictitious boardwalk and features tons of period-appropriate costumes, three dramatic fights, a moving boardwalk set, and an absolutely righteous dance

Oak Tech Drama, see next page

A Thanksgiving Day Tradition Continues at College Avenue Presbyterian Church

by Rev. Monte McClain

For more than 40 years, the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (5951 College) has been hosting a neighborhood-empowered annual Thanksgiving Day Community Meal. This year, on **Thursday, November 23**, we plan to continue to provide the meal in to a "To-Go" format, ready-made for community members to take home. We feel this is the best way to care for those who come to eat as well as for those who help serve — in this way we can share the holiday, enjoy community, and stay safe from Covid.

Thanksgiving, see page 10

High Spirits & Great Costumes at This Year's HALLOWEEN PARADE



Oakland Tech Drama, from front page

party. The cast and crew have all been hard at work for the past month and a half putting together the best experience possible.

Juliet (**Dannys Lumpkin**) is from the house of Capulet. She is accompanied throughout the play by her parents, Lord and Lady Capulet (**Aviva Powers** and **Jordan Jerrels**), and her nurse (**Rafael Davis**). Lovesick Romeo (**Carlos Hernandez**) is a Montague, accompanied by his parents, Lord and Lady Montague (**Joseph Keys** and **Bryah Gallagher**), and Romeo's homies, Benvolio and Mercutio (**Simeon Tedros** and **Larkspur Vance**).

The set designers have put together a boardwalk that flips like a book to the other two locations: Juliet's bedroom and a church. The boardwalk set includes a fun house, a gift shop, and several carnival games, among other things.

Support Oakland Technical High School's drama program. Tickets will be available at the door for $10 ($5 for students and staff). The school is located at 42nd and Broadway. The theater is designed for 900 attendees, so there will be plenty of great seats. ■

Rockridge News: Block Captain Routes Available

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

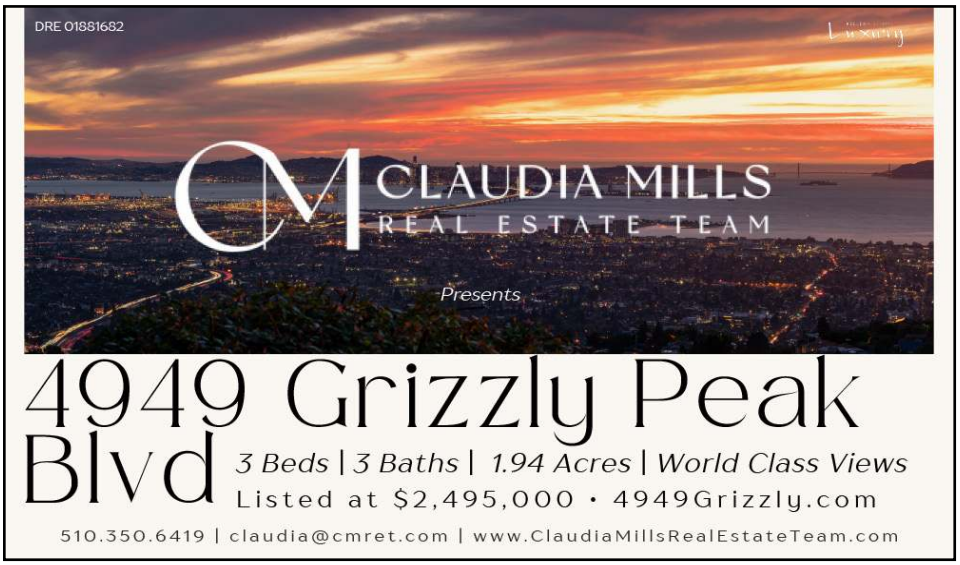


It has come to our attention that several blocks between Colby and Telegraph have not received their newsletters for a while. We want to be sure that everyone within the Rockridge boundaries receives the newsletter, which serves as the voice and best source of information for our neighborhood.

Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. Their bundles are generally delivered to their front porches on the first weekend of each month, except for August (in the area west of Colby, block captains pick up the bundles at a nearby address). Please look at the list below and let us know if you can help deliver this invaluable monthly newsletter to our neighbors.

- **Route 25A11: 407-439 North Street, from Colby to Dana**
- **Route 25A6: 438-485 60th Street, two blocks, Howell to Telegraph; then, around the corner to 5991-5917 Howell Street (from 60th to McAuley Street)**
- **Route 20A: On Claremont from 5900 even numbers up Claremont to former site of Shell station.**

Call (510) 547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer. ■



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 *Rockidge 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? We'd love to hear from you.

Want to write a letter to the Editor? Lletters are limited to 450 words and are published at the editors discretion. Send letters to: editor@rockridge.org. Please be sure to include your name, email address, 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, or advertisements.

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 DECEMBER 2023: November 16, 2023

Advertising rates are $28/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rates available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (**after noon**), or email joellis1@hotmail.com.

Classified Ads: Email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

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.*

7th Annual Crucolo Celebration at Rockridge Market Hall



Crucolo Parade, led by Rockridge Market Hall cheese buyer Alma Avalos (right) and cheesemonger Ahmad Allen (left), anchors the final Rock-n-Stroll of 2023.



Juliana Uruburu raises the first cut of Crucolo, sliced from the biggest wheel of cheese this side of the Mississippi, for the annual cheese celebration.

Rockridge Neighbor Supports Visually Impaired with Anonymous Library Donation

by Alona Rivord, Friends of the Rockridge Library

A generous member of the Rockridge community has made a large donation toward increasing the number of Oakland Public Library (OPL) resources that serve those with visual impairments. This major gift to Friends of the Rockridge Library will be allocated, in collaboration with Rockridge Branch librarians, to new resources — physical and digital.

Thanks to the anonymous donor, the Rockridge Library has become a hub of large type books. To date, OPL has purchased nearly 300 new large-type volumes using the funds. As with all materials in circulation, the large type books will move throughout the library system as they are put on hold or returned to different branches.

"Not only did the donation allow for the purchase of new titles, but replacement copies were purchased for titles that have been around for a while and are still being checked out,"

Library Friends, see page 7

Oakland Tech Gears Up for 2024 Auction

by Leslie Ayers

The Oakland Tech auction committee has started procuring donations and planning for the 2024 online Auction and Gala. The auction raises money for the OTHS Parent/Teacher/Student Association (PTSA), which supports students and staff by funding many enrichment activities beyond the school budget including field trips, events, the arts, sports and enriching campus life for all.

As always, community members are invited to participate in our online auction, to be held from **Friday, February 23, through Sunday, March 3, 2024**. For information or to donate, visit oaklandtech.schoolauction.net/auction2024/donate_items/new.

The Gala is set for **Saturday, March 9***, but it's not too early to sign up as an auction sponsor. Email auction@oaklandtech.com for details.* ■

In Case You Missed It
Summary of RCPC's October Town Hall Sustainability @ Home

Watch videos & see presentation slides at Rockridge.org

EBMUD
✓ Water saving tips
✓ Simple tool to monitor water use
✓ Conservation rebates

CITY OF OAKLAND
Electrification of our homes supports the City's Climate Action Plan

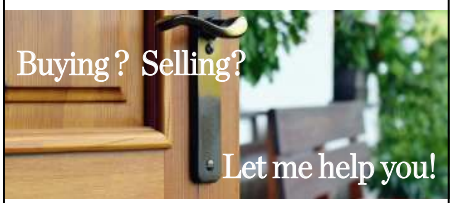
QuitCarbon
Using our homes to combat climate change while saving money:
The easiest way to leave fossil fuels behind!
QuitCarbon offers homeowners FREE decarbonization plans at QuitCarbon.com

Trees for Oakland
Our partner supporting the RCPC winter tree plantings!

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From Rockridge Area Specific Plan to the 2020 General Plan Update: How Did We Get Here?

by Annette Floystrup, RCPC Board Member

Beginning in 1987, Rockridge residents challenged themselves to imagine their neighborhood far into the future. They started by defining four categories of interest: Commercial Land Use, Residential Land Use, Parking and Circulation, and Design and Public Amenities. This became known as the Rockridge Area Specific Plan, or RASP.

Some goals remain desirable today, including a prominent goal of retaining, increasing, and developing additional residential use above the commercial ground-floor retail shops along College Avenue. Neighbors prioritized protecting the fabric of neighborhood-serving retail uses in the commercial zone, prohibiting the encroachment of office and commercial uses into the residential zone, and the identifying construction opportunities for building additional multifamily housing.

The biggest dream of all was to build a new Rockridge library to replace the temporary one that, at the time, was confined to two portables on the Claremont School grounds. That dream resulted in hundreds of volunteers putting in thousands of hours over a period of nine years — the doors to our current library opening in September of 1996.

The decisions of Rockridge neighbors, beginning with the creation of the special Pedestrian Oriented Retail Zone in the early 1970s, have contributed to the economic success, not only of this neighborhood but all of Oakland as a whole. After the creation of the special commercial zoning for College Avenue, several other neighborhoods contacted Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) for information and assistance in adopting that new zoning for themselves. As a result, five additional Oakland neighborhoods were rezoned using the RCPC model.

It should be noted that partly as a result of that special pedestrian oriented commercial zoning, College Avenue has consistently ranked as one of the top economic engines in the City for over 50 years, often second only to the economic contributions of auto dealers. The other rezoned areas also showed economic improvement.

Changes in Population Demographics

While Oakland has gone through a lot of changes in the intervening years, many aspects of the Rockridge neighborhood have remained stable. Specifically, in all types of housing units, the ratio of owners to renters has remained constant — about 55 percent to 45 percent. Accordingly, when RCPC incorporated in 1985, its membership was specified to include all adults residing within the identified boundaries, not only homeowners. The objective was always to empower all residents.

General Plan, see next page

Meeting Date: December 14, 7pm
Rockridge Library Conference Room
Speaker: DA Pamela Price

Questions for the speaker can be submitted in writing or on Zoom, or by email to chair@rockridgencpc.com. No questions will be taken during the meeting.

This will be a hybrid meeting for those who prefer to attend remotely. For Zoom link, visit: https://www.rockridgencpc.com/

NCPC is looking for a new Vice Chair. The organization meets at 7pm on the second Thursday of even-numbered months. If interested, email chair@rockridgencpc.com

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General Plan, from previous page

Although the population of Rockridge has in general become more racially diverse (from 1990 to 2020, the white population declined by approximately 12 percent to 68 percent), Rockridge has unfortunately also seen a significant decline in its Black population, which went from seven percent in the 1990 census to only two percent now. Oakland as a whole has seen a mass exodus of Black residents — 43 percent of all residents to 22 percent during that same period.

Impact of Housing Cost

Much of this change has been driven by rapidly rising housing costs. As a result, Rockridge has lost the majority of its working-class residents, those who used to make up the majority of the Rockridge neighborhood below College Avenue. This shift can best be seen by comparing the average annual household income of $213,286 in 2022, to the average household income of $123,582 in 1990, adjusted for inflation.

During this past year, as part of the Housing Element of the 2023 General Plan Update, neighborhood groups were asked to identify opportunity sites for building more housing. In Rockridge, a number of sites were identified, including the former California College of the Arts (CCA); the triangle lot at the corner of College and Claremont; the site of the second phase of the Ridge Project at Broadway and Pleasant Valley; and the Rockridge BART station.

A future possible site for high-density housing includes the old Safeway site at Claremont and Clifton. Additionally, there have been plans under exploration to move the Claremont DMV downtown and develop a portion of that site for affordable housing; but what about the rest of the site?

In 1988, neighbors dared to dream large. Their top two goals for Design and Public Amenities were to provide a public library and to increase and improve access to recreational and passive open spaces. This dream resulted in Oakland gaining a new branch library — the only neighborhood-funded library in America built by, and for, its local community.

Now, in 2023, we have an opportunity once again to work collectively toward another goal: How can Rockridge thoughtfully balance these concerns while welcoming more neighbors amidst our affordable housing crisis? Let's dream big again. ■

Land Use Committee Meeting

The Rockridge community is encouraged to participate in LUC meetings where elements of the General Plan Update will be a primary topic of conversation.

Meetings, now being held at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, will resume in January 2024 on Zoom. To participate, or to request links, email landuse@rockridge.org.



CollegePrep
A private high school in Oakland

Tucked into a glen in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland, College Prep's informal and welcoming campus provides an educational home for a lively and talented community of students in grades 9-12. Guided by inspiring teachers and mentors, they create a vibrant community that is rooted in shared values of kindness, respect, and a willingness to learn from the perspectives of others. We invite you to visit us and experience College Prep first-hand.

6100 Broadway Oakland CA 94618 510.652.4364 **college-prep.org**

November Events at the Rockridge Library

5366 College Ave.
at Manila
510-597-5017

Children:

Storytime Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30 am

Chess Club: Wednesdays at 4pm

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm

Intergenerational Origami:
First Tuesday, 11/7, at 4pm,
Third Tuesday, 11/21, at 6:30pm.

Game Night: Tuesday, 11/14 at 6:30pm. Bring your own game to play with others, or try some of ours! All ages welcome, this is a great inter-generational activity.

Teens:

Jeopardy and Snacks Wednesday 11/8; 2pm, presented by the Rockridge Teen Advisory Board

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 11/8; 4-5pm. 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.

Adults:

Rockridge Book Club every 2nd Saturday. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. November's book is *Solito: A Memoir* by Javier Zamora

Holidays: The library will be closed Saturday, 11/11, and Thursday & Friday, 11/23-11/24.

And…

Author Talk: Jeff Horwitz
Thursday, 11/16; 7-8pm

Award-winning *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Jeff Horwitz, will discuss his newly released book, *Broken Code: Inside Facebook and the Fight to Expose Its Toxic Secrets.*

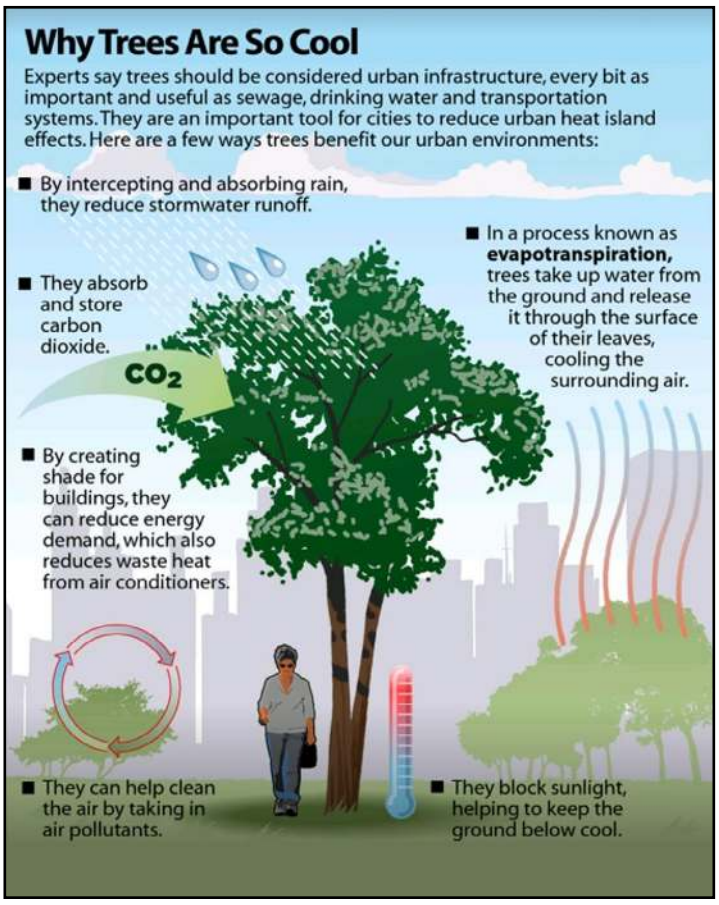
Moderated by Kevin Roose of the *New York Times.*

Hours:
Mon, Thurs, Sat 10am to 5:30pm
Tuesday and Wednesday - 10am to 8pm
Closed on Sundays

Please also check the online calendar at:
www.oaklandlibrary.org/events.

Oakland Gets Historic Grant to Plant More Urban Trees

by Annette Floystrup



Under a $1 billion program paid for by the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, ten Bay Area cities have been awarded federal grants to plant, maintain, and restore trees, including an $8 million award to Oakland. Tree canopy covers 7,819 acres or 21.5 percent of land cover in Oakland. Urban tree canopy refers to the amount of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground in an area when viewed from above.

Oakland has created a detailed Urban Forest Plan which became available for public commentary as of October 30, 2023.

Why trees?

Trees are the most cost-effective tool for mitigating climate changes. Trees greatly improve air quality, reduce energy consumption, help manage storm water, reduce erosion, provide critical habitat for wildlife, and promote our connection with nature.

Urban areas are "heat sinks." The "urban heat island" effect means that paved streets and sidewalks, buildings, and dark rooftops, all absorb solar energy efficiently, resulting in surface temperatures which can be as much as 18°F to 27°F higher in the daytime than their rural surroundings. Strategic planting of the right type of trees can cool the air by 4°F to 14°F degrees by shading asphalt streets and concrete sidewalks.

Large urban trees are also excellent filters for pollutants and fine particulates. This effect explains why there is a row of redwood trees planted on the freeway side of the Claremont Middle School playground. A single tree can help mitigate climate change by trapping and absorbing up to 330 lbs. of CO_2 per year.

How will the money be used?

According to City tree supervisor **David Moore**, Oakland plans to use its grant money to plant and restore trees not only along streets but also in private yards. Oakland will partner with local nonprofits Common Vision and the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation to plant trees in residents' yards. Street trees planted under the grant include five years of maintenance by the city, and a one-time pruning. New street trees typically only need to be watered for their first three years, but ordinarily, pruning should take place every seven.

Because street trees are currently inequitably distributed, with most of the city tree cover found in the hills and wealthier neighborhoods like Rockridge, both Oakland and the Urban and Community Forestry Program utilize the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to help identify which communities would benefit most. Moore noted that stark differences in tree cover between the hills and much of the flatlands closely match historical maps showing redlined neighborhoods.

Stressing resiliency

Trees selected for planting under the grant program will be selected using new criteria for climate resiliency. Research done by consultant **Dave Muffly**, and published on his website oaktopia.org, points to using native evergreen trees that are adapted to warmer climates. The City's Official Street Tree List has been updated for resiliency and can be found online at https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/official-street-tree-list. ■

Rockridge,
it's time to
PLANT TREES
Call to Action:
Volunteers & sidewalk tree wells needed!
Sign up at Rockridgc.org

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Library Friends, from page 3

said Rockridge Library Branch Manager **Brian Guenther**. "The number of books that look newer and fresher is notable."

OPL has purchased new titles from trending authors including M.C. Beaton, Ibram X. Kendi, Sue Monk Kidd, Marie Kondo, and Cormac McCarthy. Replacement copies have included popular titles such as Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Using the donation, OPL will be able to make more large type book purchases over the coming year to keep titles current and to replace volumes that are in poor condition.

"The donation was also used to purchase copies of high-demand audiobooks and eBooks making for shorter wait times," Guenther said. With the funds, OPL has purchased 239 additional eBook licenses and 89 more audiobook licenses.

Licenses span 25 different titles including:

- *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver
- *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks
- *It Starts with Us* by Colleen Hoover
- *Spare* by Prince Harry
- *The Maid* by Nita Prose
- *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman

To access large-type books, visitors can browse the dedicated shelves at the Rockridge Library or use the Advanced Search feature on oaklandlibrary.org. For audiobooks and eBooks, patrons can go to the ELIBRARY section of the OPL website, which can be found under the "Read, Listen, Watch" tab.

Together with OPL and the Rockridge branch, the Friends of the Rockridge Library is also exploring other ways to make library resources more accessible, including new technologies, emerging content formats, and device lending programs.

Friends of the Rockridge Library is a volunteer nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing our local branch and supporting the wider Oakland Public Library community. Visit rockridgefriends.org. ■



Sometimes I walk Scout home after "Read to a Dog" at the library. And when I walk him home, he has to smell everything along the way. He's 100 percent golden lab and lives on Broadway with Sandy, his owner. At reading time, he sits quietly like a bag of flour and lets kids read to him and pet him. The best part is he doesn't say when you make a mistake. Sometimes he wiggles his paws and shakes his head and sometimes he puts his head in my lap. — Marguerite, age 9

Stella is a happy 8-year-old standard poodle who thinks she's a human. You'll see her around the neighborhood on her morning walks, but mostly she mans her post as the professional welcoming committee at the College Avenue clothing store, DG Collective. Come by the shop and give her a treat or a pat on the head if you need a quick pick-me-up.



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Devoted Librarian Went Looking for a Job, and Found a Career

by Judith Doner Berne

eyes on Rockridge

"Public Libraries are the Latest Front in Culture War Battle Over Books." So read a *Washington Post* headline.

"It hasn't really touched us here," said **Nina Lindsay**, associate director of the Oakland Public Libraries, who grew up and lives in Rockridge, a healthy walk from the house where her parents, **Joe** and **Dorothy (Dodie) Lindsay**, still reside.

She's referring both to the book-banning epidemic that is infecting communities and even whole states across the country (think Florida), and to the disruptions of public library-sponsored drag story hours like the ones that took place as nearby as San Lorenzo, Petaluma, and Los Gatos, over the summer. Conservative protestors have argued that these programs indoctrinate young kids by sexualizing them at an inappropriate age, and used the term "grooming" to describe what happens at these children's events.

"We're very lucky that we haven't had issues with censorship at all," Lindsay said, in an interview at the Rockridge Library. In fact, "It was a full house at the Banned Books and Censorship panel discussion at Rockridge" on Oct. 7, according to the Oakland Public Library's October eNewsletter. Still, Lindsay cautioned, "It's a concern nationwide." Most books banned last year, she said, targeted those written by LGBTQ and Black authors.

As for drag story hours, "We've done them for years," she said, noting that "the protest in San Lorenzo has made the public really turn out." A July drag queen story hour at the Rockridge Library drew an audience of around 70. Five other Oakland public libraries also hosted drag story hours over the summer.



Photo: Judy Berne

'I have always looked forward to coming to work every day,' said Oakland Public Library Associate Director Nina Lindsay, pictured at the Rockridge Library.

"I found it by accident," Lindsay said, about her decision to become a librarian. It was her experience working part-time at the Berkeley Public Library, as she pursued an undergraduate degree in linguistics at UC Berkeley, which led to a master's in library and informational science at the University of Wisconsin.

"I hadn't even considered working in libraries — even though I'm passionate about learning and spent plenty of time in them," she said. "I got my first library job because I needed a job… but I found a career. "

That career has been wholly devoted to the Oakland Public Library (OPL). OPL, which opened in 1878, has grown to 16 branch libraries plus the African American Museum and Library, and the Tool Lending Library. Fresh off her master's degree, Lindsay spent 11 years as a children's librarian, two years as the Children's Collection Development Librarian, and another

Nina Lindsay, see next page



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Market talk: We peaked in median price locally in Spring 2022 and hit a 2 year low last Winter 2022/2023. The market came back some the first half of 2023, due to lower inventory. A post Labor Day surge in new listings along with highest interest rates since 2000 (7.75% average) has lead to a Fall 2023 lull. Homes without major drawbacks still perform well while those with drawbacks may linger on market this winter. Buyers will have opportunities now in terms of market choice and hedge bets that rates will come down next year to take advantage of timing to buy now. Sellers, while not at peak Spring 2022, will still see better prices than 2020 but could better gear up for an end January-March 2024 seasonally better market.

November Awareness: Native American Heritage, Movember, Diabetes, Hunger & Homeless Youth, Kindness, Giving, Veterans, Stress, Novel writing, Caregivers, Lung Cancer & Gratitude for family, friends, pets, front-line workers, leaders, healers, nature, life and of course my clients who allowed me to earn the top 3 most transactions out of 2100+ agents in 94618 and 94609 combined over the last 20 year period.



HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Perry Riani, Senior Associate

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COMPASS

Nina Lindsay, from previous page

10 years as a Children's Services Coordinator. She was named Associate Director in 2019.

Although she misses direct contact with the public, "I love working with the staff at all levels." That includes Oakland Library Director **Jamie Turbak**, support staff, and middle managers, as well as part-time library aides whose back stories she finds particularly interesting. "Many were once part of our teen advisory board, some are parents who want part-time work, some have been volunteers."

An urgent task is hiring more staff to reach the approximately 350 full and part-time employees needed to keep the libraries open seven days a week and in the evenings. The passage of the Oakland Public Library Preservation Act (Measure D) in 2018 has pretty much ensured funding. But "It's hard to relocate here on a librarian's budget," she said. "The Bay Area has not become very hospitable to the middle class."

In addition, a recent employee survey commissioned by the library found that many staff members feel less safe at work. Similar to libraries throughout the country, and made worse by the pandemic, staff members report verbal abuse, threatening interactions, and situations they aren't equipped to handle.

"As mental health and drug-related problems take stronger root in our community, we are getting more requests from people experiencing crises," Lindsay said. "Our staff do an amazing job of helping people to the extent they can, and we have great partnerships with Alameda County Behavioral Health and other outreach organizations. The City's MACRO response teams have been invaluable to us, and we are working on additional training and resource support for our staff and patrons."

"Everyone finds refuge in Oakland libraries in different ways," Lindsay said, "whether it's to find new friends or to be alone, to explore or contemplate, or sometimes just find a bathroom you can use without question, cost, or scrutiny (we've all used the Rockridge lobby bathroom on a College Avenue shopping day, right?)."

A feasibility study for rebuilding or renovating Oakland's Main Library, built in 1951, is currently underway. "It's beloved, but has outlived its capacity to serve Oakland," she said. Community workshops to help inform a vision for the new main library were completed in October. Residents offered inspiration for design and programming, responding to prompts such as "How do you want to feel when you walk into the library?" You can search the web for updates at Oakland Main Library Feasibility Study.

Lindsay bikes to work. "I like to go to downtown Oakland, buy my lunch out, and support the restaurants and small businesses." Closer to home, she frequents the Sunday Temescal Farmer's Market and then spends the day cooking for the rest of the week.

A graduate of Peralta Elementary, Claremont Middle, and Oakland Tech, she misses former College Avenue venues like Chimes Pharmacy and the College Bowl bowling alley. Zachary's Pizza opened when she was in middle school. She frequents East Bay Booksellers as well as Pegasus Books.

The latter kindles memories of its earlier incarnation, Pendragon Books, "the first place I bought my own books. I hope readers think it's funny that librarians use the bookstores, but they serve different purposes and I feel like we need them both."

Contact judyberne@att.net if you have comments or a story idea for Eyes on Rockridge. ■



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Thanksgiving, from front page

This is an opportunity for us to gather as a community to respond to the needs of those struggling with hunger, solitude, and joblessness. We plan to serve 250 to-go holiday meals free to anyone who comes by. We'll be providing these pre-packaged meals on **Thanksgiving Day, from 11am to noon**, from our campus at 5951 College Avenue. We invite our neighbors to help — this has always been a joint effort by diverse members of our Rockridge Community that includes congregational members, local merchants, and residents.

It's the contributions from our Rockridge neighbors that make this community meal possible. Donations of money and food are gratefully accepted and much needed. We expect the cost for the hearty turkey dinners with all the fixin's to be approximately $2,000.

You can also give your time. We need volunteers to help in our effort to provide this holiday meal. We'll be looking for help cooking from home, preparing the site, serving, and cleaning up — all done in a spirit of joy and giving — while paying the utmost attention to safety.

We also will be distributing "Blessing Bags," our term for care packages that include new underclothes, toiletries, a blanket, and jackets.

You can donate gently used jackets and blankets and/or money to help purchase new underclothes. More information about all of this can be found on our Thanksgiving Day webpage (see box below). ■

Visit the church website at www.capcoakland.org/thanksgiving-meal and see how you can sign-up for a volunteer slot. You can also contact the church office at capcoakland@gmail.com or (510) 658-3665.

Thank you for partnering with us to serve the common good.

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Competition Drives Price in October

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
10/2/2023	3	2.5	6446 Regent St	$1,850,000	$1,850,000	8	$2,305,000
10/4/2023	2	1	5878 Birch Ct	$1,195,000	$1,195,000	25	$1,150,000
10/6/2023	3	2	5916 Chabolyn Ter	$1,598,000	$1,598,000	12	$2,115,000
10/16/2023	3	2	5350 Broadway	$1,495,000	$1,250,000	133	$1,175,000
10/18/2023	4	3.5	391 60th St	$1,995,000	$1,995,000	15	$2,200,000
10/20/2023	4	2.5	6255 Chabot Rd	$2,549,000	$2,549,000	14	$3,200,000

Home sold in October closed 14% over the asking price on average.

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Substantive Changes Arrive at BART: The "Fleet of the Future"

by Rebecca Saltzman, BART Director

With the fall season upon us, we hope people don't just turn back their clocks but also get back on track by taking the Bay Area's Rapid Transit (BART) system. BART's new "Safe & Clean Plan" doubles down on improvements we have been making to give riders what they want from us — a safe, clean, and reliable BART that we can all be proud of. BART is now running their "Fleet of the Future" full-time. These trains are easier to clean, break down less frequently, and have improved air conditioning for hot days like those recently experienced. We have also doubled-down on the deep cleaning of all train cars.

I am most excited about our increased service. For years, I have fought to improve service on nights and weekends; our new schedule increases it by 50 percent. No rider will have to wait more than 20 minutes on the platform day or night, and on the Yellow Line, where Rockridge station is located, weekday daytime service has increased to 10-minute frequencies. BART now provides frequent service at all times of day, no matter what day of the week you travel.

Riders have expressed that BART's number one priority should be safety, and we have listened. New BART Police Chief **Kevin Franklin** adjusted patrol assignments to increase police presence on the trains and in the stations. BART is also using unarmed Crisis Intervention Specialists, Ambassadors, and Fare Inspectors to boost their visibility and to conduct welfare checks for the unhoused. Doubling of foot patrols has reduced the average incident response time to four minutes.

BART also recently launched the next phase of our "Not One More Girl" initiative to address sexual harassment and gender-based violence some have experience while riding on the trains. This youth-led initiative, in partnership with community-based organizations, is critical to making sure BART is safe and welcoming to all who ride, especially for girls and gender-expansive youth. To support this campaign, BART has introduced new bystander Intervention Cards that riders can discreetly pass to other riders to prompt bystander intervention, and that can be used to report harassment when it is taking place. Riders can pick one up from any station agent.

One of the highest priority projects at BART is the installation of taller, stronger fare gates to deter fare evasion. An initial prototype set of swing-style fare gates has been in use at Rockridge for some time now, and work will begin soon at West Oakland to install these new prototype fare gates by the end of December. Installation at all 50 stations should be completed by the end of 2025.

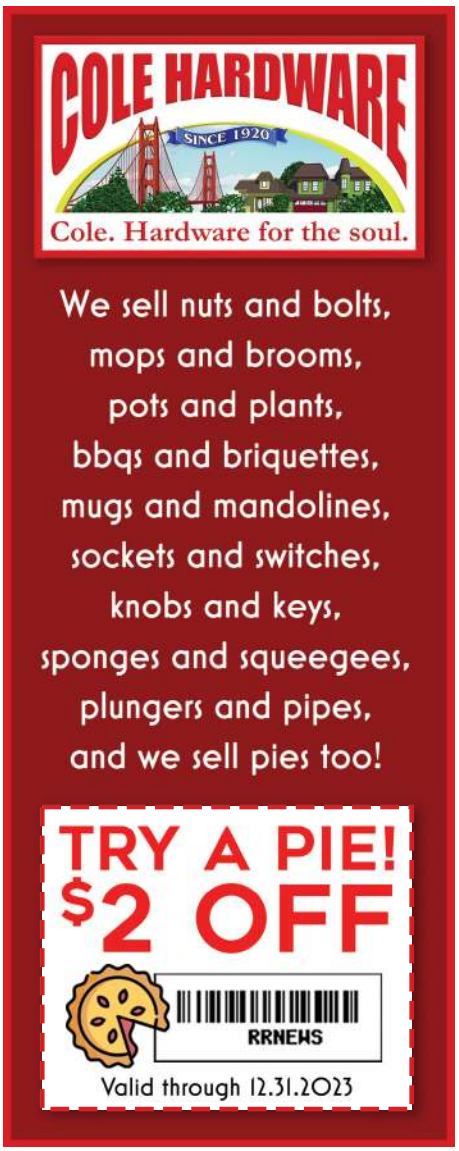
For those who want to take your bike on BART, we are making it easier than ever. The BART Board recently voted to update the "Bikes on BART" rules for the first time in ten years. The new rules, which I authored, allow riders to take bicycles on escalators and in all train cars, helping more people to bring their bikes into our system and get to where they are going in a timely manner.

So, if it's been a while since you have tried BART, I encourage you to come, relax, and enjoy the ride. If you are one of those loyal riders who has been with us throughout the past pandemic, thanks for riding!

Rebecca Saltzman represents Rockridge and seven other stations on the BART Board of Directors. ■

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RCPC's Kevin Faughnan Community Grant Program Helps Fund Climatescape

by Robin McDonnell

Climatescape is the newest recipient of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) Kevin Faughnan Community Grant. The RCPC sets aside funds from the proceeds of the Kitchen Tour for a grant program that supports small community-led projects in Rockridge. FROG budgeted $2,000 for the project, and RCPC granted $750 in funding to help cover the cost of the plants.

The Climatescape project, located at the corner of Frog Park near Hudson, is a true community collaboration. Since the creation of the park, the location behind the basketball courts has been neglected due to the difficulty of getting water to the site. Rockridge landscape designer **John Kamp** designed the project at no cost, and local volunteers worked together to prepare the site for planting.

RCPC grants are intended to encourage and support new ideas from Rockridge residents that improve the neighborhood. This project will beautify an otherwise bare corner of the park and become an educational resource for children and adults interested in low-water landscaping (see article on right). ■


Photo: Anna L. Marks

Climatescape Takes Shape at Frog Park

by Carol Kasparek and Theresa Nelson

On September 23, **John Kamp**, **James Rojas**, and Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG) members gathered near the Hardy Park basketball courts to break ground for a new pocket park. "Climatescape," a term Kamp has chosen, refers to a setting in which plants not only endure shifts in the environment but continually adapt to changing conditions (see September 2023 *Rockridge News*). The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has awarded this project a $750 grant to supplement the funds already raised by FROG board members (see article on left).

The 30' by 30' area is bounded by a concrete curb. About 50 years ago, a small metal play structure had been installed. By the early 1990s, the failing structure was removed by the City — leaving the area to become overgrown with weeds. The FROG Committee wanted to start over.

The newest design relies on a careful choice of plants and an innovative planting technique to create a pollinator garden that will not require irrigation — an ongoing challenge at this part of the park. Kamp and Rojas (https://www.prairieform.com/), who had also consulted with neighbor **Patrick Cullinane** last year on the two community parks he created, also funded in part by the Kevin Faughnan Community Grants program (see *Rockridge News*, April 2023), led committee members and some of their children through a fun, hands-on design session. Beginning

Climatescape, see next page





Climatescape, from previous page

with envisioning what they saw as the future of the garden, they developed a compelling design incorporating the group's input, and which the committee enthusiastically welcomed.

Once community planning sessions and drawings were completed, the plants purchased, and the ground prepared (with locally sourced cardboard, thank you Rockridge merchants), training was conducted on the specific method of planting — and the team finally broke ground.

Unfortunately, a few shovels later led to a daunting discovery — a layer of asphalt stretched underneath much of the area, preventing necessary air and water circulation. Kamp brought in a new tool, a remarkably compact jackhammer, and wheelbarrows of asphalt were removed to allow the Climatescape to take shape.

The new plants, almost 140 of them, were put in over the next few days, and volunteers have been watering them according to a specific plan to get them established. FROG volunteers have been hauling water from the spigot in the Hardy Dog Park with a handy red wagon and some five-gallon buckets — it takes about 15 trips to complete one watering cycle. The plants are expected to thrive independently by next spring.

For more info, contact John at kamp@prairieform.com. For info on all park activities, visit frogpark.org. ■

Visit Rockridge Artists at East Bay Open Studios

Established 48 years ago, East Bay Open Studios has presented an annual free and family-friendly self-guided tour of artist studios and exhibition spaces throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. As of this year, Oakland Art Murmur has taken stewardship of the event. Three Rockridge artists will be participating in the event in early December and neighbors are encouraged to stop by and learn more about them.



Marsha Balian's mixed media piece "Boomerang."

Katie McCann's collage piece "Poppy."

Marsha Balian (www.marshabalian.com) and **Katie McCann** (www.beetleblossom.com) are mixed media collage artists whose work has been seen throughout the Bay Area, many parts of the country and internationally. Their work is accessible, multi-layered and often has a strong narrative quality. This is an opportunity to view and purchase their work at reduced prices.

December 2nd and 3rd, from 11am to 5pm at 5495 Kales Ave, between College and Broadway.

Trina Anderson (www.trinaanderson.com) is a painter and printmaker based in Oakland where she's made her home for more than three decades. Her creative passion revolves around exploring the objects and structures made, used, and often discarded and forgotten by humanity. "I'm deeply fascinated by the stories they carry. It's my means of inviting others to discover the beauty and stories hidden within the everyday."

December 2nd and 3rd, 11am to 5pm at 5240 Shafter Avenue ■





From Kabul to the Mediterranean: Venerable College Avenue Pub Heads in New Direction

by Skip Fogarty

Longtime neighbors will likely remember Barclay's pub on College Avenue. I have recollections of many family brunches on weekends. Another memory is bringing my little league team and parents there for post-game celebrations. The casual vibe of Barclay's was the charm of the place. Dart games and empty kegs against the back wall. All the regular faces at the bar. Crayons and French fries, often on the floor.

In 2016, Barclay's was sold to an ownership duo who were old school friends and grew up in the neighborhood. Rechristened as the Golden Squirrel, the new spot came with many upgrades, a new menu, and a full liquor license. The Squirrel had a more upscale feel, but it was still a relaxed and reliable spot for a burger and a beer — or maybe a cocktail and a comedy show.

In August, there was another change in ownership at that wonderful location, directly across the street from the Julia Morgan designed Presbyterian Church. "My family has always loved this neighborhood," says new managing partner **Akbar Arghandiwal**. "We were searching for a new restaurant location and I spotted this place. When we found out it was for sale, we jumped on it."

He lives in Walnut Creek, and at one time resided on Broadway Terrace. "I want this to remain a neighborhood gathering place," Akbar says. "Rockridge deserves the best, so we want to establish a new, fresh and welcoming place for our neighbors." He expressed an interest in preserving some of the Squirrel's entertainment events such as trivia games on Sundays and perhaps the comedy nights.

Arghandiwal came to the Bay Area in 1982 from his native Afghanistan. His family ran a dry cleaning business on College. He has a long career of success in restaurants as an owner, partner and executive chef. He presently has part interest in the well-rated Livermore restaurant Roya Afghan Cuisine. His brother operates an Afghan-style restaurant in Santa Cruz and is involved with a string of Mexican eateries in various airports around the country.



Akbar Arghandiwal is preparing a Middle Eastern-inspired menu for the space formerly occupied by the Golden Squirrel.

A couple of weeks ago, Arghandiwal decided to close the doors while he makes changes in menu and decor. He says many neighbors have encouraged a more diverse menu — and he's settled on a new name. Saffron Kitchen will be "a delightful culinary journey from Kabul to the Mediterranean," he promises. Stand by for a reopening in early November.

You can reach the new management team with questions or suggestions at info@goldensquirrelpub.com. ■





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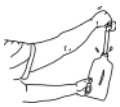
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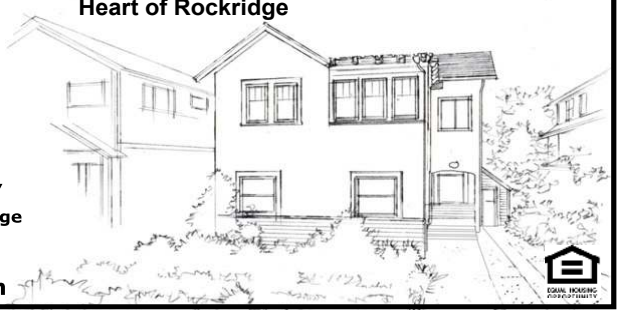
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