THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
VOL 39 • NO. 5 • ISSUE NO. 419 • MAY 2024 CIRCULATION: 6,400 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

RCPC Election Results are In

Hundreds of neighbors turn out for this year's election: One incumbent re-elected Five new members join the board

by Zac Unger, RCPC Board Member and 2024 Election Officer

The election is over and we have the results. Thanks go out to everyone who voted on April 18 or 20. A total of 441 people showed up to make their voices heard — the second largest turnout ever!

Casey Farmer (incumbent)	**288**
Zack Walton	**269**
Kristen Belt	**255**
Eli Kaplan	**255**
Muhammad Alameldin	**241**
Kim S. Smith	**237**
Andrew Charman	192
Annette Floystrup	179
Stuart Flashman	173
Ronnie Spitzer	167
Jennifer McElrath	164
Kirk Peterson	162
David Beiser	15

Congrats to the six winners highlighted above; please welcome them to the RCPC Board of Directors. And a big THANK YOU to departing RCPC Board Members **Aly Bonde**, **Andrew Charman**, **Annette Floystrup**, **Ben Friedman**, **Robin McDonnell**, and **Kirk Peterson**. We appreciate everyone who participated — candidates, volunteers, and voters. (*See Letter from the Chair on page 10.*) ■



Photo by Anna Marks

Bambino Thrift Shop volunteers (left to right) Dee McDonough, Lou Gates, and Carol Maes are making big plans for the store's anniversary later this month.

Bambino Thrift Shop: A Beacon of Support For Thirty Years

by Anna L. Marks

Alameda County public health nurse, activist, and feminist, **Bertha Wright** (1876-1971) believed health care services should be available to all income groups, especially for infants and young children, regardless of their ability to pay. This dream became a reality in 1914 when Wright founded Baby Hospital (now called UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland) with social worker Mabel Weed, her lifelong companion, and a group of local women.

When the all-male Board of Directors took control of the hospital in the late 1920s, the women formed

Bambino Thrift, see next page

Got Kitchen? Got Time? Join the Tour!

by Star Lightner

Hello Rockridge, it's time for another Rockridge Kitchen Tour and we are gearing up in two ways.

First, we're looking for kitchens to be on the tour. This year we are very interested in a diversity of kitchens in terms of style, cost, and function. Your kitchen may be Craftsman, mid-century modern, Victorian, eclectic, or another style. In terms of cost, many kitchens are very expensive to remodel, but maybe you did it on a shoestring. There can even be diversity of function. Maybe your kitchen is particularly small or you have decided to focus on energy efficiency. Moreover, it doesn't have to be all about the fixtures; it can also be about structure. Have you moved walls, repurposed spaces, or changed the flow?

Kitchen Tour, see page 3

Bambino Thrift, from front page

auxiliary groups known as "The Branches" to continue raising money for the hospital. With the support of The Branches, the Bambino Thrift Shop opened in 1928. They moved to 5290 College Avenue in 1994.

Carol Maes has been working in the shop since 1998, first as Manager, then as Volunteer Manager. She now serves as Raffle Coordinator for their big anniversary celebration. Maes loves working in the neighborhood, only a half mile from her home where she's lived for 50 years. **Dee McDonough**, the store's 30th Anniversary Chair, is also a local resident and has lived in Upper Rockridge for the past 40 years. The two met decades ago when both their children went to school at St. Theresa's.

The store will be holding a raffle on **Saturday, May 18,** and hopes neighbors come by in support. "It's a little difficult to get people to come up to the Broadway end of College Avenue, so we are going to put out balloons and advertise a lot that we're open — we will be serving tea and cookies, and holding our raffle drawing that same day," says McDonough.

This year, they will be raffling off more than $4,000 worth of items and gift certificates that have been donated from businesses in Oakland, Berkeley, and beyond. "Traditionally over the years, The Branches as a whole have donated close to a million dollars from different functions… from Bingo to the Debutante Ball," notes McDonough.

Raffle tickets will be available for sale May 7–18, and cost $5 for one, $10 for 3, $20 for seven; and $50 for 20. Grand prize is a special shopping experience: Bambino will pick one raffle winner who will be entitled to a 30 percent discount on purchases made through May 30, 2025. The discount will be applied to a maximum of one item per month for any full-priced item not already on sale or discounted (non-transferable, limited to personal use by winner only. Winner need not be present to win, but must present identification and the winner's certificate at time of purchase).

It takes a lot of love and attention to keep the store stocked and appealing, and Shop Manager **Lou Gates** combines that with her background in information science to find efficient ways to sell things in the store. She inspects the influx of donations and posts photos to Social Media. "We're constantly trying to make the store fresh and popular with the kids in the neighborhood."

Gates also assists with donations, which are accepted on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 11am to 1pm. She says typical donations include clothing, housewares, jewelry, books, and a some small furniture (due to limited display space). Some items are not accepted, like ripped or torn items, or those that pose a possible insurance risk, like exercise equipment, baby cribs, and baby car seats.

Please note that there's a five-bag maximum for each donation. For larger furniture donations, it's best to call the shop in advance at 510-658-7473 to ensure available space.

To learn more, donate, or sign up for the weekly email newsletter, visit www.bambinothriftshop.org; or follow them on Facebook or Instagram. ■



College Avenue Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue / 94618
(510) 658-3665
www.capcoakland.org
safe | open | real

CYDNEY ORTZOW painting
Interior • Exterior
Lead-Certified Painters
For a free estimate call Cydney
510 • 652 • 4034

THE RockridgeNews

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

Rockridge News Production

Anna L. Marks ..... Editor & Layout Artist
Jo Ellis..... Assistant Editor & Ad Manager
Susan Montauk .....Business & Distribution Manager
Judith Doner Berne ..... Senior Contributing Writer

RCPC Board of Directors, 2024-25

Casey Farmer .....Chair
Ken Rich..... Vice-Chair
Kim S. Smith..... Secretary
Louisa Bukiet .....Treasurer

Mark Aaronson, Muhammad Alameldin, Kristen Belt, Eli Kaplan, Star Lightner, Tom Lollini, Zac Unger, Zach Walton,

Contact the board: chair@rockridge.org
For information: info@rockridge.org

Contacting the *Rockidge News*

Are there topics you'd like to see covered in the *Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* distributor? We'd love to hear from you.

Want to write a letter to the Editor? Letters are limited to 450 words and are published at the editors discretion. Send letters to: editor@rockridge.org. Please include your name, email, and street of residence. **Deadline is the 11th of each month for the upcoming newsletter.**

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 JUNE 2024: May 20th, 2024

Advertising rates are $28/column inch ($32 for color). Six-month pre-pay rates available.
For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 **(after noon)**, or email **joellis1@hotmail.com**.

Classifieds: 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.*

Kitchen Tour, from front page

In short, there is no template and no specific type of kitchen we are looking for. Just as Rockridge is not a static and unchanging place, neither is the Rockridge Kitchen Tour. You may have noticed that there were three ADUs in the past two Kitchen Tours, and the RCPC board is enthusiastic about continuing to highlight them. Thus, if you have a new ADU that you would like to have on the tour, please let us know.

Kitchen Design Concepts

ADU Kitchens: How did you maximize a smaller space?

Budget Kitchens: Where did you find your materials? Did you DIY?

Traditional Kitchens: How have you preserved the original details of your kitchen?

Mid-Century Modern Kitchens: Where did you source the materials? Where did you draw inspiration?

Post-Modern Kitchens: What design features did you choose and why?

Smart Kitchens: What technological features enhance your life?

Green and Sustainable Kitchens: Have a fully electric kitchen to showcase?

We are also interested in your feedback: What are some things you would like to see (or not see) on the Kitchen Tour? While the Kitchen Tour is RCPC's only fundraiser and its main source of funding, we are interested in hearing how to make it better, whatever that means to you.

Second, we need VOLUNTEERS! The Kitchen Tour has a lot of moving parts and we need volunteers to handle advertising, sponsorships, and to create the tour brochure. We also need writers to create descriptions of the kitchens/ADUs; a photographer to photograph them; and a volunteer coordinator to recruit and train tour docents. We have a small but mighty team in the works so far, but we need more great folks to put it together.

Please email kitchentour@rockridge.org with kitchen or ADU candidates, feedback on the Kitchen Tour, or to volunteer. Thank you. ■

Neighbors Pitch in for Earth Day at Frog Park

by Will Sheldon

The annual Earth Day Frog Park and the Temescal Greenbelt clean-up was a great success. The big structure was cleaned; the fiber wood chips were turned over; sand that had infiltrated the wood chips was removed; trees, bushes, and ivy were trimmed; loose debris was removed; large amounts of trash were collected; graffiti was painted over; the bathroom was cleaned… and the park looks fabulous.

Friends of Frog Park thank all the volunteers who showed up to spread the love and get their hands dirty. Their next clean-up event will take place sometime in September for Creek to Bay Day.



Photo by Anna Marks

Thank you to **Ain't Normal Café** for donating coffee, **Bakesale Betty's** for donating cinnamon rolls, and **Boichik Bagels** for donating bagels and schmears. And lastly, we thank the City of Oakland for supplying tools and a green waste dumpster. ■

corcoran
ICON PROPERTIES





Anne D. Brandon
Realtor
510.682.6644 | 510.339.9290
Anne.Brandon@corcoranicon.com
AnneDBrandon.com
Lic# 01877719

© 2022 Corcoran Icon Properties. All rights reserved.
Each franchise is independently owned and operated.

Land Use Committee Meeting

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

Meetings are held at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

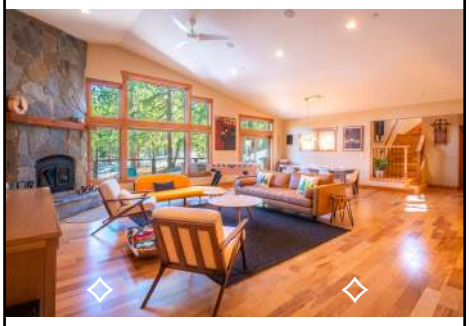
The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 15, on Zoom

To participate, or to request links to this or any previous meeting, email landuse@rockridge.org.

BOOK A 5-STAR STAY
★★★★★



Sebastopol
West Sonoma County
TheSebastopolRetreat.com



Truckee
North Lake Tahoe
TheTruckeeHouse.com

Save 10% | Promo Code: RN10
Exp. 9/2024

Behind the Scenes With the Good People of Colby St.

by Skip Fogarty

Considering the types of small businesses typically profiled here in the *Rockridge News*, you probably wouldn't think about a bustling video production agency as one of our neighbors. But right there on Colby, in a former storefront turned yoga studio, is a company called MVP, formerly known as Maximize Video Productions.

Run by founder **Max Fancher**, MVP is a full-service creative agency with expertise in the whole scope of commercial production and film making — from storytelling to location scouting to casting to pre- and post-production editing, and everything in between.



Photo courtesy of MVP

(L to R) Zubeyir Mentese, Eric Wahlstrom, Sarah Barker, Jove Mandzik and Max Fancher use their MVP/Good People van to haul video gear and to deliver meals to unhoused folks.

"We take pride in our client list," Fancher says. "As our business grew, we became able to take on bigger projects for clients like Apple, Genentech and Covered California. In turn, those larger accounts allow us to also serve cause-related companies and nonprofits with smaller budgets." Examples include Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Hope Services, and Goodwill. "We look for opportunities to partner with clients who are eager to push the envelope creatively while also doing good in the world."

In business for 17 years now, Fancher says, "we rebranded ourselves a few years ago. With a lot of thought and input, we settled on the notion of MVP being all about good people. That means we try to attract good people to work here. Then we align with good clients. That leads to our best possible work and I think it distinguishes us in the industry."

The Santa Cruz native studied sociology at UC Berkeley and played football as a running back for the Bears. After Cal, he operated a sailing school and charter business in the Berkeley Marina. He also led sailing excursions in exotic locales like Tonga, Tahiti, Greece and Turkey.

Around the time his first daughter was born, Fancher was looking for a change of career direction. Always interested in film and photography, he said he really caught the bug for making videos on his sailing trips. He produced video "scrapbooks" for clients to remember and share their adventures. He enjoyed the work and discovered that people would actually pay for it. So, he set a new course, at first working from a bedroom at home. "We have a picture of our baby in a sling on my chest while I'm pounding away at the keyboard."

Then, one day on his neighborhood jog, he spotted a "For Rent" sign. The corner building had caught his eye before as he was looking for more space to grow his business. When he inquired and toured the space, he knew the former neighborhood

MVP, see next page

Benjamin Moore
WOODLUXE
Years of technological innovation have yielded a brand-new exterior stain that comes in a wide variety of colors and finishes.
20% OFF
WOODLUXE GALLONS
COLE HARDWARE
Cole. Hardware for the soul.
Valid through 5.31.24

COLLINS ROOFING
Family Owned & Operated
(510) 444-2220
www.collinsroofingcompany.com
Quality Works • Free Estimates
Lic #695711

MVP, from previous page

grocery was the perfect spot for MVP. Now, the 1,000-square-foot boutique studio space includes edit bays for post-production, conference space for meetings, and enough room to shoot the occasional interview or product shot.

Snug in a residential neighborhood, the company aims to be a good neighbor in many ways. They held an open house when they first moved in, offer fresh water to passerby dogs, and recently organized an art show in Colby Park. With creative flair, they frequently re-purpose the props from client shoots into fun window displays describing their projects.

Beyond Rockridge, the company really walks the walk of being good people. The first Saturday each month, they rally employees and volunteers to feed hundreds of unhoused folks in San Francisco's Tenderloin and in West Oakland. "We work with City Eats to deliver hot meals which are much better than a cold sandwich handout," Fancher says. "These days, there's plenty of negativity about our downtown areas, but we find that giving something back shifts people's attitudes from helplessness to empathy."

MVP currently employs about 20 folks. Several are full-time employees and, as is typical in the production industry, most MVP associates work on a per-project basis.

Eric Wahlstrom is the lead editor on MVP's various projects. With the company for over four years, he says "working at MVP is different than the large companies I used to work for because I'm given a lot of creative autonomy, and my ideas go further here. Max embodies our good people ethos in how he supports and values me as an employee."

Producer **Danielle Cheifetz** echoes those ideas. "Over the years, I've cultivated a network of professionals with positive attitudes and reliability, and getting the opportunity to meet and work with other good people only helps everyone grow."

MVP, see next page

Dogs and Cats of Rockridge

Her name, **Machka**, is slang for "female cat" in central Europe, and she stands in solidarity with all displaced cats during wartime. The Maine Coon cat loves Costco Paté and prefers to take a nap when "people food" is being served. Machka has an uncanny ability to get into in any new box in under five seconds and will chase any drinking straw to add to her growing collection. She loves to play with her sister feline, Kitska. They both trained easily and have learned to come on command and give fist bumps.





This is **Germ**, a four-year-old Bernedoodle. He was adopted from Michigan right before the pandemic when he was only eight weeks old. After long hikes, he loves to be rewarded with peanut butter, cheese, and Polka dog treats. He has a lot of empathy and always knows when you need extra cuddles. When he is not walking with his guardians to Trader Joe's or Bakesale Betty, you will find him sitting or lying down on the porch steps watching the world go by.

Does your furry friend live in Rockridge? If so, send a photo of your four-legged companion with a short commentary to: editor@rockridge.org.



MVP, from previous page

Max and his wife Maggie, who serves as MVP's CFO, have two daughters, Ella, 16, and Tessa, 8, and they live on Boyd Avenue. "One thing that's great about Rockridge is the wonderful public schools," Fancher says. Ella attended Chabot Elementary, Claremont Middle, and is now at Oakland Tech. Tessa is on the same course.

"When you find alignment with your co-workers, your clients, and your community, it's just the best feeling," Fancher concludes. Characteristically, he gathers the team before every client shoot in a football-style huddle to share a bonding chant: "On three… one, two, three — good people!"

For info, see maximizevideo.com.

Mercy Vintage Takes Over Storefront on College Avenue

Mercy Vintage opened in June of 2009 on Piedmont Avenue and will soon be relocating to College at Lawton, the corner location previously occupied by textile designer Lesley Evers and Right Angle hair design.

Owner **Karen Fort** currently operates two shops across the street from each other, and looks forward to consolidating them into a larger location nearly twice the size of the two combined.

"We all work together and wanted to be in one space. We're really excited to be in that neighborhood. People are stopping every day to welcome us, and telling us how excited they are. We can't wait to get going over there."

They plan to continue offering a wide variety of vintage clothes and accessories for women in a 1920s-era space. If all goes well, they will open this month, seven days a week. ■



Shop owner Karen Fort purchased dry cleaner tracks to display her large selection of vintage Levis®.

SOLD IN ROCKRIDGE



6762 MANOR CREST
Closed 33% over list price with 4 offers!
SOLD FOR $2,250,000



COMING IN MAY!
343 Glendale Ave, a sublime Craftsman bungalow with a 94 Walkscore®!

Contact me for details!
MAXI LILLEY
510.919.8997
maxi@redoakrealty.com



RED OAK REALTY
The Rockridge Realtor® with a Designer's Eye
DRE#1919653

A Benefit For Children Afflicted by War
The Rockridge Chorale
Performing
MOZART
CORONATION MASS IN C.KV317
Plus Bernstein, Arnesen, Brahms and more
Saturday May 11th 2024, 3PM
Mother's Day Weekend
Concert and Reception
Tickets
Adults $20
Children <12 $10
At the door $25
First Congregational Church of Oakland
2501 Harrison St. Oakland, CA 94612
rockridgechorale.org



Devi de Sam Lazaro
Founder and Conductor



YOUR LOCAL
REFILL SHOP
[BULK] [ZERO-WASTE]
GROCERY SHOPPING WITHOUT THE WASTE



ReUpRefills.org
6025 COLLEGE AVE. OAKLAND

Know Justice, Know Peace

by Carol Kasparek



Crew members install the "Know Justice, Know Peace" sign as part of the Autumn 23 show at The Gardens at Lake Merritt.

"We need to do something," said engineer, artist, and Rockridge resident **Mauricio Bustos** in reaction to the tide of national events surrounding the death of George Floyd in the summer of 2020. He realized then that he had to "channel his anger at what was happening in the world," and was convinced that he needed to use his talents to "get people to think that we are all in this together."

One of his mentors would always ask, "Are you connected to power and to the ground?" Bustos would remind himself of this as he embarked on an artistic endeavor to tie it all together. He decided to use light, as in neon and LED, to convey his message as he brought a luminous Black Lives Matter sign to life. He and his crew fashioned the BLM piece in a shared warehouse in Emeryville where Burner fire-breathing vehicles take shape. He did not expect that the execution of the sculpture would turn out to be only one of his challenges.

When he looked for a location to mount the piece, he discovered that people did not want to get involved. Fortunately, Emeryville's mayor at the time connected him with the owners of Rising Sun whose building overlooks Highway 24. Bustos and his son were soon up on the roof meticulously positioning the piece, reassuring vigilant police officers they were safe — and on July 25, 2020, the Black Lives Matter message blazed into being. "So beautiful, so clean, so much work," Bustos remarked on the result.

Bustos has always found interesting things to do. For 15 years, he has been part of Core Crew creating fantastical and functional contraptions for Burning Man. With a graduate degree in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, he has constructed massive outdoor sculptures throughout the East Bay. On a weekend in 2018, he filled the empty lot at the corner of Claremont and College with fiberglass wands that bent and twisted in the wind. Later, he created a sea of steel seagrass at the Richmond Ferry Terminal.

The next large-scale social justice project for Bustos is already in process — a huge, animated neon work "Know Justice, Know Peace," is currently taking shape. Bustos has open-sourced the technology he developed to control the displays, but money will ultimately determine the speed of progress. A crowdfunding site is funneling money for materials. They are hosting volunteer events where everyone will be acknowledged for their contributions. "A kid can say, 'I sanded that letter,'" explained Bustos. The Crew (which also includes attorneys, doctors, and nonprofit organization leaders) will continue to devote themselves to bringing the sculpture into being.

"Know Justice, Know Peace will be a powerful gift to the community", asserts Bustos, and the Oakland City Council agrees. They chose the piece to be part of the Festival of Lights, and will be mounted within the month across from the offices of the Mayor and Chamber of Commerce. With that unveiling, Bustos will have achieved his goal of bringing the joy of social justice to a larger audience — let there be light. ■

STEA REALTY GROUP
DRE # 01221457
ROCKRIDGE LIVING AWAITS
DANIEL@STEAREALTYGROUP.COM | 510.843.6400
Call for details

5460 Locksley Ave

5457 Kales Ave
JUST LISTED

Park Day Co-Founder Inspires, Learns from Students

eyes on Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

"Those were the days when anything was possible." Longtime Rockridge resident **Susan Erb** was referring to the '70s, when she, then a fledgling teacher, and five sets of parents left Twin Pines Day School — an independent progressive day school in the Temescal neighborhood — to found Park Day School.

Erb had knocked on the door of Twin Pines with degrees in art and psychology from Earlham College, a Quaker school in her native Ohio, but no teaching certificate. She was hired at $500 a month to teach kindergarten although, "I hardly knew how to teach."

But growing dissatisfaction with what she described as a "chaotic" teaching and learning environment, drove the group to come up with an alternative. "We don't like what is going on here" — exemplified by walls filled with psychedelic posters. "So, what would we like? It was somewhat of a conspiracy. We would meet after school out on the playground in secret."

Come summer, the meetings shifted to her kitchen. "We didn't have a lot of resources, but we did have a lot of imagination and desire," she said. They opened the K-3 Park Day School that fall, renting space from Beth Jacob, the Orthodox Jewish Synagogue on Park Boulevard. "We mopped bathrooms and painted walls," and with no money for furnishings, "We started digging in dumpsters in the Oakland Hills, the Oakland flats, and at Safeway."

"We took every student we could get," Erb said, with a September 1976 enrollment of 22. By October, that had grown to 28. Their calendar conflicted with the synagogue's calendar, so on pre-Sabbath afternoons they held classes in a street parklet, "which no way was a park." Three years later, with a growing student body, they moved to Montclair Presbyterian Church and added grades 4-6.

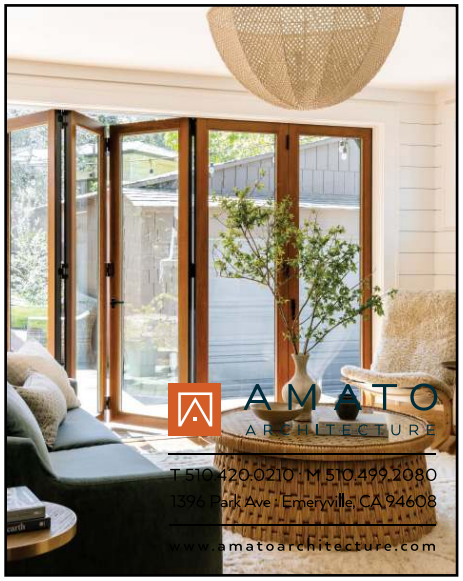
In a full-circle scenario, Twin Pines closed in 1982. Erb and her cohorts, with an enrollment that had grown to nearly 300 students, purchased the property. In 2006, the school "adopted" the East Bay Community School and expanded to K-8. "This was total investment," she said. "There was no hierarchy. All decisions were made together by the staff and board."

Erb was the reason the late **Tom Little**, self-described as a 22-year-old graduate student who sports a large red Afro, bushy mustache, and braces, left San Francisco State to become an unpaid intern at the new school.

"Tall and willowy, Susan conveys a serene confidence with adults that quickly morphs into gentle wackiness with a young child," he later wrote in his book, *Loving Learning: How Progressive Education Can Save America's Schools*. "When speaking with children, she'll rarely look down at them; instead, she squats or kneels to address them at eye level as she calls their attention to wonders they haven't yet noticed. I realized right away that serving as Susan's apprentice would teach me more than anything I'd learn in graduate school." Little went on to head Park Day School for 27 years.

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page







Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

As for Erb, "I was never cut out to be a director. I was a teacher. A teacher who loved being a part of a collaborative experience in all of its frustrating, challenging, learning, thrilling, parts: Keeping our eyes on the prize of creating a dynamic, brave place of learning for kids and adults."

A goal from the beginning, she said, was to have staff and students that reflected the diverse group of founding parents. But instead of student tests, they focused on progressive education ideals — social justice, collaborative learning, creative use of space (the school has gardens and a chicken coop), and community activism.

That included projects with Emerson Elementary, the nearby elementary school; and, until it closed in 2008, the Matilda Brown Home, the historic, 132-year-old assisted living facility for women, now part of Park Day's campus. "We'd go over and read stories to the ladies which seemed to enliven their lives."

Erb guided three generations of **Mike McConnell's** family. "You send your child off to the care of a teacher, not a school," McConnell said. "So, when another parent called to say Susan is unique; would you join us if she were willing to keep teaching our children in a new school? The answer was an enthusiastic yes. And sure enough, one by one, more wonderful, committed, dynamic teachers were added. But Susan was the prototype."

"She was my smart, beloved teacher," said daughter **Ericka McConnell**, a Rockridge resident and commercial photographer. "Susan was one of the primary reasons that I loved school. She had these traditions like Charlotte's Web Day where we would dress up as animals," and posters such as: In This Room It's Okay to Make Mistakes.

"I got to revisit her teaching style, Ericka said, when daughter **Flora Breitbard**, now a high school senior, was in Erb's first-grade class shortly before her retirement. Leaving teaching was a hard decision, said Erb. "I was so invested. We had gender-questioning kids at an early age. We were one of the first schools to open our thinking and to learn from them. I really did grow there. I had the privilege of being at that school."



Now retired, Susan Erb reflects on her more than 40 years of teaching, "We were always activistic in our classroom." *Photo by Judy Berne*

She also considers it a privilege to live in Rockridge where strolling along College Avenue gives her a sense of community. "I love the old-fashioned, family-owned business feel of Cole Hardware." Her husband, **Mark Levin**, is a regular at Cole Coffee. "Thank goodness for the small stores and being able to walk everywhere," Erb said, "that is Rockridge at its best."

Have a Rockridge-based story to tell? Please email judyberne@att.net. ■

Darin J. Worm
BROKER
510.504.4960
djworm@centurioninsurance.net

Centurion Insurance Agency
Commercial + Personal + Life + Health

An Independent Insurance Brokerage providing cost effective, comprehensive Insurance products and services since 1947.

www.centurioninsurance.net

ORINDA ACADEMY



DARE to be DIFFERENT
7:1 Faculty-Student Ratio | Max Class Size of 13
GRADES 8-12 OrindaAcademy.org

LETTER FROM RCPC CHAIR

Growing as a Community

Thank you to the nearly 450 residents who came out to vote in the RCPC elections. I'm humbled to have been re-elected and re-appointed Chair by our new board. RCPC welcomes five brand new board members who bring fresh ideas, have deep roots throughout the neighborhood, and bring professional expertise related to our neighborhood's most pressing issues of land use and growth — in addition to being active parents in Rockridge schools and/or safety advocates on their blocks.

Maison d'Etre to Reopen this Month

Pressed against the windows of Maison d'Etre, you may have noticed, is what stands between the currently closed doors and the store's promised spring reopening — boxes upon boxes of amazing goods. The owners are working hard to inventory, price, and arrange these goodies onto shelves, and promise it will be dazzling.

Opening day will be sometime later this month… stay tuned.

What can a small neighborhood association do?

A lot actually. Since its founding, RCPC has been a prominent voice for the entire neighborhood when talking to the decision makers in the City and beyond. Some shining examples from our history: Passing a special tax to create the Rockridge Library; co-leading negotiations with Safeway for a better project at the College/Claremont shopping center; and facilitating the creation of Frog Park and Hardy Dog Park. Last year, our letters to the City led to increased density on College Avenue and in the City's Housing Element.

Why did I run for RCPC?

I was frustrated by the cost of housing — both rental and ownership. I'm agitated by comments like, "my kids will never afford to live here" and I believe this problem calls for our action. Our housing crisis was caused by a lack of building housing, for many reasons, including community opposition to density. Like all of us, I've loved our neighborhood since the moment I stepped foot here. I revere our vibrant College Avenue, our beautiful streets, and our palpable sense of community. I believe more people deserve a chance to be part of this neighborhood and so I've stepped up to serve.

What's ahead of us?

State housing laws have changed greatly to make building housing easier. Public opinion has followed suit to support that housing growth, from ADUs one unit at a time, to larger opportunity sites, including CCA (the former arts college at Broadway and College). Growth is inevitable — its how we help shape it.

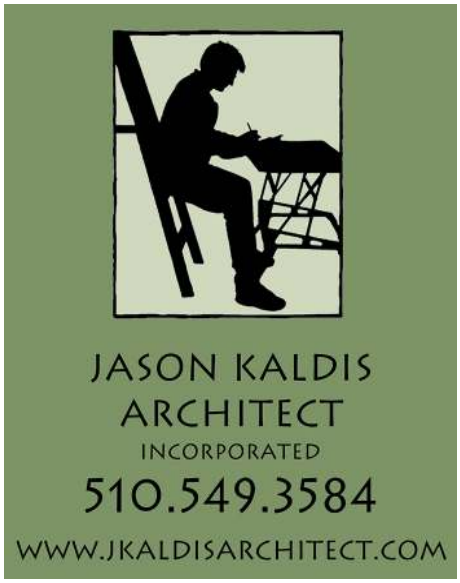
In the '90s, RCPC developed "The Rockridge Area Specific Plan." We're due for an update! Throughout 2024, RCPC seeks to develop a "Community Vision Plan" to collectively identify how we want our neighborhood to grow. Through a series of engagement opportunities and an online survey, we'll ask neighbors to weigh in on questions like, "How do you see Rockridge now?, "How do you envision it ten years in the future?," and, "What are your favorite and least favorite attributes of the neighborhood?"

We look forward to your thoughts and ideas. Sign up for updates here: bit.ly/VisionRockridge.

In addition to uplifting voices from throughout the neighborhood into the Community Vision Plan, my goals as Chair are to strengthen our partnerships with the merchants of the Rockridge District Association and to support a successful Kitchen Tour — our nonprofit's sole fundraiser and longstanding tradition (coming this fall). ■

Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair





LETTER TO THE EDITOR

New Development Has No Plan for Safe Access

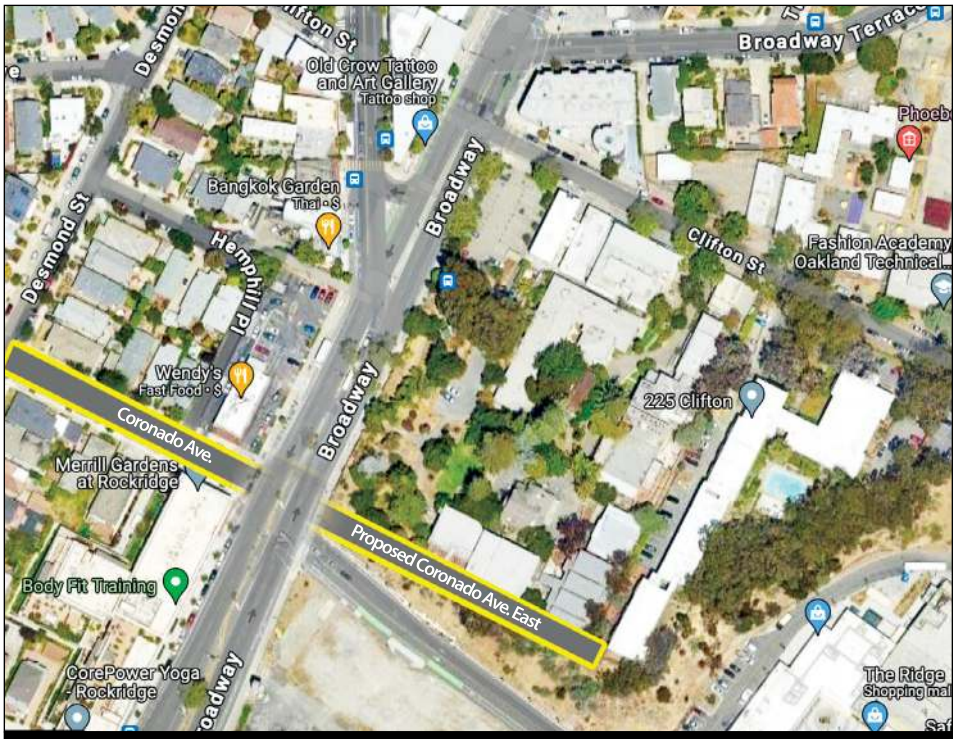
DEAR EDITOR: The latest version of the proposed development of the CCA campus seems to respond to many of the community's concerns. I have spent years on these grounds having been a student there in the '60s. Based on figures provided by the developer at the February 14 Zoom presentation, this project, when fully occupied, will bring approximately 760 residents, including children, to Rockridge.

I am concerned about the lack of any design considerations or site modifications regarding emergency vehicle access and the ability of people to escape in case of an emergency — earthquake, fires, or god forbid, a shooter.

The only egress from the long building proposed for the topmost portion of the site (Building B) is Clifton, a very narrow pedestrian street. A combination of fire trucks and ambulances, plus police cars trying to access people in need of emergency care would create an absolute mess. Plus, there is the apartment complex at 225 Clifton, with another 100 or so people, and, during the day, the students from Oakland Tech's Upper Campus on the north side of Clifton.

If this project is NOT revised to consider this possible situation, the resulting potential catastrophe could be worse than what we experienced back in 1989 AND put the property owners and the City of Oakland in major financial liability. Do we want Oakland to declare bankruptcy?

I feel that this plan as currently designed is extremely dangerous and needs to be revised to include a second major roadway that would allow safety vehicles to access more of the site. As currently proposed, the sole exit from Clifton onto Broadway will allow for only right turns onto Broadway, heading north, and since most people will want to go south into downtown or to the freeway, the intersection will create traffic jams at all hours with cut-through traffic directed into the small neighborhood streets, etc.



Coronado Avenue (highlighted in yellow above) could be extended east across Broadway into the campus to allow another access point in case of emergencies.

There seems to be another option that has not been mentioned by the developer and that is to create a second access road along the southern portion of the site. This would create an extension of Coronado, an intersection allowing left-hand turns from the site, and also quicker access from Fire Station #8 to the site.

I hope that the Oakland Fire Department, Oakland's Planning Department, Oakland's Planning Commission, and the Oakland City Council have the courage to speak up and make sure that the final design includes meaningful traffic mitigations that will provide Rockridge with a safe addition to our neighborhood. ■

Susan Shawl
63rd Street



ART TILE
tile ▪ countertops ▪ flooring
4336 Broadway
Oakland
510.547.8288
www.arttileoakland.com

BPAD
ADU's
NEW HOMES
KITCHEN + BATHS
HISTORIC RENOVATIONS
BUTTRICK PROJECTS
ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN
www.buttrickprojects.com
Member 1% FOR THE PLANET

TREE SCULPTURE
COMPLETE TREE CARE
Proudly serving Rockridge since 1965!
(510) 562-4000
www.treesculpture.com
Fully Insured | Certified Arborists | Lic #655977

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Yellowjacket Traps — The Time is Now

DEAR EDITOR: Over the last couple of summers, the yellowjacket population in Rockridge seems to have exploded. Also known colloquially as "meat bees," these pesky buggers are familiar to anyone who regularly tries to dine outdoors in the summer as they will show up quickly and make it difficult to enjoy a meal.

Even though there aren't many yellowjackets flying around yet this season, now is the best time of year to get traps out. Now that the weather has warmed up, queen yellowjackets that overwintered in the area are emerging to venture forth and establish new nests, and the very first workers born this year are already flying around to get those nests going. The Alameda County Vector Control (ACVC) has told me that every yellowjacket caught in the spring prevents approximately 1,000 from being born in summer.

I got my traps out in mid-March and am happy to report that within about a week they had caught about two dozen workers and one queen.

If you want to buy traps, I highly recommend either reusable or disposable models from the brand Rescue, which you can order online or find at most hardware stores. The reusable ones should last for years, and all you have to do is re-bait them every 10 weeks or so during the spring/summer. The disposables work for about 30 days and then can be thrown in your normal garbage. Both kinds should be removed in the fall/winter when they serve no purpose. These traps just include an attractant — no poison. The yellowjackets expire from heat/dehydration once they're in the trap. In my experience, they catch virtually no other insects, which I appreciate as well. Given the size of most of the lots in Rockridge, just one trap in a backyard should be effective at reducing the local yellowjacket population.

Yellowjackets will fly 1,000 feet from their nest to forage, so merely ensuring there are no nests in your yard is not sufficient. The more traps we have around the neighborhood, the more likely it is we'll prevent the formation of new nests, and the more likely we can all enjoy outdoor meals in peace.

If you do become aware of a yellowjacket nest in an outdoor area, know that Alameda County Vector Control will promptly respond and destroy it once they receive a report.

A yellowjacket nest was identified on my block last summer, formed in a hollow tree stump, and I'm happy to say that ACVC took care of it in a matter of days. To file a report with ACVC, check out this page: https://acvcsd.org/request-service. ■

Aaron Myers
Manor Crest

Experience * Knowledge * Performance
With Over 350 Real Estate Transactions
Market talk: This is the peak month of the year for housing inventory, though still below prior year averages. Contact me to hear more about buying or selling options in this current market!
SOLD: Gorgeous Rockridge remod w/ stunning views @ 5978Margarido.com 3+BD 3BA ~2,200 SqFt Sold @ $1,950,000
FOR SALE: 4 contiguous view lots in Piedmont Pines, great for 4 homes or a dream estate @ $ 995,000
COMING: Glen Highlands 4+ Bd 3+ Ba 3,300+ SqFt beauty across Hwy 13 from Upper Rockridge - @ $2.1M
May is Awareness Month for: Mental Health, Brothers & Sisters, Love a Tree, Wildfire Safety, Strawberries

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!
Perry Riani, Senior Associate
"Real Trends America's Best Real Estate Professionals Top 1.49%"
1900 Mountain Blvd Oakland, CA 94611
1625 Shattuck Ave Berkeley, CA 94709
C: 510.813.3799 Perry.Riani@Compass.com
License # 01402540
COMPASS

on College Avenue


Photo by Anna Marks

ACRE – Downstairs Café
5655 College Avenue

Tucked inside a tasty brioche bun (from Starter Bakery) lies the Brisket Burger — a special blend of 70 percent chuck and 30 percent brisket — ground daily for the restaurant. They make 12 burgers each day to ensure freshness, and serve each of them with shredded Iceberg lettuce, white onions, white cheddar cheese, and pickles (from Somoma Pickleworks). Add avocado or Hobbs' bacon for an extra treat. ■

— Anna L. Marks, editor

Monk's Kettle to Open this Fall in Rockridge

Monk's Kettle will be moving this fall from San Francisco's Mission District into the space formerly occupied by Citron, at 5484 College Avenue. The craft beer and wine tavern, which has another location in Terra Linda, is well-known for its award-winning fried chicken sandwiches and burgers. The SF location, which originally opened in 2007, will remain open through the summer with a final sale of rare and highly sought-after beers made from scratch before their final closing.

"In many ways, we are seeking a return to the beginning, to the time when we were surrounded by our community, to a time when that community was more stable, and, in particular, to a time when that community was more given to going out and experiencing the world through its restaurants, bars and shops. And we couldn't be more excited about it," says co-owner **Christian Albertson**.

The new location will feature an open floor plan, creating a big room for bar seating and dining. An overhead trellis and roof will allow for year-round seating in the large outside back deck. Reservations will be available through OpenTable. ■







IN MEMORIAM
Mary Catherine Haug



Mary Catherine Haug, known locally as MC, a Rockridge resident for more than 50 years, passed away peacefully on April 2nd. She was 80 years old.

MC moved to Rockridge (from Virginia) in the early 1970s when a lower-middle-class couple could still afford a two-story Craftsman for under $50k. She, along with her then-husband **Arthur Robinson Boone**, raised three children (William, Isabelle, and Phoebe Boone) and many neighborhood-friendly cats on Kales Avenue.

During her 45 years on Kales, MC experienced first-hand some of the big moments in Oakland history: the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake; and the 1991 Oakland Hills Firestorm. She remembered well the travels of the Rockridge Library as it moved from its original location to a temporary portable on the Claremont Middle School campus to its current home at College and Manila. She watched the transformation of the old bowling alley at the end of her street as it became a bookstore, and the countless restaurants that came and went over the years. She saw incredible change in the neighborhood, but her love for it never wavered.

MC loved Rockridge to her core. She believed in supporting small local businesses. She would line up on New Year's Day for the Pegasus calendar sale and was ecstatic when Cole Hardware moved in. For years she held court at Cole Coffee (having been a faithful customer since it was Royal Coffee and just had the tiny shop on 63rd), and once driving became difficult, she made it her goal to walk from her home to Chocolate Dragon or Hudson Bay Cafe every day for her daily caffeine fix and exercise.

But it wasn't just the businesses she loved. She loved the community. She was very social and some affectionately called her the "Mayor of College Avenue." Whether you knew her or not, you've likely interacted with her on her walks in the neighborhood, during her time serving on RCPC's board, or bundling the *Rockridge News*. She might've even checked you in for your blood donation appointment at the Red Cross on Claremont where she volunteered for many years.

And, even if you've never met MC, you have likely noticed her efforts if you have ever walked down Kales between College and Broadway. The magnificent London Plane trees that line the street were planted in the 1980s after MC collected signatures from Kales Avenue residents and petitioned the City of Oakland to plant the trees on the then-bare street. They are a testament to her long-standing love affair with Rockridge.

When MC needed to move to more senior-friendly accommodations, her most important criterion was to remain in her beloved Rockridge. She did not want to be far from her garden filled with fragrant freesias, her friends, or her favorite coffee shops and restaurants. She enjoyed her last few years at The Point with a spectacular view of the Bay from her 6th-floor apartment. On a clear day she could see the Bay Bridge, the Golden Gate Bridge, Mt. Tam, and the Campanile at UC Berkeley. She loved Oakland, and Rockridge above all, so please, if you feel it fitting, raise a glass of champagne or a breve latte in her honor — or plant a tree. She would love that too.

For information about her memorial service in August or to share condolences, her children can be reached at HaugMC@gmail.com. ■

May Events at the Rockridge Library

For Children

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays, 10:30am.

Chess Club: Wednesdays at 4pm. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm. Two dogs, Scout and Coco, alternate weeks. They are trained to listen to young people practice reading aloud.

Intergenerational Origami: Join Ellen for amazing folding practice on Tuesday 5/7 at 4pm and Tuesday 5/21 at 6:30pm.

Kamishibai Paper Theater with Erica: Thursday, 5/16 at 10:30am for toddlers, Thursday, 5/30 at 1:30pm for preschoolers.

AAPI Culture Experience: Māori Mo Ake Tonu: Saturday, 5/4 at 10:30am. Come see this Māori group performance, directed by Tracey Wihongi Panek (of the Nga Puhi Māori tribe) perform poi and haka dances and story-telling.

Summer Teen Volunteers Needed: Volunteers, ages 11-16, needed to help with our Summer Reading Program in June and July. New volunteers must attend a quick Orientation (5/14 at 6:30pm, 5/17 at 4pm, or 6/1 at 3pm), then choose shifts (2.5 hrs.) to help younger kids sign up, get prizes, do crafts, etc. Email esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org or stop by the library.

For Teens

Beach Volleyball Tournament with mocktails and snacks! Wednesday, 5/15 2pm-3pm. Hosted by the Teen Advisory Board and supported by the Friends of the Rockridge Library.

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 5/15, 3:30-4:30pm. 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 library (usually every 2nd Wednesday in the TeenZone, but date changed in May due to end of school year). New members welcome.

For Adults

Ask Your Area Home Experts: Every 2nd Friday, noon-2pm. Get answers, tips, and connections from a Senior Loan Advisor and a Realtor, both Rockridge locals. Have questions answered about home ownership, maintenance, finance, investing, ADUs, downsizing, moving, and more.

5366 College Avenue at Manila
510-597-5017

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

Holidays: The library will be closed on Monday, May 27, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day

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. Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., P.O. Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131.

For more information, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.
The deadline for June is May 20, 2024 (available June 8).

HARDWOOD FLOORS
Install, sand/refinish, repair, re-coat existing. Large jobs or small. Twenty-plus years in Piedmont Ave/Rockridge. Bruce Williams Woodfloors. Please call or text Bruce at 510/652-8121. CA Lic # 913727; www.blwfloors.com.

Handyman Service-House Repairs & Remodeling
Dry rot, kitchen and bath tile refurbishing or installation, window installation, plumbing, fence, deck & handrail repair, electrical wiring- fixtures, outlets. And much more. Call Juan 510/692 -6399 or email jbahena.info@gmail.com.

Reward Based Dog Training
Does your adolescent pup need help with basic obedience, leash manners or impulse control? We offer private training customized to help your dog succeed! Please call 510/646-9657 or visit dogsquaddogtraining.com for more information and to get started.

Garden Maintenance, Cleanups & Design
Experienced team of two dedicated to the art of gardening. We specialize in garden maintenance, cleanups and custom garden designs. To contact us, please email yourgreengardeners@gmail.com. Check us out at www.yourgreengardeners.com.

663 Alcatraz Ave #4
Challenged credit OK - $1995 /$1995 last /$1000sec. Available April 1 2024. Large one-bedroom unit; remodeled. Full kitchen and full bath. Recently remodeled / close to UC Berkeley / Bart bus, shopping and more. 415/527-7647; Melissabparker@gmail.com.

Happy Mother's Day!
For the month of May relax and rejuvenate with a custom facial, tailored for your unique skincare requirements. Visit Penelope's Aesthetics! $95. Gift certificates available. 510/594-1552; penelopecalef.com.

Electrical Remodels and Repairs
Need outlets for your new electric toilets? I can help with that. I've been doing electrical work in Oakland and Berkeley for over 35 years. Sutorik & Company. www.sutorikandco.com. Lic #397149. 510/655-3677. ■

Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

The next meeting will be held at the Rockridge Library Conference Room

Thursday, June 13, at 7pm

There will be brief presentations by Community Resource Officers and discussion of crime and safety.

A Zoom link is available to those who wish to attend remotely.

For more details, visit www.rockridgencpc.com

The Greater Rockridge NCPC meets every 2nd Thursday of the even numbered months.

LAW OFFICE OF
DAVE KARLINSKY
725 WASHINGTON ST., SUITE 313 OAKLAND, CA 94607
(510) 788-5700 WWW.DAVEKARLINSKYLAW.COM

Practicing exclusively in the area of trusts and estates:

- Estate planning
- Probate / trust administration
- Dispute resolution
- Special needs trusts

Please contact me during regular business hours to schedule an appointment.



We are always
ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL

Includes a full mouth set of digital x-rays & comprehensive exam

piedmont dental
BY DESIGN
Dr. Jill A Martenson, DDS

(510) 652-2911
1331 Grand Ave.
Piedmont, CA 94610
PiedmontDentalbyDesign.com

Meets every 2nd Saturday, 3:30pm to 4:30pm at the Rockridge Library.

Please all (510) 597-5017 for info and to get a copy of the book.

COME VISIT US AT THE CORNER OF LIFE & CHANGE



The GRUBB Co.
REALTORS

Ron Kriss, Broker
Lawton Associates
(c) 510-612-2547
RonKriss@JPS.net

RON KRISS
Lawton Associates
510.612.2547
DRE #01417458

ANDREW PITARRE
Compass 415.342.9950
CalBRE #01867911

LAWTON ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE
DRE# 01417458

Coming Soon to Temescal Place!

Penthouse Style Unit
3 Bed, 2.5 Bath in 1726 SF
3 Decks, Bonus Loft
+ Abundant Storage
2 Car Parking
Fantastic Walkable Location
4811 Telegraph Ave



"#1 in Rockridge Real Estate"
199 Successful Sales in Rockridge
"I know Rockridge"
www.LawtonAssoc.com

OMNI PAINTING & WATERPROOFING Inc.
COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL
INTERIOR-EXTERIOR
Professional preparation.
Many local references.
All work guaranteed.
(510) 654-3339
www.omnipainting.com

GoldStar Beauty Lounge
5332 College Ave, Oakland
(510) 428-4011
Helping you look and feel your best
Hair Cut – $35 and up – men, women, kids
Nail Care – manicures & pedicures
Waxing – eyebrows, lips, chin, and more
Hours: Tue–Sat 10 am–7 pm
Walk-ins welcome



BHR
BETTER HOMES REALTY
Celebrating 59 Years of Excellence in Real Estate Brokerage
For nearly six decades we've earned the loyalty of countless clients, helping them achieve the American Dream of home and investment property ownership. Our deep-rooted relationships within the community built on trust, has been pivotal in our journey. From first-time home buyers and seller representation, to seasoned investors, we've been privileged to be a part of your journeys.
Kevin Brown, Broker
Better Homes Realty, Rockridge
510.593.4780 | dre# 00644175

COMPETENCE
in Action
PIPE SPY®
License #: 754966
Keeping the Neighborhood Clean & Safe Everyday
(510) 465-3000
www.pipespy.com

Rockridge Dental™
510.653.6677 rockdent.com
3rd Floor
Market Hall
Ste. 312
Bruce D. Fong, D.D.S.
Filippo Cangini, D.D.S, M.S.
Advanced Preventive, Restorative, Periodontal Gum Care, and Dental Implants.