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

RCPC/NCPC Joint Town Hall

Thursday, October 10, 7pm
Rockridge Library
Upstairs Conference Room
(Sweets and snacks provided)

Join the Rockridge Community Planning Council and the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council at a meeting regarding Measure NN, a public safety funding bill, which is on the ballot in November (replacing Measure Z).

This joint meeting will discuss the issues around renewing the police, fire, and violence prevention funding provided by Measure Z, which expires at the end of 2024.

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 even-numbered months.



The 15th Biannual Rockridge Kitchen Tour is Almost Here: Get Your Tickets Now!

From Craftsman to Modern… See How Rockridge Cooks

by Star Lightner, Rockridge Kitchen Tour Chair

Maybe you've seen the posters and banners around Rockridge; the Rockridge Kitchen Tour is almost here. If you love design and want an inside look at how Rockridge kitchens are being updated, don't miss this amazing tour — now in its 30th year! — **Sunday, October 13 from 12:30 to 5:30pm**.

This self-paced, mostly walking tour allows you to see an impressive array of eight newly renovated kitchens and two brand new ADUs, ranging from classic Craftsman to sleek modern, and many styles in between, as well as a diversity of sizes and budgets. See the very latest in kitchen design and chat with architects, designers, and contractors. The homes this year are located all over the neighborhood — from Broadway to near Frog Park and just off College near Clifton and Hudson.

Don't forget that the Rockridge Kitchen Tour is also the major fund-raiser for Rockridge Community Planning Council, which benefits the Rockridge neighborhood — including funding of the Halloween Parade, neighborhood beautification projects, and numerous community grants.

Kitchen Tour guests receive a copy of the comprehensive tour brochure, describing each kitchen and listing resources for those contemplating a remodel of their own. The brochure is a treasure trove for both design enthusiasts and future renovators. ■

Tickets are Now Available

Advance tickets are $50 (plus fees) and on the day of the event for $55 (plus fees.) Purchase tickets at https://rockridgekitchentour.com or by using the QR code below.

Ticket holders can pick up their wristbands as of 11am on Sunday, October 13, at the Kitchen Tour table in front of Market Hall where same-day tickets may also be purchased.

Don't Miss the Rockridge Halloween Parade: October 27

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Assoc.



The annual Halloween Parade is the most thrilling day of the year to be on Rockridge's College Avenue. On **Sunday, October 27 between 11am and 2pm,** free family-friendly festivities will stretch along College Avenue — from Alcatraz to Broadway — for all ages to enjoy.

Halloween Parade, see next page

Halloween Parade, from front page

The Rockridge Library (5366 College) will serve as the main gathering place for families, hosting engaging activities like crafts with MOCHA, Storytime, book giveaways, and entertainment. A special thank you to **Kelly S. Wright** from State Farm for sponsoring the commemorative Trick-or-Treat bags.

A family-friendly dance party will be hosted outside of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (5951 College) with DJ **Danny Santos** spinning Halloween classics for dancers of all ages, as well as crafts for kids. Rockridge merchants will be passing out candy as Trick-and-Treaters walk by in costume.

Look for the "Trick-or-Treat Here" signs posted outside participating businesses. In addition, look for Rockridge merchants who will be adding to the festivities with Halloween-themed sales, giveaways, tastings, popups, and more.


Photo: Anna L Marks

The Rockridge District Association will be offering special prizes for best costumes to children and pets who post on social media and **tag @rockridgeoakland that day.**

The annual Rockridge Halloween Parade is co-produced by the Rockridge Community Planning Council, Rockridge Library, and Rockridge District Association. A full schedule and list of business activations can be found at www.RockridgeDistrict.com closer to the event date.

RCPC Op-Ed

Yes, on Prop 5 — Empowering Local Communities to Build Affordable Housing and Essential Infrastructure

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

Although housing development can be a divisive issue, many in our community share a desire to see more affordable housing in our neighborhood and throughout Oakland. Our city, region, and the entire state face an unprecedented housing crisis with countless families struggling to find affordable homes. The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) is committed to advancing solutions that expand affordable housing opportunities. In this spirit, our board voted unanimously to endorse Proposition 5, a transformational measure that will unlock local communities' ability to address some of our most vexing problems.

Prop 5 will make it easier to create more affordable housing by allowing local voters to approve housing and infrastructure bonds with a 55 percent vote. This measure removes a systemic barrier that has for too long blocked communities' ability to meet their affordable housing and infrastructure needs. Prop 5 empowers local communities to fund projects that will directly benefit their residents, ensuring that decisions about building affordable housing and improving infrastructure are made at the local level by the people who know their communities best.

By supporting this measure, we can help local governments address critical needs — from creating more housing for working families and seniors, to repairing our roads and enhancing emergency response systems. Prop 5 also requires strict accountability and transparency provisions that help ensure all funds are spent effectively so local voters and taxpayers can be confident that projects will deliver impactful results.

Passing Prop 5 is a crucial step toward making housing more accessible and affordable in Rockridge and communities across California. RCPC has endorsed this measure, and we hope you'll join us in voting YES on Prop 5 this fall. ■

THE RockridgeNews

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It's 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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Jo Ellis..... Assistant Editor & Ad Manager
Susan Montauk .....Business & Distribution Manager
Judith Doner Berne ..... Senior Contributing Writer

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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 editor's 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.

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Display Ad Deadline for NOVEMBER 2024: OCTOBER 15, 2024

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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.*

eyes on Rockridge

Rockridge to Vote for OUSD District 1

by Judith Doner Berne

On November 5, Rockridge voters will have a choice of two candidates to represent Rockridge on the board of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) — a nurse midwife and mom with two children in Oakland Schools, and a UC Berkeley junior and 2022 graduate of Oakland Technical High School.

Rachel Latta and **Benjamin Salop** are running to replace Sam Davis in District 1. Davis is retiring after four years, most recently as board president. "People want to see equity and excellence for every student in every school, and they want a parent of current OUSD students on the board," said Latta, 41, a daughter of Filipino immigrants. She grew up in San Francisco and now lives in Rockridge.

"Retaining and recruiting teachers are my priority," Latta said. She wants to increase pay and streamline the hiring process for teachers because "getting into a teaching position at OUSD is very difficult." State money, she said, is available to provide transitional kindergarten (TK) and after-school programs to every elementary school, which could boost enrollment and add hours for part-time teachers. "Almost 1,000 four-year-olds couldn't get into OUSD's TK programs [this year]."



Photo provided by Benjamin Salof

"I understand the issues of middle and high school students," says Salop, a 2022 graduate of Oakland Tech.

Salop, 20, lives in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood and said he will work for more student, parent, and faculty access to the board, budget accountability, and better college and career preparation for students. A product of both private and OUSD schools, he feels that he understands the issues of middle and high school students. His twin brother is an Oakland School for the Arts graduate, his mom is a retired architect, and his dad is an environmental scientist.

"Families don't have a say in how things are run," Salop said. As a student body president and a student liaison to the board while at Tech, "trying to interact with its members impressed upon me the lack of acess

OUSD Vote, see next page

Historic First: 16- and 17-Year-Olds to Vote in School Board Election

In an historic first for California — the County of Alameda, the City of Oakland, the City of Berkeley, Oakland Unified School District, and Berkeley Unified School District have announced that 16- and 17-year-olds in Oakland and Berkeley will be able to vote in their respective school board elections this month.

Key Information/Dates for the November 5th election:

Voter Information Guides will be mailed to all voters (including youth voters) as of Thurs, Sept. 26, 2024.

All voters, including youth voters, will be mailed a mail-in ballot starting the week of Oct. 7, 2024.

The last day for all voters, including youth voters, to register online at https://registertovote.ca.gov/ is Monday, Oct. 21 (all voters, including youth voters, may also register to vote in person at the Registrar of Voters' office at 1225 Fallon St. through Election Day).

The last day for all voters, including youth voters, to request a mail-in ballot replacement is Tues, Oct. 29, 2024. ■

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OUSD Vote, from previous page

from students. I saw that our parents and our faculty had the same problems." The result, he said, is a dysfunction that affects the education of OUSD students.

Current board members do not have offspring attending OUSD schools. Latta is focused on remedying that. Daughter Lucinda, 12, attended Prescott Elementary and now is in seventh grade at West Oakland Middle School. Her son Desmond, 9, attends Prescott. Both schools are located in West Oakland. Preschooler Marcus, 4, will attend Prescott next year.

Latta has been active in Equity Allies for OUSD which helped to feed students during Covid's school closures; created an Equity Fund for underserved schools; and worked to expand restorative justice programs. She is the school liaison for the Prop 15 Schools and Communities First Campaign to further fund California public schools, and serves as a member of OUSD Superintendent's Equitable Enrollment Committee.

Salop has a dual major at Cal (civil engineering and intellectual history) where he works part-time as a research assistant in the civil engineering department. As co-chair of the Oakland Youth Commission, he helped champion the ballot measure that allows 16 and 17-year-old Oakland Schools' students to vote for the school board for the first time, a plan that





Rachel Latta with her husband Chase and their children, Desmond, Lucinda, and Marcus.

Latta also favors.

His experience has impacted how he views an OUSD education — inequitable and uneven. "As a student at an underfunded school, we didn't have access to basic things." Salop touts the Paideia program (a 10th to 12th grade college-level discussion on the great works of literature, history, and political thought), but laments that "not every student has the opportunity to take these classes."

The two candidates offer differing opinions on several important topics:

Lead Contamination

Salop: "Since these lead tests were conducted in April and May 2024, students and staff have been drinking from potentially contaminated water supplies without any notice from OUSD or EBMUD, even when OUSD's board policy requires that 'the Superintendent or designee shall, within one business day, notify teachers, other school personnel, and parents directly, through written notice, or electronic mail' if lead levels exceed 5ppb at any test site. This is the third time in seven years that OUSD has identified elevated levels of pollutants in drinking water. The question shouldn't be why Oaklanders had to wait five months to get test results, but why we've had to wait five years for our district to get rid of lead."

Latta: "Lead exposure is a major public health crisis, not only in schools but also in our homes and places of work, and we need to protect our children and school staff. The lapse in communication from the district to the community is completely unacceptable, and the results of the ongoing internal investigation should be publicly communicated and made available online. I expect that the current school board will exercise its oversight role to ensure the superintendent holds whoever is responsible accountable and to ensure this never happens again."

School Closings

Latta: "I don't support the way we have closed schools in the past. We haven't given those families what we promised them. We haven't saved any money from any of those closures. My children go to a school they say is failing, and they are thriving."

Salop: "Small schools with low attendance are unfair to those students and unfair to other students as well. The district spends way more per pupil at the smaller schools." At the same time, Salop envisions closed schools being turned into neighborhood centers that feature educational facilities such as child development centers. "If I have to close a school to keep ten schools open, then that's what I would do."

Board-Union Relations

Salop: He was a member of the shadow student negotiating team that led student campaigns to support the 2019 strike, but as a student advisor to the board, he noted, "I faced retaliation from OEA members and allies. It's critical that the school board and OEA leadership establish and maintain strong and cordial levels of communication that supersede any policy disputes." He favors including union members and leaders on district committees and seeking their input on policy issues.

Latta: "I do think there needs to be some repair" of relations between the board and the OEA (which has endorsed her). "I want to do what I can to be a bridge between the board and the union. I was raised in a union household. I know what unions do for workers. But the current dynamics and acrimony will only lead to another strike. I would not be a person who would add to the fervor."

For more, see BenForOakland.com; RachelForOakland.com. ■

RCPC Land Use Committee

5295 College Avenue Update

by Tom Lollini, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

Since its initial pre-application submittal in June, Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has been tracking this proposed project closely. In late July, the RCPC sent an inquiry to the Oakland City Planning Department seeking information on the process, timeline, and eligibility of this project for state-mandated ministerial review, density bonuses, and various zoning waivers asserted in the owner's application, (see September 2024 *Rockridge News* or visit https://rockridge.org/how-new-state-housing-laws-could-reshape-rockridges-future/).

On September 9, having not heard back, RCPC sent a follow-up inquiry to the City of Oakland's political leadership seeking a response, and articulating more specific questions about certain project elements, their relevance to state program eligibility claims, and the City's review process to make its determinations (https://rockridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-9-9-5295-College-Ave-RCPC-to-City-of-Oakland-Officials.pdf).

These elements included the scope and scale of the commercial podium and how its financial justification would be evaluated, the building's placement on its site and the associated planning and building standards waivers it would require, the amount of proposed parking, and technical questions about how the density of the project was being calculated for state density bonus purposes.

On September 11, RCPC received a response from Planning Director **William Gilchrist** informing us: "At this time, Tribal Consultation is underway as required by State law. There is no time limit on this process, and the developer cannot apply for project approval until the consultation is complete.

The applicant will then need to submit a development application before the City can address the specific aspects of the proposed development. The City will make no determination on the project until the developer submits an application for development. The Bureau of Planning must determine whether a project is eligible for streamlining under SB 35 within 60 days of application submittal for projects of 150 or fewer units."

In a separate communication to local architects in the community, City Planner **Neil Gray** noted: "a review of Building Code compliance is not performed during Planning review, and the City does not evaluate the financial feasibility of a project."

RCPC will continue to monitor and engage the City on this project and keep the neighborhood informed. ■

RCPC Land Use Committee Meeting

Next Meeting: Wed., October 16, on Zoom

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.

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





Letters to the Editor

A Montrosity in the Hood

Dear Editor: I am writing because of my concern regarding the proposed "monster" building at 5295 College Avenue. I feel somewhat confused regarding the building proposal for 5295 College Avenue. Under the CN-1 zone, a hotel is NOT PERMITTED there. The height proposal for this monstrosity is 170 feet tall! But the height limit here is 55 feet.

Currently, the Oakland Planning Code requires a ten-foot setback in the rear, I believe, but under what these guys propose, there is ZERO setback at the rear and on the south portion of the property line. I do not see any buffering, "wedding cake setbacks" in this zoning area where it abuts R zones.

This proposal shows no buffering, instead, it looks like a fortress wall, and no fenestration to speak of… and keep in mind that safety codes and fire codes prohibit any windows/ventilation openings in the wall along the back-property line.

The floor area ratio proposal is more than 1.5 times, this estimated max includes the Density Bonus regs. There is a REQUIRED Open Space calculation…the website info from this group shows less than half of the required open space, I do not yet see if they corrected this.

This building will stand out like a sore thumb in our neighborhood. It needs to be substantially scaled way back. Please DO NOT ALLOW APPROVAL of this building; it proposes so much that is contrary to existing Oakland planning and zoning codes!

The builders of this monstrosity do not care about our neighborhood, not one little bit.

Ellen Gierson
Opal St. ■





Yes In My Back Yard

Dear Editor: My family and I live two blocks from the proposed 5295 College Ave. development and are thrilled to see this proposal to significantly upgrade the architecture and streetscape at the south end of College Avenue and bring 88 sorely needed residential units (20 percent affordable) to the neighborhood.

We appreciate that the taller part of the building is set back from the street so as not to radically change the feel of the streetscape. We are disappointed to see NIMBY flyers in our neighborhood further discouraging such investment, upgrades, and expansion of housing. We want to see our neighborhood grow, improve, and welcome more families.

Colin Hughes
Broadway ■

On the Ballot: Measure MM

Measure MM, the Wildfire Prevention Zone, will be included on the November ballots of the residents of the Very High Fire Hazard Zone as defined by Oakland. They will be asked to pay $100 per year to fund the Oakland Vegetation Management Plan, providing dedicated funds to the Fire Department for such service.

Roadside clearance of brush and dead and dying trees would increase to 100 feet on evacuation routes. More goats would be grazing, inspections strengthened, and resident oversight and accountability stronger than most similar ballot measures.

Recent fires on Grizzly Peak were put out fast due to the quick response from fire departments from several jurisdictions as well as vegetation management on UC property — this is what Measure MM will support. Let's put out fires before they get out of control and spread.

To learn more, visit https://www.makeoaklandwildfiresafe.com.

Elizabeth K. Stage
Chair, Make Oakland Wildfire Safe

Letters, cont'd

Three Cheers for Preemption

Dear Editor: Thank you to the letter column in the *Rockridge News* for demonstrating how wise State lawmakers have been to largely preempt neighborhood groups from blocking housing. In all too many recent letters on the apartment tower proposed for College Ave, we saw the usual effort to freeze the neighborhood's profile in amber.

There is always a reason new housing isn't quite right — maybe it shades a solar panel or maybe construction will be disruptive, or maybe the architecture is novel. The result of these gripes, before recent legal reforms, was a death of a thousand cuts for each project through endless processes and adjustments, giving existing residents unwarranted veto power over new development.

Whatever marginal value these ideas may have, the cumulative result is clear: The hollowing out of Rockridge as a middle-class family neighborhood as building stalls out, rents spike, and the asking price for ordinary mid-century houses balloons to well over a million dollars. Even the news column was at pains to note that the tower is "unusually tall and dense for its location." Well, yes: The fact that such buildings are unusual here demonstrates decades of policy failure. It's a reason to call for height and density, not to oppose it. Buildings in this transit-rich neighborhood in a congenial climate should be tall, dense, and affordable. Because they are not, Rockridge is reserved for the wealthy, who, as the letter page demonstrates, are often eager to maintain that situation, and ordinary people are increasingly displaced to car-dependent sprawl development in triple-degree heat in the Central Valley. We should applaud our State leaders for recognizing the problem and edging the inevitable concerned neighbors firmly out of the picture as they work to restore an East Bay, and California, for everyone.

Craig Segall
Alcatraz Ave. ■

Building Design is Dangerous

Dear Editor: Thanks so much for your coverage of the proposed building project at 5295 College Ave. My family and I live on the backside of the site on Clifton Street, and what they are proposing would be five times the height that currently exists sitting directly on top of the property line. As it is now, their water pipes hang directly over our property and when they burst a few years back they flooded our backyard and bottom floor. There is also no safe access for the fire department to get to the backside if there is an emergency.

I have invested a lot in my community and building a home my family and friends can enjoy. This build with no setbacks would not only cut off any access we have to the sky in our backyard, but it would put my family in danger. I am totally supportive of more housing density in Rockridge and with this site specifically but it needs to be safe for its neighbors and residents.

This project as is would make my backyard unusable for the rest of my lifetime. Something like this can't move forward without the engagement of our community. If RCPC truly represents our community they must make a statement that a high rise doesn't make sense in this location.

Vennessa Hasten
Clifton St. ■

Appeal for Sensible Housing

Dear Editor: My brother and I have lived on Clifton Street for forty years. We moved to Rockridge when it was solidly working class, mainly Italian, and now enjoy the most charming walkable neighborhood, close to freeways, BART, public transport, places of worship, restaurants, independent bookstores, and a village of stores, doctors, and other professionals. We are not opposed to modernization, nor have we been opposed to change.

We are in favor of affordable housing, however, the proposal for 5295 College Avenue lacks several sensible and legal requisites — setbacks exist for the sake of safety and accessibility; the proposed height for the development is not sensible; the impact on traffic, the surrounding businesses, and our homes, which we cherish, shall by far militate toward the negative impact on the community, rather than the positive. Please oppose this project on our behalf and on the behalf of our community.

David and Anthony Vela
Clifton St. ■

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Letters, cont'd

5295 College: A Viable Proposal?

Dear Editor: Many thanks to all who wrote about the proposed Highrise building at 5295 College Avenue; and thank you to the *Rockridge News* for publishing these letters. It is very important for the RCPC to gather information and take a strong position on this project. The applicant claims to be eligible for "ministerial review," which eliminates neighborhood participation in shaping the project. It is truly shocking to learn that a project of this size and impact could receive Planning Department approval without consideration of the effects on the Rockridge neighborhood, or its business community.

The Oakland Planning Department has responded to initial queries and has confirmed that its review of this proposal will not take Building Code compliance or financial feasibility into consideration. I would like to point out that it would not be responsible to approve a project that has given no consideration to public safety. Surely the dramatic *Rockridge News* photo of flames rising behind homes on Clifton Street during the fire that destroyed East Bay Booksellers should give us reason to challenge this high-rise project – built to neighboring property lines with no setbacks and limited emergency vehicle access.

Our new height limit on College Avenue is 55 feet. This will permit the construction of a five-story structure for housing, and complementary commercial uses more in keeping with the neighborhood. I would submit that no building that is classified as a Highrise — 75 ft. to the highest floor of occupancy — should be proposed without basic Building and Fire Code compliance review. Any design must be held to these standards.

To propose a project without accurate representation of basic code considerations like proximity to adjoining structures; realistic emergency vehicle access; utility capacity; and space for fire sprinkler and smoke management systems, is not responsible. It distorts projections of the project's cost and fails to identify any upgrades to streets and critical utilities that the City may have to bear.

Let's have an informed discussion about these concerns — now — to shape a project that provides affordable housing and respects our community's safety into the future.

Merideth Marschak
Virmar Ave. ■

Kitchen Remodeling: What the Experts Say

by Susie Wyshak

The Rockridge Kitchen Tour reflects a goldmine of knowledge from designers, builders, and real estate agents, such as:

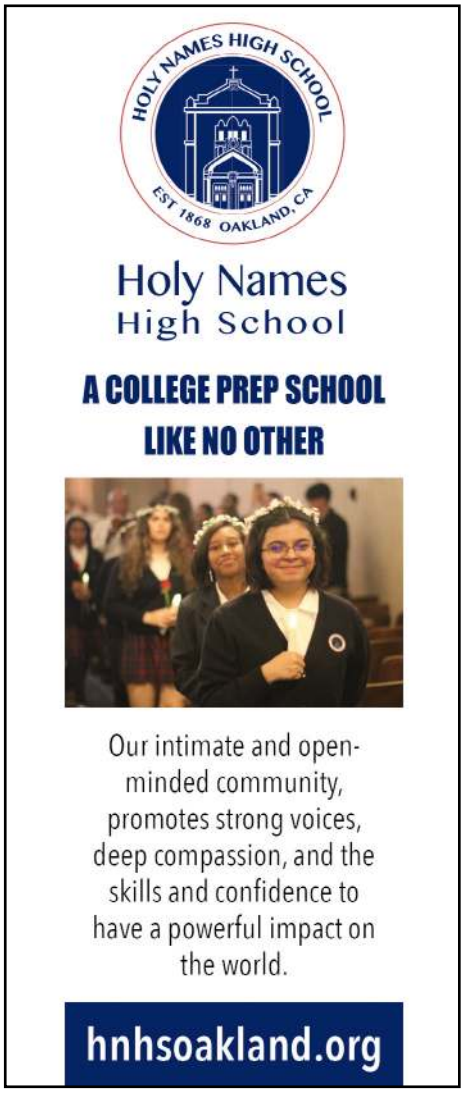
Cabinets vs. Shelving

Those Instagram-worthy floating shelves, "They look good online but aren't a must-have," says Kitchen Tour lead sponsor and real estate agent **Remy Weinstein**. "Lack of good cabinet space is often a real issue. When home buyers move in, they prefer ample space for food and dishes over a cute set of floating shelves."

A clean look inspired the "appliance garage" trend, which some tour kitchens have featured. However, real estate agent **Andrew Pitarre** notes that sometimes there just isn't space for them. "An alternative is to add plugs to pantry cabinets and pull-out drawers for small appliances, such as microwaves and toasters."

Architect **Jason Kaldis** echoes that idea, suggesting cabinets with rollout trays on deeper and harder-to-reach cabinets and swing-up or swing-down shelves. Still pining for floating shelves? Architect **Tamar Nachshon** of HDR Remodeling advocates for less wall storage and more open storage.

Kitchens, see next page







Kitchens, from previous page

"It costs less and it's less stress on the homeowner having all this stuff hidden away. It forces you to minimize." Just be sure you're committed to minimizing.

For the Island-Obsessed

For many, the kitchen island is the new dinner table. "People love to have casual seating at a counter within the kitchen for entertaining functionality and additional counter/prep space," says Pitarre. "If it's an island, it's hard to make it big enough. Bigger is better in almost all instances."

"If it's an island, it's hard to make it big enough. Bigger is better in almost all instances."

Large sinks on islands are the exception to the bigger rule, says Architect Kaldis. "Keep an island sink small and located where you would not lament the loss of that piece of counter, and where a faucet would not be visually or physically obstructive or a nuisance."

Shedding Light on Lighting

Lovers of open shelves rejoice: When located near windows, they keep the view itself from feeling cluttered or sightlines getting obstructed by more solid wall cabinetry, says Kaldis. He also suggests under-cabinet mounted strip lighting to showcase backsplash tile.

Pendants, recessed lighting, and skylights are all good. Where to stop? Pitarre feels in-drawer and toe-kick lighting (under cabinets) may be a trend to skip.

Easy Wins

Everyone agrees: Make spaces just a little bigger and more open than you initially think possible. If you have the budget, go for lux appliance brands, such as Sub-Zero® and Thermador®, which check the boxes for Weinstein's high-end buyers. When a range is 36 inches or larger, Pitarre marvels, "You'd be surprised how much you can fit in them. It's almost like having a double oven."

Remember everyday conveniences such as the touchless faucet, handy when hands are ultra-dirty or greasy. For those living without dishwashers, even an 18" dishwasher tucked into a cabinet space can be life-changing (you'll thank the author later). You may want to skip the pot filler faucet mounted behind a range, which Weinstein says may have a "wow factor" but not much benefit to resale value.

First Steps to Kitchen Bliss

Open your mind. "Some people don't realize how much they alter their lives to their existing kitchen," says HDR architect **Milton Tong**. **Abe Wortman**, Proyecto CEO, advises clients to prioritize systems and upgrades that ensure client comfort, such as building envelope, HVAC, windows, doors, and electrical.

To define scope. **Kathryn Rogers**, Principal Architect at Sogno Design Group, asks clients what is and isn't working in their space. "I encourage people to make a list of "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves." Kitchens are one of the most expensive rooms to remodel, so before deciding to undertake a large-scale renovation, have a good understanding of your goals."

To manage your remodel, Kaldis encourages clients to be involved, communicate frequently, and trust the experience of the architect or designer you are working with. "They see the ripple effects of decisions often before you do. Trust them, but verify that they "get you."

"Make sure your contractor provides a detailed budget, advises you on potential cost changes, and has contingencies or other tools for transparency regarding possible expenses," says Proyecto's Workman, who used tools to create accurate scope take-offs and identify discrepancies between plans and reality.

Get your sizzling questions answered at the Rockridge Kitchen Tour. For more information, see article on page one, and visit rockridgekitchentour.com for a full list of available resources.

Susie Wyshak is a Rockridge resident, Realtor® with Compass, and an aspiring kitchen re-designer; susiewyshak.com (DRE 02144226). ■



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Fermenting A Passion for Cheese

by Carol Kasparek

This year, the American Cheese Society chose to give their Meritorious Service Award to one of their most active and dynamic members. **Juliana Uruburu** of Market Hall received this high honor (one of many) after a 30-year career in the cheese industry.

"Her life's mission has been to nurture and guide thousands of people entering the field," noted one of the members announcing her award, "inspiring and mentoring managers all over the world." Another tribute declared, "You deserve to be recognized for the impact you have had on me and everyone in this room…. Market Hall sets the standard for what a cheese shop can be."

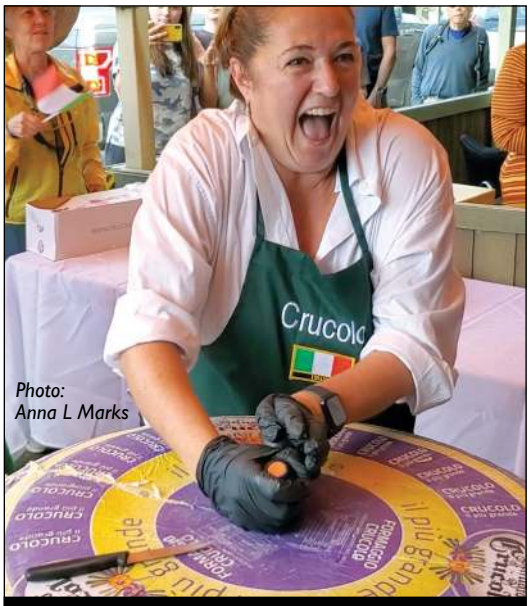


Photo: Anna L Marks

Cheesemonger Juliana Uruburu of Market Hall slices into the biggest wheel of cheese this side of the Rocky Mountains.

Uruburu went to work at Market Hall as her first job out of high school — the foodie destination Sara Wilson and her family had been creating for a growing community of gastronomic devotees. Many of those pioneers went on to create their own businesses, joining other culinary visionaries in the Bay Area. After learning much from these future luminaries, Uruburu developed her dedication to the craft.

After a few years stint, she left to earn an Interior Architecture degree from the San Francisco Academy of Arts, and used those skills to design and manage a specialty food shop in Jack London Square. When housing development in the area stalled and the shop closed, Uruburu returned to Market Hall where she quickly became manager of the cheese department — realizing cheese was her calling. "Cheese chose me," she confesses.

This began her teaching career… connecting with makers, judging in competitions, and building professional standards and resources for the industry. While conducting classes at Market Hall, Uruburu also began teaching at the San Francisco Cheese School, using her approach to instruct over 800 people (by her count) at conferences, local cooking schools, and private gatherings… and even led trips to farms and dairies to show customers the source of their food.

Uruburu recently made a special trip to Paris to be one of the first Americans to receive the "Chevalier du Taste Fromage de France." The award ceremony had her donning a heavy green robe and being tapped on each shoulder with a massive sword. Back in America, she worked with the American Cheese Society to craft the Certified Cheese Professional Standards, now the premier professional certification in the country. "Being in their company brings me so much joy," she says.

Now, as Retail Operations Manager, she oversees operations, focusing on the future. Every year, managers at Market Hall are encouraged to determine "three ways they want to grow," explains Uruburu. For the coming year, she looks forward to completing the food hall remodel and conducting classes in Rockridge while promoting agritourism in Northern California. She intends to inspire others to realize what she has, that working in this industry enhances life. "I want everybody to know everything" she says of her goals. ■

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Trees for Rockridge



Piedmont High Sophomores Madeline Booth and Miles Lee plant a tree on Shafter with advice from Stephen Stirplin from Trees for Oakland.

With the support of Trees for Oakland and the Rockridge Community Planning Council, more than a dozen volunteers turned out on Saturday, September 20, to plant 14 trees in the neighborhood. To find out how easy it is to plant a tree at your home, email treesforoakland.org. ■

Dogs of Rockridge

This is **Dash**, a five-year-old red mini poodle who lives on Hermann Street with her humans Aparna and Damo and their feline kitties Toby and Zooey. Dash loves going to Peet's coffee, long walks, and rolling on big clumps of clover. His aspiration is to someday catch a squirrel (fat chance!).





Meet **Finley**. While his DNA test deemed him a "mega mutt," we know he's 100 percent goofball. From staring out his Presley Way window to visiting his favorite College Avenue small businesses for treats, Finley is a Rockridge boy through and through. Should you see him barreling down the street, come up and give him a pet.

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.

Shoes on Solano is Now Sole Terra Shoes

Shoes on Solano, which opened its store at 5933 College Avenue in 1990, has now consolidated its stores under a name that represents all locations and its online presence — Sole Terra Shoes. Founder and Creative Director Carol Fabretti plans to continue offering a top selection of comfortable, fashionable footwear.

Visit www.soleterrashoes.com. ■

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Cult Favorites Come to Rockridge

by Chris Ayan

In the heart of Rockridge, two cult favorites are making their debut, promising to leave locals hungry for more. Bad Walter's Ice Cream and Monk's Kettle have both made waves in their respective corners of the food scene and now they're bringing their unique brands of flavor and community to one of Oakland's most vibrant neighborhoods.

Bad Walter's Ice Cream

It all started as a pandemic pop-up for Bad Walter's Ice Cream, but founder **Sydney Arkin** had bigger plans. After selling out day after day, she knew it was time for a brick-and-mortar location. Though she was focused on finding the right space, landing in Rockridge felt like kismet. "All my original followers are in this neighborhood," Sydney said. The shop opened early last month in the space formerly occupied by Smitten Ice Cream at 5800 College Avenue, and now, lines wrap around the block.



Monk's Kettle co-owners Nat Cutler and Christian Albertson plan to create a welcoming neighborhood tavern.



Sydney Arkin serves up an original brand of ice cream at Bad Walter's.

But it's not just the hype that keeps people coming back — it's the ice cream itself. Bad Walter's serves up nostalgia in a cone, but not the kind made for kids. "It's weird, it's fun," Sydney explained, and that's exactly the point. The flavors are unlike anything you'll find elsewhere because no one else could imagine them. Think Ritz Crackers, Nutter Butter, and Reese's Pieces — flavors your parents would have denied you growing up. But now that you're an adult, they can't say no, and neither can you.

While keeping the freezers stocked has been a challenge, Sydney and her team are working around the clock to meet demand.

Monk's Kettle

Just down the street at 5484 College Avenue, Monk's Kettle is bringing its beloved gastropub experience from San Francisco to the space formerly held by Citron, right next to À Côté. After opening its original Mission District location in 2007 as a neighborhood tavern, Monk's Kettle evolved, following its clientele to Marin in 2020, and now the East Bay. The new Rockridge location is set to open this month.

No matter what's on the menu, co-founder **Christian Albertson** admits, "The burger will always be our top seller by far — always has been, always will be." But don't overlook the other dishes. Chef **Raiden Brenner** has a knack for pickling, and you'll find his creations sprinkled throughout the menu, adding sharp, vibrant flavors to complement the pub classics.

Fans of the original SF spot will also be relieved to know that the award-winning beer program remains intact. Expect 28 draft beers, 70+ bottles, and an expanded menu of non-alcoholic options, including beers from Barrel Brothers, wines from Sovi, and mocktails. With the Mission District facing challenges, the team wasn't willing to risk another ten-year lease. "Being on College Avenue in Rockridge today feels like Valencia in 2012," said Albertson.

With both Bad Walter's Ice Cream and Monk's Kettle now calling Rockridge home, this neighborhood, already known for its culinary reputation, is set to become an even stronger destination for those seeking creative, memorable culinary experiences. ■

Rockridge Market Hall Wins Big at "Best of the East Bay"

The results are in for *East Bay Magazine/East Bay Express'* 2024 "Best of the East Bay." Congratulations to Market Hall Foods and Highwire Coffee Roasters for being recognized in four categories; and our neighbors at ACRE Kitchen & Bar garnered four awards this year. Thanks to all who voted.

Market Hall Caterers: Best Caterer

Market Hall Foods: Best Salads

Market Hall Bakery: Best Desserts

Highwire Coffee Roasters: Best Local Coffee Roaster

ACRE Kitchen & Bar:
Best New Restaurant
Best Bartender, Best Restaurant
Best American Restaurant

Highwire Coffee Storefront Showcases Local Artist



Artist Rachel Perls is an architectural color consultant and oil painter. You can view her works at Wisteria, Vita, and Baker in Commons in Elmwood. Perls recently displayed her mural in the storefront window of the new home of Highwire Coffee, which has moved next door to 5615 College Avenue (photo on left).

Perls has called Rockridge home since 2008, and lives here with her husband, daughter, and two dogs.

Piedmont Play School Has Openings

The Piedmont Play school offers a cooperative model with an integrated curriculum focused on building self-esteem and confidence while honoring individuality. Located in Hampton Park, this developmental preschool uses various play activities to foster learning for children 3-5 years old. Morning program runs from 9am to noon, Monday to Friday; extended care options are available. Although preference is given to Piedmont residents, Rockridge residents are encouraged to apply as spots are still available. Visit www.piedmontplayschool.org or email info@piedmontplayschool.org. ■

Update on East Bay Jewish Community Center Project

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board Member

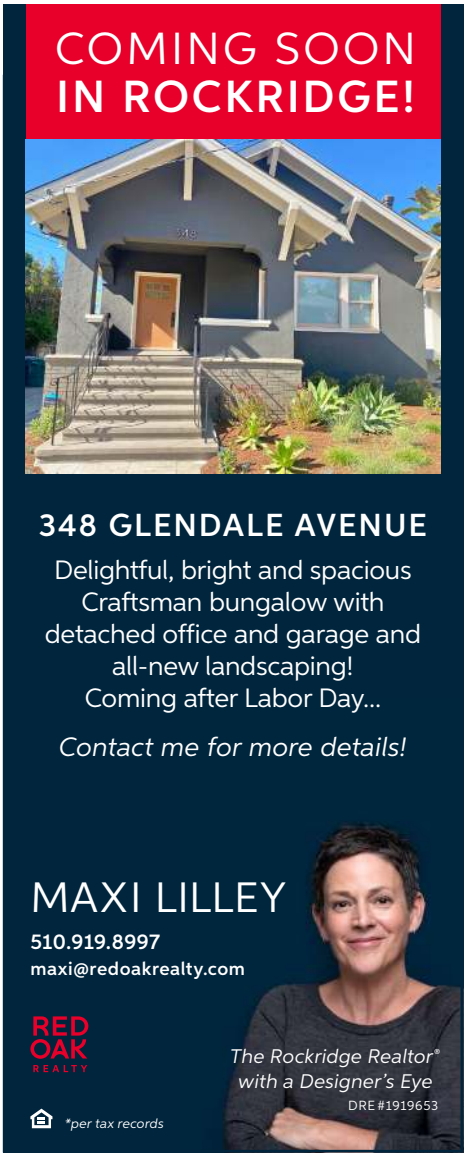
East Bay Jewish Community Center (JCC) representatives have been meeting with RCPC board members and immediate neighbors on Chabot Road for the past two+ years to discuss the JCC's plans for modifying and using the Dreyer's site, which the JCC will not fully occupy until January 2025. The discussions have been constructive.

The site's main uses will be as business and administrative offices for nonprofit organizations — preschool, after-school, and summer camp programs for mainly younger children; and for community and religious events and programs. There will not be any noteworthy sports or recreational activities.

City of Oakland approvals for the project are likely to be reviewed at a Planning Commission meeting in November, although nothing is officially scheduled as of mid-September. At the urging of the RCPC and Chabot neighbors task force, the JCC and Oakland planning officials have agreed to make several safety improvements at the College and Chabot intersection. These include relocating College Avenue bus stops to after the intersection; constructing a bulb-out at the northwest corner; and placing Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs) across both College crosswalks.

Discussions with the JCC are ongoing. The RCPC Board will consider taking position on the JCC project at its October meeting. A more in-depth article about the project and its status will appear in the November issue of the *Rockridge News*. ■





OCTOBER Events at Rockridge Library

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.

For Children

Storytime: Thursdays & Saturdays; 10:30am.

Chess Club: Wednesdays at4 pm. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm every week.

Origami for All: Every third Tuesday at 4pm; 10/15. All ages welcome.

Crafts: Bendable Mummies for Halloween: Thursday, 10/24 at 4pm.

Decorated Skulls for Dia de los Muertos: Tuesday, 10/29 at 4pm. All ages welcome, children under 8 must bring a grown-up.

Halloween Parade Events: Sunday, 10/27, 11am – 2pm. Join us in the Library Parking Lot for music, stories, crafts, and more fun for kids!

For Teens ages 12 – 18

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 10/9; 4-5 pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library.

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.

Needlework Circle: every Thursday, 2-4pm. Bring your yarn and fiber arts projects to Rockridge Library to work in good company. This group is facilitated by neighbor and long-time maker Vicki Breton who has expertise in knitting, crocheting, embroidery, applique and felting.

Making Sense of Medicare: Thursday, 10/19; 2-3pm. Get the expert advice you need about upcoming changes to Medicare and their impact on you.

Author Talk with Lenore Weiss: Wednesday, 10/2, 6:30-7:30pm. Lenore Weiss will be conversation with Tarshel Beards about her novel, Pullp into Paper, "an engaging, disturbing and sometimes humorous novel exposing a calcified network of corruption between a company (Rand-Atlantic) and the government (EPA) in a small Southern town where 'the stink [is] the smell of money.'"

Author Talk with Betty Tucker: Tuesday, 10/15; 3-4pm. Follow Betty Tucker's personal journey from an impoverished childhood in racist rural Florida to successfully completing college, building a career and raising a family in California. Betty's path is both emblematic of the Black experience in America and highly unique.

Fall Meet the Author Series: Wednesday, 10/23, 6:30-7:30. New York Times Bestselling author, memoirist, and award-winning podcaster Carvell Wallace will be in conversation with Tarshel Beards about his book, *Another Word for Love: A Memoir*. Mr. Wallace will be signing copies of the book, available for purchase from A Great Good Place for Books. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Rockridge Library.

Hands-on Mushroom Program: Saturday, 10/26, 1-3pm. Yolanda Burrell of Pollenate Farm will provide information about mushrooms and how to grow them at home. Supplies, including a mushroom growing kit are included. Space is limited, please call 510-597-5017 to reserve a spot.

ROCKRIDGE BOOK CLUB

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

October's book is *The Wager* by David Grann. Please call (510) 597-5017 for info and to get a copy of the book.

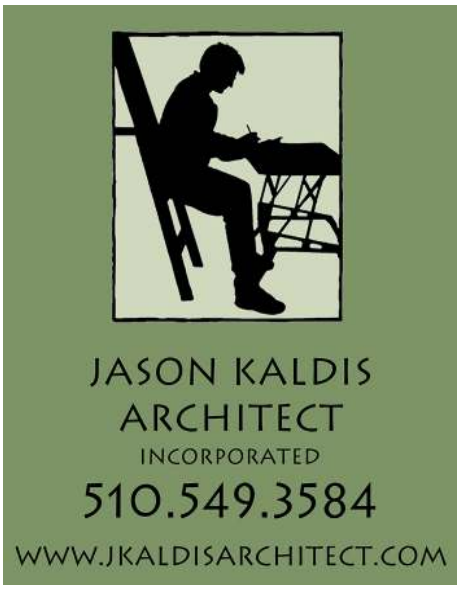
Walk This Way: Peralta Elementary's 2024 Walkathon

by Dulcey Rieter

Did you know that one of your neighborhood schools, Peralta Elementary, serves approximately 350 children each year? It takes an additional $400k in fundraising from our community to help kids in the neighborhood get an education that includes teachers for PE, art, and music, as well as math tutors, teachers' aides, and even basic classroom supplies.

Help make a difference for our students. This child-powered fundraiser for Peralta Elementary is looking for individuals and businesses to sponsor our 2024 Walkathon to raise essential funding for our kids. Join us in supporting this year's walkathon on **Sunday, October 20**. Peralta students (and parents) will walk around and around the big block that Peralta sits on (from 63rd Street, to Telegraph Avenue, to Alcatraz Avenue, to Dana Street).

All donations are fully tax-deductible (Peralta Parent Teacher Group is a 501(c)(3); Tax ID 94-2831259). Email walkathon@peraltaschool.org for more details, including sponsor incentives, or visit https://givebutter.com/peraltawalkathon2024 to donate. ■





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For more information, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

Deadline for November's issue is: October 17, 2024 (available Nov 2).

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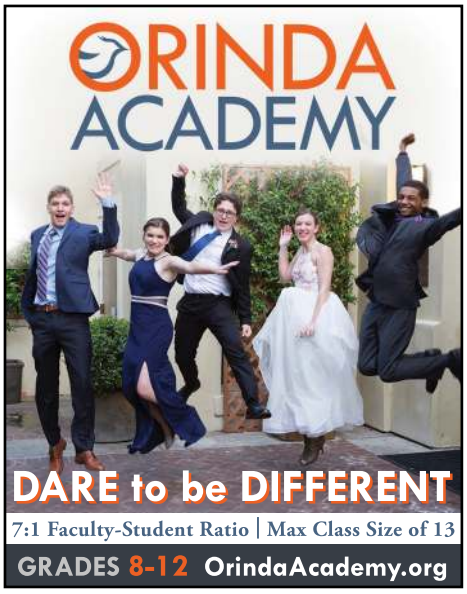
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NEW:
Heart of Rockridge: 309 63rd St @ College Ave (Adjacent Cole Coffee). FULLY VACANT 4-plex, roughly $120k/year gross income. Expansion potential. Listed @ 1.695M
COMING:
Glen Highlands: 4+ Bd 3+ Ba 3,300+ SqFt 1990s beauty across Hwy 13 from Upper Rockridge - Listed @ $2.1M

September is Awareness Month for: Hispanic Heritage, Blood Cancers, Library Card Sign-up, Suicide Prevention, Alzheimer's, Forgiveness, Food Bank, Grandparents, Encouragement, Positive Thinking, Self-Care

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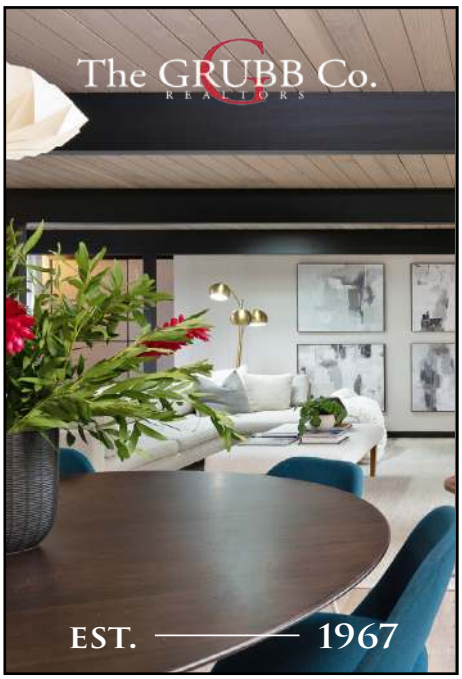
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