THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
VOL 39 • NO. 11 • ISSUE NO. 425 • DECEMBER 7, 2024 CIRCULATION: 6,500 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609

Festive Holiday Shopping Starts In Rockridge

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association

With the holiday season upon us, the excitement of heartfelt giving while gathering with loved ones fills the air. Although online shopping might offer convenience for distant recipients, there's something deeply unmatched about sourcing your holiday shopping and experiences in the local community, particularly in a neighborhood as vibrant and eclectic as Rockridge.

It's hard not to whistle your favorite holiday tunes as you stroll along tree-lined College Avenue, soaking in the charm created by a diverse selection of boutique shops in all their holiday décor and shine. Rockridge offers a perfect setting for a holiday shopping experience that's as personal as it is meaningful.

Rockridge's artsy vibe offers plenty of opportunities to find locally created goods. From works by local artists to bespoke fashions, and hand-poured chocolates, shopping in Rockridge ensures you can pick up distinctive items that will leave a lasting impression. Let's explore some of the unique discoveries you can find on College Avenue in Rockridge.


Photo: Josh Soyombo

Claire Button Down shirt at Devan Gregori.

The Claire Button Down Shirt is a brand-new design found at **Devan Gregori** (5540 College Ave.).

Holiday Shopping, see next page

RCPC Community Event
Discussion with
Oakland author Leah Rothstein
January 15 @ 7pm
College Avenue Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue
Food and hot tea provided
JUST ACTION
HOW TO CHALLENGE SEGREGATION ENACTED UNDER THE COLOR OF LAW
RICHARD ROTHSTEIN
LEAH ROTHSTEIN
Learn more and register at Rockridge.org or scan here
This book is available at Pegasus Books (on College Ave) & Marcus Books (Black-owned bookstore at 3900 MLK Way)

Zenbooth Arrives at the Rockridge Library

by Alona Rivord, Friends of the Rockridge Library

A new study booth is now available for booking at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library. Located on the second floor, the Zenbooth provides a private workspace for individuals or small groups. It is equipped with a table and three chairs, motion-activated lights, power outlets, and a ventilation system.



"The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive," said Branch Manager **Brian Guenther**. "As expected, folks are using it for virtual meetings and quiet study. We've also seen it being used for one-on-one tutoring and online therapy sessions."

Guenther says that the Zenbooth is being booked up to six times per day and has gained in popularity since it was installed in August by the Berkeley-based manufacturer.

Zenbooth, see page 4

Holiday Shopping, from front page

"We are so excited to launch it for the holiday season. Made from soft brushed cotton, it's a wardrobe staple that anyone would be thrilled to receive as a gift," says designer and shop owner, **Devan Gregori Meneses**.



Studio Ghibli products and plants at Planterday.

Looking for something therapeutic that promotes nature, reduces stress, improves mood, enhances cognitive function, and instills a sense of purpose and accomplishment? "A houseplant is the gift that keeps on giving. Its growth and beauty are a reminder of care, patience, and the joy of nurturing something new throughout the year," says **Yumi Day**, co-owner of **Planterday** (6004 College Ave.). As a bonus, the shop donates a portion of all proceeds to the Crisis Support Services of Alameda County.

If gently used items are your style, **Bambino Thrift** (5290 College Ave.) goes all out for the holiday season with winter fashions, housewares, vintage and decorative items, works of art, glassware, jewelry, footwear, toys, games, and more. Your purchases support a great cause — all proceeds go to UCSF Children's Hospital Oakland.

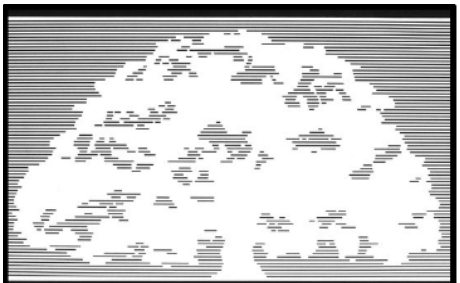
The Wardrobe Project (5461 College Ave.) carries a selection of used vintage and modern clothing, and local artisan wares. "We love the holidays. It is a way to highlight the local makers and vendors in our shop, like Upperline Vintage with vintage decor and home goods; Bengal Jewelry/ Undecided Studios with their handmade jewelry; and Fonzie's Artisinal Goods' hand-poured candles," says shop owner **Talia Brown**.

Home entertaining gets seriously elevated with a gift of barware from **Maison d'Etre** (5640 College Ave.). "Our barware selection is both stylish and functional, ideal for the entertainer who appreciates high-quality glassware and accessories, from coasters to cocktail shakers," says **Lily Sosnowski**, business owner. They

Holiday Shopping, see next page

corcoran
ICON PROPERTIES
Buying? Selling?
Let me help you!

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.


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

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.

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 Suczynski-Smith ..... Secretary
Louisa Bukiet ..... Treasurer

Mark Aaronson, Muhammad Alameldin, Kristen Belt, Eli Kaplan, Star Lightner, Tom Lollini, Zac Unger, Zack 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 editor's discretion in the order received. 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 $22, 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 JANUARY 2025: DECEMBER 16, 2024

Advertising rates are $28/column inch ($32 for color). Six-month pre-pay discounts 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.*

Holiday Shopping, from previous page

also offer free wrapping with your purchase, adding a special touch to every gift.


Photo: Sharon Silverstein

Rapti's reversible cashmere shawl at In Full Swing.

When asked what is a popular gift at **In Full Swing** (5937 College Ave.) this season, proprietor **Sharon Silverstein** says it is the Rapti reversible cashmere shawls. "They come in a variety of gorgeous colors and prints that are fair-trade and handmade in Nepal. Made from 100 percent high-quality cashmere, they retail for $90. It's the perfect winter layer that can be worn over a tee, sweater, or jacket."

Give a gift that warms both the heart and the feet. "We carry a large selection of the popular brand Uggs and we offer free gift wrapping," says **Liz Taylor**, owner of **Tootsies Rockridge** (5525 College Ave.).

Carol Fabretti, owner of **Sole Terra Shoes** (5933 College Ave.), suggests one of their Birkenstock, Olukai, or Taos slippers made with sustainable wool and shearling. We also carry cozy socks from Smartwool and Socksmith made with hypoallergenic wool and bamboo or cotton in beautiful, fun patterns."

Davines hair products are an excellent option for the diva on your list. "Davines has a long history of great products that are formulated and packaged using renewable energy and a neutral carbon footprint. They offer products for all hair textures and styles," says **Elizabeth Herzberg**, owner of **elizabeth H the art of hair design** (5431 College Ave.). Her salon, like many others on College Avenue, has haircare, body, and beauty products, along with professional expertise to help you pick.

Looking for a chance to do something good for your neighbors — housed and unhoused — with friends and family this holiday season? Consider volunteering at **College Avenue Presbyterian Church** (5951 College Ave.) to serve a free hot meal, distribute new underclothes and toiletries, and know you're making the world a better place.

Rockridge is home to artisanal coffee roasters, bottle shops, gourmet markets, cheesemongers, bakeries, and chocolatiers that will satisfy any foodie on your list. What is a guaranteed success at any holiday event? "Wine! Specifically local red wines, eclectic imported wines, and Champagne," says **Hannah Ermisch**, wine manager at **Vino!** (6319 College Ave.). "Our wines are all from small growers around the world, creating a unique selection to pick from. Wine is the perfect gift for any holiday party."

You can pair any wine selection with a gift basket from **Rockridge Market Hall** (5655 College Ave.). "We have designed new gift basket offerings that feature charcuterie, cheese, truffles, baking pantry items, and local offerings," says **Julie Uruburu**, food director.

What's a holiday without Panettone? It takes 48 hours to make this Italian bread, and it is a hand-crafted holiday specialty at **Starter Bakery** (5804 College Ave.). "It is available in two flavors, Traditional and Chocolate Orange. We make it using a unique slow fermentation process, and the result is a buttery, rich bread with a light and tender golden crumb," explains **Annelies Zijderveld**. "Be sure to pre-order it."

No stocking is complete without



Photo: Frances Fernandez

Chocolate bars from Xocolate Bar.

delicious chocolates. The **Xocolate Bar** (5854 College Ave.) offers in-house-made artisan chocolate using organic, fair-trade and natural ingredients. "Our gift boxes are available in 4, 9 or 16 piece and we have sweets for all ages," says **Frances Fernandez**, general manager.

While we could offer more gift suggestions, explore and experience what Rockridge has to offer for yourself. Bring a friend with you, enjoy a nice dinner, and know you are helping to strengthen the local economy as you go. In a world where mass-produced gifts are the norm, there's something truly special about receiving a gift that is unique and meaningful.

Perhaps when giving your gift, you'll have a smile and a story to share about where you found it, how it was made, and why it was special. After all, when you shop in Rockridge, you're not just buying gifts, you're sharing our community. ■


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

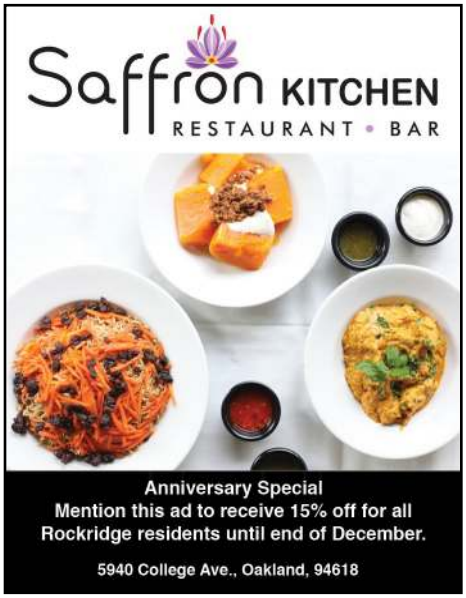
Zenbooth, from page one

Patrons can reserve the 7' x 7' booth for one hour per day. It can accommodate a maximum of four people. Reservations can be made in the Meeting and Study Rooms section of the Oakland Public Library website or in person at the branch.

Users must check in and out with library staff who lock the booth when it is not in use. Patrons must also leave their library card or an ID at the reference desk and are asked to respect the space and the time limit.

The Rockridge booth is one of only a few such spaces available in the Oakland Public Library system. The 81st Avenue branch has two study rooms for up to six people each that can be reserved in two-hour blocks.

Zenbooth was made possible by donations from the community to the Friends of the Rockridge Library. ■



FORL is Recruiting Board Members

The Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) is seeking volunteers to join its board of directors, especially people with experience in design, digital media, communications, or fundraising. FORL is committed to diversity and inclusion in our search. Email rockridgelibrary.friends@gmail.com to learn more.

Saffron Kitchen Celebrates First Anniversary

Saffron Kitchen is celebrating its first anniversary at 5940 College Avenue, bringing a unique fusion of Mediterranean and Afghan flavors to the East Bay community of Rockridge. The restaurant, known for its warm ambiance and innovative menu, will mark this milestone with a special anniversary offer of **15 percent off to all Rockridge residents during the month of December.**

Since opening its doors in late 2023, Saffron Kitchen has quickly become one of the neighborhood favorite, offering a menu that blends traditional Afghan recipes with Mediterranean influences. Guests can enjoy a range of signature dishes, including saffron-infused kebabs, various rice dishes, savory stews, and aromatic rice pilafs, often paired with handcrafted cocktails and an extensive wine list. The restaurant was awarded Best Middle Eastern Restaurant by *East Bay Express* and Diner's Choice Award 2024 by OpenTable. ■

The Rockridge Library is a place for everyone

Kid Space | Teen Space | Meeting Space | Virtual Space | Reading Space | Study Space | Quiet Space

Friends of the Rockridge Library
Supporting the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library

Donate today!

Support the Rockridge Library!

Since 1996, the Friends of Rockridge Library has helped the library purchase materials, provide activities, and create great experiences — all with the help of our community. Your contributions make possible author talks, shelving, comfy chairs, online resources, and summer programming.

- ☐ Bibliophile $250
- ☐ Champion $100
- ☐ Supporter $50
- ☐ Friend $25
- ☐ Fan $ _____

SEND CHECK TO:
Friends of the Rockridge Library, P.O. Box 3723, Oakland, CA 94609
OR DONATE ONLINE: rockridgefriends.org

Donations are also shared with other Oakland library branches in need.
Contributions are tax deductible. Federal Tax ID #45-3951826.

Visit Market Hall — for Gifts, Raclette Saturdays, and More

By Roberta Klugman

What's happening at Market Hall Foods this coming holiday? Gifts, like house favorite *olio nuovo* — fresh, bright, and the first of the season's new olive oil harvest.

Holiday-packaged bread and confections are available in glorious seasonal wrapping: *Struca, panettone, pandoro, panforte, lebkuchen*, and more. The bakery's holiday desserts include the Uncommonly Good Fruitcake, *stollen*, and *Bûche de Noël*.



Market Hall cheesemonger, Calvin.

Raclette Saturdays offer hot, aromatic raclette (melted cheese) over tasty accompaniments. This event has been very popular and will continue just outside Market Hall **every Saturday in December from noon–3pm**.

Check out the holiday offerings, now through New Year's, throughout Rockridge Market Hall shops. For ordering deadlines, pickup days, holiday hours, and more visit https://rockridgemarkethall.com/holidays. Market Hall will ship culinary gifts and baskets nationwide. ■

Shop Local at Peralta Elementary's Makers Market

by Jenny Wehrt Burnham

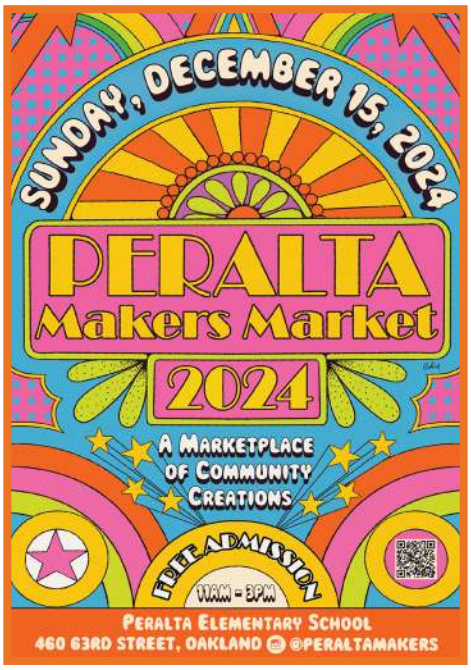
The Rockridge Neighborhood welcomes back the Peralta Makers Market this December. Come shop for holiday gifts from local artisans and small businesses from the Bay Area. This free event will take place on **Sunday, December 15th from 11am to 3pm**, and is open to the public.

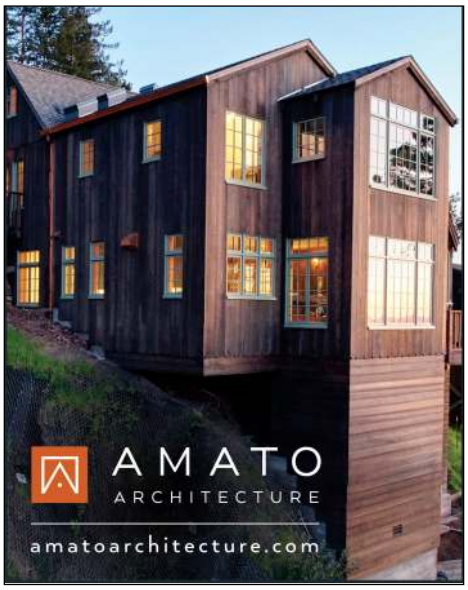
Shoppers will find handmade treasures, unique gifts, local eats, and homemade treats! Vendor fees support Peralta's enrichment programs that fund the school's art, garden, music, and Physical Education classes. Make your dollars count this holiday season by investing in the neighborhood and strengthening Oakland's creative community. ■

Peralta Makers Market

Sunday, December 15, 11am to 3pm
Free admission / Open to the public
460 63rd Street, Oakland

Located on the Peralta Elementary campus, off Alcatraz and behind the Pet Food Express on Telegraph Avenue. Follow @peraltamakers on Instagram to check out the participating vendors.





ROCKRIDGE LIVING AWAITS!







DANIEL STEA

510.843.6400

OVER 100 HOMES SOLD IN ROCKRIDGE

Call Daniel for details

The End of An Era For 118-Year-Old Black Walnut Tree

by Anna L. Marks

The Black Walnut tree stood tall and graceful for over a century at 5380 Shafter Avenue, a testament to nature's artistry and a cherished icon in the neighborhood. According to **Gola Fry Woods**, one of two sisters who grew up in the Victorian home where the tree stood, the seedling had been brought from Michigan in 1906 where it was native. The intention was to graft it to a native English Walnut. Instead, however, it was planted directly into the soil.

Known affectionately as "the grand old lady," the property where the tree grew was built around 1893. It was one of the first homesteads in Rockridge before the town was annexed to Oakland in the late 1800s. It was designed by architect Leo Nichols at a cost of $3,418.50.

Michigan attorney H.P. Fry purchased the home in 1906, shortly after the big earthquake, and became home to three generations of his family. The 3000+ square foot, 4+ bedroom home (with nearly 1,500 square feet of basement) has seen several owners since — most of them ignored proper caretaking of the tree.

In the early 1960s, the house was



divided into three apartments, and Paul Pilgrim and Gerald Roy rented two of them while studying at California College of Arts and Crafts. They purchased the home in 1967 after Roy quietly bought the adjacent property to avoid a speculative sale to developers looking to construct an apartment complex on the double lot. The two spent the next three decades restoring the house back to a single dwelling. Roy had UC Davis arborists inspect the tree about 20 years ago, and found at the time that it had reached its limits.

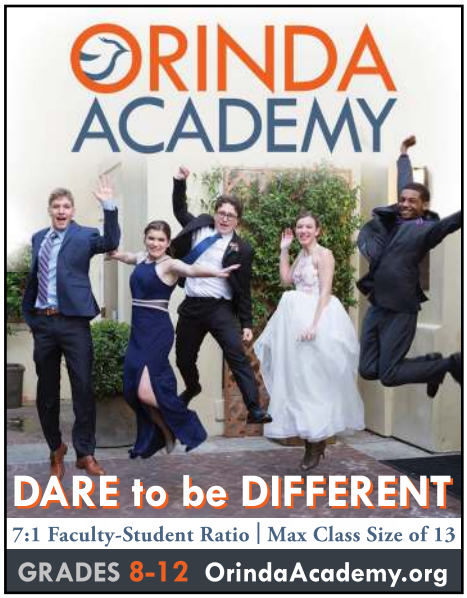
But had it grown from a transported seedling? **Zach Vought** of Urban Forestry Associates thinks not. Upon close inspection, he discovered that the large deciduous tree was actually a native Northern California Black Walnut. He noted that the tree's structure had become a concern due to a history of poor management, extensive trimming by PG&E due to overlapping power lines, and natural declining vitality.

Vought noted that "the internal decay at the many old pruning wounds is the general structural defect of most concern as it increases the likelihood of branch failures. The tree could be retained and managed by removing the dead limbs and pruning, but the prospects of rehabilitating it to a productive condition aren't good." A few other arborist reports came to similar conclusions.

Mark Sherwood purchased the property for his family back in 2019 and has been fixing it up since — reroofing, adding new exterior siding, replacing leaky and damaged windows, adding fresh exterior paint, and the unexpected removal of the tree. He hopes to move in soon, despite the prolonged permit process that has delayed much of the needed work. He was very sad that the tree had to come down.

"I know the feeling of people in the neighborhood who are a little steamed. I get it. I had the same defiance and disbelief when I first was told that the tree was on hospice. On the bright side, we have done extensive research on what iconic tree to plant as a replacement, and, at increased expense, we will be transplanting as mature a tree as possible while still allowing for its root system to take hold.

"We still long for a grand tree for this grand house, with a tree fort, and, one day, a tree swing to complement," says Sherwood. ■





TNT Strength Voted Best in the East Bay

Congratulations to TNT Strength for being voted best in the East Bay by *East Bay Express* (October 2024). Known as the personal training studio where people redefine aging by getting in great shape in just two 30-minute workouts per week, they note that the median age of TNT's clients is 50, (their youngest client is 15 years old and their most senior client is 91 years old). TNT Strength has also accumulated more 5-star Google reviews than any other personal training studio in Oakland.

Founders **Liam Bauer** and **Jesse Schmidt** credit their success to the incredible synergy within their team. Bauer and Schmidt are joined by strength coaches **Eric Fong** and **Ryan Salcedo**, both San Jose State kinesiology grads and former physical therapy aides. Bauer has been in working in the fitness industry since 1988, and Schmidt since 2017. Schmidt currently serves on the board of directors for Oakland Rotary.

In conjunction with running their studio, the two owners also produce the "Truth Not Trends" fitness podcast (available on Apple and Spotify) dedicated to providing science-based exercise and nutrition advice. TNT's mission is to improve health and prevent disease through evidence-based strength training to help people become the best version of themselves.

The brick-and-mortar studio is open Monday through Friday at 5255 College Avenue in Rockridge. Inquiries can be made at tntstrength.com or by calling (510) 768-5421. ■

Dogs of Rockridge



Cassie & Cleo love the holidays. Cleo (top) is a 4-year-old rescue dog from Taiwan. She acts more like a cat and loves to sit with her paws crossed, chase squirrels, and sun soak. Cassie (bottom) is a 3-year-old rescue who is part Great Pyrenees and German shepherd. She loves to steal Chuck-It balls and sing when she hears sirens. You might see these two walking in the neighborhood.



Meet Jazzy. She's 12-years old, but don't tell her that because in her mind she's still a puppy. She's half Maltese and half Yorkshire Terrier, but you can call her a Morkie. Jazzy has lived in three different states and has traveled internationally to three countries, but her best friend is her New Jersey cousin Koko. "Sometime I make pig noises when I get too excited. I love a fluffy blanket and my toy beer. I can be a little shy, but who isn't?"

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.

Frederick Louie Womack
Act 3 Estate Management
PACC Certified Appraiser

act3em@gmail.com
510.502.9340

- Professional evaluation for estate planning, insurance, or any life changes.
- A valuable solution for individuals seeking proactive estate appraisal and planning.
- Complimentary walk-through consultation.

SHEFORD A.I.A. PACC CERTIFIED GRADUATE



JCCEastBay
Jewish Community Center of the East Bay

Building an inclusive community in the East Bay

www.jcceastbay.org
info@jcceastbay.org

RE UP

YOUR LOCAL REFILL SHOP

[BULK] [ZERO-WASTE]

GROCERY SHOPPING WITHOUT THE WASTE

ReUpRefills.org
6025 COLLEGE AVE. OAKLAND

eyes on Rockridge

Local Filmmaker Taps Into Her Own Coming-of-Age Story

by Judith Doner Berne

"Making a film is like a miracle," says first-time filmmaker **Lauren Shapiro**. "I love every second of it." Rockridge resident Shapiro, at age 40, is pursuing her dream of telling a story she wrote more than ten years ago based on her coming-of-age experience. Entitled *Still Life*, it depicts how she, as a 15-year-old, coped over six months before, during, and after her mother's death from cancer at age 47.

She titled it *Still Life*, "not only because it offers a portrait of a very specific place and time that ultimately alters (and in many ways arrests) the course of the main character's life, but also because it examines how daily life continues to unfold, still, even in the face of a monumental trauma. *Still Life* is also, of course, a life being told in stills."



Photo courtesy of Lauren Shapiro.

Lauren Shapiro, for whom "ballet was a really important part of my life," directing a scene from her coming-of-age film.

The 98-minute film, expected to be released in mid-2025, is promoted as: "A late '90s Bay Area coming-of-age romantic-comedy-drama about loving while losing, and living in the liminal (that stage between childhood and adulthood)." If "liminal" sounds like a psychological term, it's probably because Shapiro has a doctorate in developmental psychology from UC Santa Cruz, following up her undergraduate psychology degree from UC Berkeley. She taught in the doctoral program at The Wright Institute, a graduate school of psychology in Berkeley, from 2014 to 2021, when she followed her heart into filmmaking.

"The seeds were planted by my parents who said, 'When something bad happens, do a story about it.' I wanted to be a writer at an early age." She has a photo of herself taking notes as she watched her mother having her head shaved when she began chemotherapy.

Still Life recounts how a teenager faced with her mother's death tries to go ahead with her daily life — school, ballet lessons, and falling in love — only to get her heart broken. "I'm trying to show how, at the special time in life in which you are turning 16, your world is collapsing just as it is opening up," Shapiro said.

***Still Life*, see next page**

FIRST FEDERAL
OF SAN RAFAEL
Free Checking that Pays AND Saves!
+ Super High Rate on your FREE checking account
+ Rebates on ALL ATM Fees anywhere in the US, anytime.
SERVING THE BAY AREA SINCE 1963
6058 College Avenue | 510-652-9500
FFsavings.com | @FirstFedBayArea
Ask us for details. Bank rules and regulations apply. $50 minimum opening deposit. Other fees such as non-sufficient funds, overdraft fees, etc. may apply. See fee schedule for details at ffsavings.com. Member FDIC.



McCUTCHEON CONSTRUCTION, INC
mcbuild.com | 510.558.8030 | 1280 6th Street, Berkeley
LICENSE # 528791 • AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED COMPANY

Still Life, from previous page

Keepsakes from her past authenticate the film. "The lead (**Anika Jensen**, a UC Irving student from Alameda) is wearing my actual clothing from high school and a lot of the textbooks are mine," she said. (Jensen's mother plays Shapiro's ballet teacher.) "My actual Honors English teacher, **Beth Furstenthal**, is playing that part in the film."

"I'm a much older version of myself," said Furstenthal, now retired from teaching, and has lived in Rockridge for 50 years. "I ran into Lauren walking down Broadway a few years back. She recognized me. It was serendipitous. You see me in two scenes, one in which I call her with condolences. She asked me to try and remember what I had said in the actual phone call all those years ago. You always remember a student who loses a parent." Furstenthal found her first time in a film fascinating. "I was incredibly impressed because Lauren had never made a movie before."

"I feel like I have to tell this story," Shapiro said, which she dedicates to her mother, **Reva Shapiro**, a motivational speaker, professor, and psychotherapist, who lived in Rockridge before moving to Walnut Creek. Lauren and her family now live in the house where Lauren spent the first six years of her childhood. She met her husband, **J.D. Zamfirescu**, as a teenager. He's pursuing his doctorate at UC Berkeley in computer science while teaching programming and electronics at California College of the Arts. Six-year-old daughter, **Addie**, makes a brief appearance in the film.

"*Still Life* has been completely community supported," said Lauren, who used an all-East Bay cast and filmed at East Bay locations as nearby as Contact Records in Temescal Alley and Ellington & French gift shop across from the Claremont Hotel. "I think the story will resonate with many people since loss is a universal experience — and how joy and sorrow can happen at the same time."

For **Billie Nolfi-Makau**, a junior at Oakland Tech, appearing in school classroom scenes "was really cool and a good work opportunity." Active in Tech's theater program, the Rockridge 16-year-old took part in three days of shooting. Ten-year-old Chabot Elementary student **Violet Buch** played Lauren's young cousin.

Lily Fritsch, a junior at Oakland School for the Arts, was another teenage extra. "I've never been in a movie, but I was a background dancer in a music video for a school production," she said. Making friends with the other teenagers in the film was a highlight for Fritsch. "We're going to have a group watch party when it comes out. Lauren was super nice. My parents thought it was super cool."

Lauren also considers her film "a love letter to the Bay Area. Where we live is so beautiful, I wanted to share it. The landscape is almost a character itself and also has a symbolic function. This film is really rooted in place."

"Raising funds for an independent film is an ongoing challenge," she said. In addition to production, post-production, and publicity costs, film festivals charge fees. Although Lauren wrote, co-produced, and directed *Still Life*, she had to assume a myriad of other duties as well. "Some days I'm the P.A. (production assistant). I get the coffee and take out the garbage."

Interested readers can follow the film's progress and find out how to support it by visiting the website at https://www.still-life-the-film.com. ■







Letters to the Editor

Style, and Substance, Matter

Dear Editor: We are seriously concerned about the scope of the project proposal for housing and retail at 5295 College Avenue. We support more housing density in Rockridge but feel strongly that the designs need to fit the style of our existing neighborhood. We have been happy with the recent five-story developments around the intersection of Pleasant Valley and Broadway. Those two buildings merge nicely with the surrounding development and have increased the housing stock in the area.

This proposed 15-story building, rather than integrating smoothly into the surrounding architecture, would break apart the neighborhood feeling, block sun and views for the existing homes in the immediate area, and make that end of College Avenue undesirable for people to move to.

If the reason the developers are proposing such an unsightly tall building is just that it is the only way they think they can make a profit on the project, then we think the City of Oakland should propose designs that enhance our neighborhood and open a bidding process for interested developers. Oakland could work with the School of Architecture at UC Berkeley to design multi-family buildings for Rockridge that would house many more residents without destroying the beauty of our neighborhood.

Please do all you can to help Rockridge grow in a healthy way.

Barbara Morrissette & Philip Rich
Contra Costa Road ■

No More NIMBY-ism

Dear Editor: I read with interest the letters to the editor in the last issue regarding the proposed development at 5295 College Avenue. It was surprising to see so many opposed when I have read many times in the *Rockridge News* that people support higher density development on College Avenue. Now that there's a proposal, those nearby are opposed.

This unwillingness to accept higher density housing seems to be the definition of NIMBY-ism. I appreciate Sam Fishman's letter in support (September 2024 *Rockridge News*), and the recognition that there are few opportunities for taller buildings in Rockridge. This College Avenue site is vastly underutilized and would make a great place for an apartment building. While I am not wed to 15 stories, another letter that urged two to five stories seems to miss the potential of this location. I support a robust multi-family residential project on this site.

Michael Levy
62nd Street ■

SOLD in the ELMWOOD!



2822 BENVENUE AVENUE

This Berkeley brown shingle on Benvenue Avenue found its next owners in a private off-market sale. Once in awhile, a property is preparing to come to the market, and the listing agent and the buyers agent just happen to run into one another, and a transaction comes together quietly pre-market. Call it real estate kismet. Or call it the power of the agents' network connections. But when the parties find each other in this way, it is like plucking a needle from a haystack.

One of the sellers is a former colleague of mine from nearly 30 years ago, many years before I was in real estate. It's a good reminder that you never know where your next call will be from! It's a pleasure to be of service to this family.

MAXI LILLEY
510.919.8997
maxi@redoakrealty.com

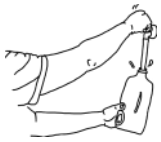
RED OAK REALTY

*per tax records



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





ReUp Refill Shop
Every Wednesday
Seniors Get
Ten Percent Off
• 6025 College Avenue •



THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL · CPS · mens conscia recti · FOUNDED 1960 ·

CollegePrep
A private high school in Oakland

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

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

Letters, cont'd

Housing Yes, Highrises No

Dear Editor: As reported recently in the *Rockridge News*, the City Council will consider the Broadway/College CCA project in December. Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA) has been actively involved, and at first, we opposed the proposed 19 story tower. We advocated for a building no higher than 7-8 stories and for 20 percent affordable units. Mobilizing the community, we conducted two well-attended public meetings at the Rockridge library to learn what residents wanted.

Their calls and letters resulted in a reduction in height, first to 11 stories, and ultimately to the present 7 to 9 stories with 448 units. We have continued to work successfully to improve the design with varied setbacks and roof heights to make the original box-like structure more pleasing. We also asked the City to ensure a stringent Fire Department review of emergency vehicle access and escape routes to be done before building permits are issued.

We will keep monitoring the project to make sure the public park really is accessible (including signs on the Broadway wall saying "This park is open to the public"), and that the traffic study will address the fact that only right-hand turns will be permitted into and out of the site. In the long term, we would love to see a traffic circle on Broadway so that drivers do not cut through neighborhoods.

Our advocacy has resulted in a much better project. However, we failed to increase the number of affordable units. The developer will provide only the legally required minimum, in this case five percent of the units for very low-income residents (a family of four earning up to $77,850). We will continue to advocate for higher minimums for future projects.

Recent State laws that facilitate housing production may have unintended consequences, including allowing highrises even where local zoning laws prohibit them.

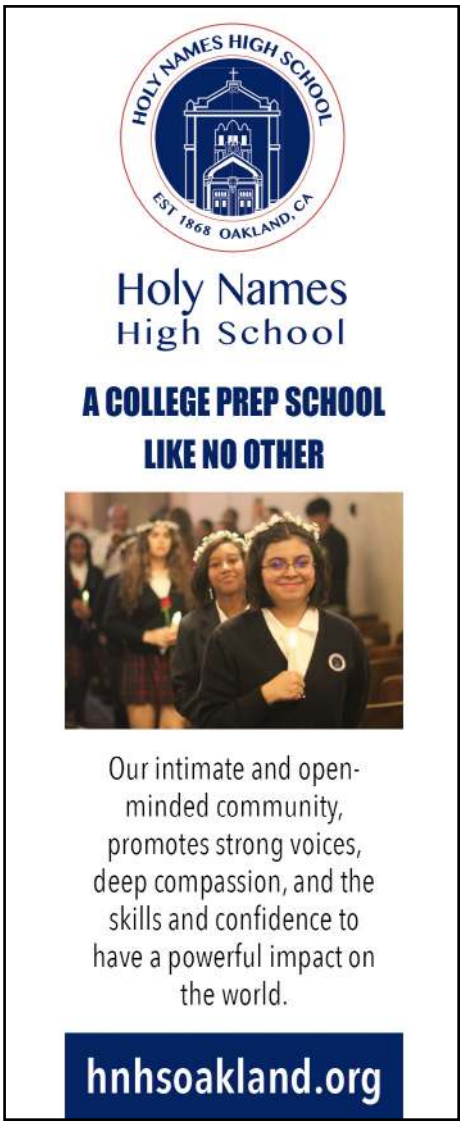
As recent Letters to the Editor indicate, many in Rockridge understand and accept the necessity of building mid-rise, dense housing in this community, 5 to 8 stories at appropriate sites, with substantial numbers of affordable units — not just the legally required minimum.

Our slogan is "housing yes, highrises no." Recent State laws that facilitate housing production may have unintended consequences, including allowing highrises even where local zoning laws prohibit them. All the rules are different now. Highrises that could not be built in Rockridge years ago could be built now, despite local ordinances and community opposition.

Our neighborhood is highly desirable, land is expensive, we expect future proposals will be for upscale highrise housing. We must continue to advocate for housing with substantially more affordable units that still recognize and respect the beauty and human scale that make Rockridge so desirable. We can make a difference, we already have. If you share these goals and want to work with us, write to UBAOakland@gmail.com.

Myrna Walton for UBA
S. Rockridge Blvd. ■





Planning Commission Approves Jewish Community Center

By Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board Member

The Oakland Planning Commission voted 4-0 at its November 6 meeting to approve the Jewish Community Center East Bay's (JCCEB) application for community education and community assembly conditional use permits. The Commission decision is now final as no appeal to the Oakland City Council was timely filed.

There were 20 speakers during the public comment period at the Commission hearing, most of them residents of Chabot Road between College and Claremont, the neighborhood block most affected by JCCEB's plans. The proposed new uses for the nearly 3-acre site include a preschool childcare program, educational and cultural programming, rental and nonrental special events, and administrative office space for mainly Jewish nonprofits and charitable organizations. Special events will be held in the former Yoshi's restaurant and jazz club on Claremont. Office and retail store use will continue in the former Dreyer's office building on College.

Special events will be held in the former Yoshi's restaurant and jazz club on Claremont.

For almost three years, Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) representatives and designees of the most immediately affected neighbors, organized as the Chabot Village, met with JCCEB representatives to discuss traffic, parking, and noise mitigation measures, and related concerns. The Commission's approval came after the JCCEB offered several amendments to the Conditions of Approval that had been raised during these meetings. The most notable amendment involved the elimination of pickleball as a permissible use on the site.

Following the Planning Commission hearing, RCPC and Chabot Village representatives continued to meet with JCCEB representatives. These meetings resulted in the signing of a Community Benefits Agreement on November 15. Provisions in the Agreement include strengthened requirements for vehicle entrance and departure to and from Claremont for special events; limitations on both the number of attendees and the number of programs and special events to be held annually; restrictions on the use and location of outside speakers for amplified sound; and additional measures to reduce the noise impacts of a small ball court adjacent to Chabot Road residences. In addition, the Agreement establishes a Neighborhood Committee that will meet at least semiannually to seek to resolve potential JCCEB site and programmatic issues of Rockridge neighborhood concern. ■

RCPC Land Use Committee Meeting

Meetings in December and January will be canceled due to the holidays.

Meetings will resume at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month as of February, 2025.

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





# of Rockridge


Photo by Saeid Kian

Monk's Kettle: Monk's Burger

5484 College Avenue

The relocation of Monk's Kettle to Rockridge is a cause for celebration for those of us in the East Bay. As a fan of the original Mission location in San Francisco, I was thrilled to visit their new outpost during their soft opening.

The star of the show at Monk's Kettle has always been the Monk's Burger, a staple that has garnered a devoted following over the years. Eager to see if it lived up to my memories, I ordered this classic dish at the new College Avenue location. I'm happy to report that it did not disappoint.

The patty, cooked to a perfect medium-rare, was juicy and flavorful. The cheese melted seamlessly over the meat, creating that irresistible gooey texture that elevates any great cheeseburger. The bun was fresh and billowy, providing the ideal vessel for this masterpiece.

The sauce, generously applied, added just the right amount of tang and creaminess to complement the other components.

In a nod to healthier choices, I opted for the kale salad instead of fries. To my pleasant surprise, this decision led to an unexpected highlight of the meal. The salad was a revelation— its crisp leaves tossed in an incredibly flavorful dressing. Thinly sliced radishes added a peppery crunch, making this side dish far more than an afterthought.

The newly-opened Monk's Kettle in Rockridge has successfully brought the magic of their old San Francisco location to Oakland. The perfect recreation of their beloved Monk's Burger, coupled with delightful surprises like the stellar kale salad, makes Monk's Kettle a welcome addition to the East Bay's culinary landscape. I can't recommend Monk's Kettle enough and will undoubtedly be returning soon. ■

— by Saeid Kian

Send your favorite bite (or beverage) in Rockridge to: editor@rockridge.org

CORRECTION: The wrong address was listed for La Esquinita in our November newsletter's "Best Bite." Their correct address is 5400 College Ave.

Help Deliver the *Rockridge News*: Two Blocks up for Grabs

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

Thanks to **Lynn Delaney** for her service as Block Captain on Broadway Terrace, and **Leila Heid**, Block Captain of the 400 block of McAuley. Both Lynn and Leila are ready to pass the baton and hope someone will step up and volunteer so there won't be a break in delivery to their streets.

The job takes about 20 minutes and is a great way to get to know your neighbors. Your residence should be nearby to the route you choose. Please let us know if you are available to take on either of these routes:

- **Route 08B: Both sides of Broadway Terrace, odd numbers from Broadway to 5409, even numbers from Broadway to 5400.**
- **Route 25A3: 400-441 McAuley (Colby to Howell)**

Please help: Block Captains deliver newsletters door-to-door. They receive their bundles the first weekend after the first Friday of each month (except for August). Call 510/547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer. ■



Safer Rockridge Adds New Board Members

Safer Rockridge, the local nonprofit focused on enhancing neighborhood security, has added three new board members. **Diana Calla**, **Parker Monroe**, and **Chris Shayne** have joined existing member **Josh Aycock**, who will be transitioning off the board over the next few months.

Established in 2014, Safer Rockridge pools contributions from local households and businesses to provide unarmed patrols and other security services at no charge. The expanded board is focused on boosting community engagement and increasing both the coverage and visibility of the patrol vehicles to provide a more robust deterrent throughout the neighborhood.



Safer Rockridge board members Diana Calla, Parker Monroe and Chris Shayne.

All four of the board members are Rockridge residents who have volunteered because they appreciate the importance of keeping the community safe and secure.

Diana, an attorney at Jones Day in San Francisco, resides with her husband and daughter on Bryant Avenue. Parker, a retired symphony orchestra manager and current board chair of Chanticleer, lives on Shafter Avenue with his wife Teresa Darragh. Chris, the incoming Board President, who is responsible for content marketing at Osterweis Capital Management, also lives on Shafter Avenue with his wife.

They all join **Josh Aycock**, an investor with Synchrony Ventures and long-serving board member, who lives with his wife and two daughters on Locksley Avenue.

For more information, visit them at SaferRockridge.com. ■



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

The next meeting will be held on:
December 12, at 7pm,
Rockridge Library Conference Room

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

For details, visit
www.rockridgencpc.com

JASON KALDIS
ARCHITECT
INCORPORATED
510.549.3584
WWW.JKALDISARCHITECT.COM



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

Rockridge Library DECEMBER 2024

For Children

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30 am.

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

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

Origami for All: Every third Tuesday at 4pm; 11/19. All ages welcome.

Tinker Tuesdays: Join us for various crafts for children every Tuesday at 4pm. All ages welcome, children under 8 must bring a grown-up.

Winter Bingo: Complete 5 activities in a row on your bingo card to win a free book. Ages up to 13. Stop by anytime: 12/21/2024-1/21/2025.

For Teens ages 12 – 18

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 12/11; 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

Craft & Sip: Saturday, 12/07, 3-4:30pm. Come and enjoy the good company of your neighbors while decorating tea towels with block prints. We are also providing a tasty winter beverage for a cozy afternoon. All supplies are provided. Please call Rockridge Library to sign up.

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.

Rockridge Book Club: every 2nd Saturday, 3:30-4:30pm. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. December's book is Commonwealth by Ann Patchett

Needlework Circle: every Thursday, 2-4pm. Bring your yarn and fiber arts projects to Rockridge Library. Build community, share your passion, learn, have fun!

1-on-1 Computer Help: every Saturday, 10am-12pm. Do you need help with a password or your Email or your phone? Come with your devices and technology questions and our volunteer tech guru will help you get sorted. First come, first served. ■

Holiday Closures:
Christmas Eve - December 24
Christmas Day/Hanukka - December 25
New Year's Eve - December 31 (closing at 5:3pm)
New Year's Day - January 1, 2025

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

Please also check our online calendar at www.oaklandlibrary.org/events for events throughout the city.

Rockridge Library
5366 College Avenue at Manila
510-597-5017

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.

Deadline for January's issue is: December 16, 2024 (available Jan 4).

Handyman Service-House Repairs & Remodeling
Dry rot, kitchen and bath tile refurbishing or installation, window installation, plumbing, fencing, deck & handrail repair, electrical wiring, fixtures, outlets, and much more. Call Juan 341/221-9200 or email 5826.jbv@gmail.com.

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.

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.

Electrical Remodels and Repairs
It's the season of . . . LIGHTS! Are you ready? I've been doing electrical work in Oakland and Berkeley for over 35 years. Sutorik & Company; www.sutorikandco.com. Lic #397149. 510/655-3677.

Handyman for Hire
Multifaceted and well experienced. Hauling and towing available. No job too small. Reasonably priced. Lee Self. 707/223-1298, call and text.

JEWELRY REPAIRS
Formerly of High Strung and Blue Door Beads! Marilee is now doing repairs as an independent contractor. Please email her at mjwrepairs@proton.me for all your jewelry repair needs!

Rental: 663 Alcatraz Ave, Unit 3
Oakland, 94609. $2200 first /$2200 last $1000 sec. Available 12/10/2024. Large one bedroom unit remodeled. Full kitchen and bath. Tile flooring. 415/527-7647; Melissabparker@gmail.com.

Penelope's Aesthetics
Celebrate the holidays and bring in the New Year! Be ready for the festivities with a lash and brow tint, $40. Freshen and liven up your first impression, *your face* penelopecalef.com Call today! 510/594-1552.

User Manual for your dog?
Need help with leash manners, basic obedience, or problem behaviors? Private, in-home training can help! Visit dogsquaddogtraining.com or call 510/646-9657 for more information. ■

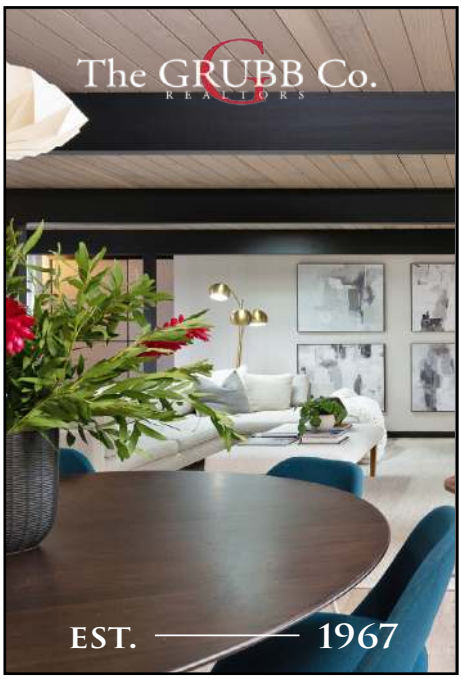
Shop ROCKRIDGE

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.



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

Andrew Pitarre
Compass
415.342.9950
DRE #01867911

LAWTON ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE
DRE# 01417458





5657 Amy Drive
Just Sold w/ Multiple Offers!
www.UpperRockridgeTranquility.com

"#1 in Rockridge Real Estate"
200+ Successful Sales in Rockridge

www.LawtonAssoc.com

Post election special offer - discounted commission to those leaving the country!

OMNI PAINTING & WATERPROOFING Inc.
COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL

INTERIOR-EXTERIOR
Professional preparation.
Many local references.
All work guaranteed.

(510) 654-3339
www.omnipainting.com

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

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



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.