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 Town Hall Launches Community Vision Plan — How Should Rockridge Grow?

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

RCPC TOWN HALL MEETING

Monday, February 10
7-8:30pm

Rockridge Library
5366 College Avenue

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will hold a **Town Hall on February 10, from 7pm to 8:30pm** at the Rockridge Library to launch the Rockridge "Community Vision Plan." Attendees will learn more about this process to create a vision for our neighborhood's growth, open space, transportation, and more — and how you can participate. The process will include several opportunities to weigh in on priorities for our neighborhood within multiple working groups and via online surveys.

In 1990, the RCPC created the "Rockridge Plan." This community visioning exercise led to the creation of the Rockridge Library and Frog Park. The development landscape looks very different now than it did in the 1990s — as do our needs as residents. A statewide housing shortage has created an affordability crisis throughout the Bay Area. RCPC sees this as an opportunity to revisit, as a community, our priorities for our neighborhood. Where and how can we make a dent in the housing shortage? How do we align housing supply with transit and open space needs? What other types of projects could improve livability for Rockridge residents? Many Rockridge residents have expertise in this area as architects, planners, transportation analysts, or land-use attorneys — and many consider themselves urbanists who love living in a transit-oriented neighborhood.

Town Hall, see page 3

SAVE THE DATE

2025 RCPC Board Elections

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair and Election Officer

Rockridge Community Planning Council will hold its annual election in April. There will be two opportunities to vote: **Thursday, April 24 from 7-9pm,** OR **Saturday, April 26, from 1-4pm.** As has been our practice in recent years, RCPC will hold the elections at an outdoor and accessible location on College Avenue.

Interested in Running for the RCPC Board?

To declare your candidacy, email election@Rockridge.org by **Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 5pm**. Please include a copy of your California driver license or ID, or a lease or utility/tax bill showing your name and physical address.

Who Can Run?

Anyone 18 years or older whose principal residence is within the RCPC boundaries can run for the board (see Rockridge.org). This is an active board — all members are

RCPC Elections, see next page

Hudson Bay Cafe: A Neighborhood Gathering Spot for 40 Years

by Judith Doner Berne



Owners **Tanya Anderson** and **Sadri Madjlessi** strive for "a comfortable setting" at the Hudson Bay Cafe.

"It is *the* neighborhood institution. It's about a sensibility we all share — the reason why we live in this neighborhood." So says **Ben Safir**, who was at the counter joking with the young server as he ordered his

Eyes on Rockridge, see page 8

RCPC Elections, from front page

expected to volunteer and support RCPC projects and activities in some capacity.

How Does the Election Work?

Six board seats— half the elected board positions — will be filled by election this year. Candidates are invited to submit short candidate statements for the April edition of the *Rockridge News* and participate in a live-streamed Candidates' Forum to be held before the election begins, and viewable online afterwards.

RCPC expects candidates to conduct their outreach with integrity and to refrain from personal attacks on other candidates. Any outreach materials that promote a candidacy shall exclude endorsements by public elected officials as well as any implied claim of sponsorship by the RCPC Board of Directors.

What is the Scope of RCPC?

We're your official neighborhood association focused on land use, development, transportation, public amenities, and quality of life. We work in partnership with the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and the Rockridge District Association (RDA), our merchant's association.

We write letters and speak before the City Council and Planning Commission on proposed housing and other development projects in Rockridge, changes in public policy under discussion by the City such as the Housing Element and zoning, etc.

What is the Time Commitment?

Time spent on board business requires about 4-8 hours on average per month (depending upon your role, and the events planned for that month). We hold monthly board meetings and host occasional Town Hall meetings. Each year, certain board members are elected by the full board to serve in Executive Committee roles (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) and/or to serve as chairs on committees (Land Use Committee, Transportation, Parks, Communications, etc.).

Other Ways to Get Involved

RCPC seeks to engage as many neighbors as possible in the Community Vision Plan (see front page regarding our February Town Hall meeting for an overview). We always need volunteers to support our community events (the Halloween Parade, the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour, retail/musical entertainment events with our merchants, etc.), and to assist with the *Rockridge News* (contributing articles, assisting with newsletter distribution, etc.).

Please see Rockridge.org for more information and examples of the organization's impact.

Email Chair@Rockridge.org to learn more about the election process and how to participate. ■





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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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 MARCH 2025: FEBRUARY 21, 2025

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.*

Town Hall, from front page

Regardless of how long we've enjoyed living here, we all love the neighborhood — so please consider participating. We hope to build community and bring neighbors together. We acknowledge that there are many perspectives on particular housing projects, heights, etc., and this process is about learning and visioning together.

Proposed Changes to RCPC Bylaws

Upon arrival at the Town Hall meeting, residents will be asked to vote on a small but important update to the annual election procedures — a proposed amendment to the election process as stated in Bylaws Sec. 7.6.

Voters will have the choice of voting YES or NO to an amendment of Sec. 7.6 ("Vote Required to Elect Directors") concerning the procedure for determining a winner in the case of an election tie. In the case of a tie, the winner would no longer be determined by a runoff election. Instead, as the amendment provides: *"In the event of a tie vote for a seat on the board, the Election Officer shall summon the candidates receiving the equal number of votes to appear* [and] *....The Election Officer shall resolve the tie by coin toss or drawing of lots."*

To be eligible to vote in the election, you must be at least 18 years old and present documentation showing your primary residence within RCPC boundaries (e.g., Calif. driver's license). Learn more at www.rockridge.org/elections.

Note: In the nearly 40-year history of the RCPC Board there has never been a tie. As election operations are a significant undertaking for an all-volunteer board, by eliminating runoffs we seek to maintain our focus on serving neighborhood needs. ■

We are diverse people gathered as an active community by our common faith & continuing commmitment to:
Choose Mercy
Speak the Truth
Practice Justice
Protect the Vulnerable
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Billingsgate Seafood Comes to Rockridge Market Hall

Hapuku Fish Shop Closed January 27

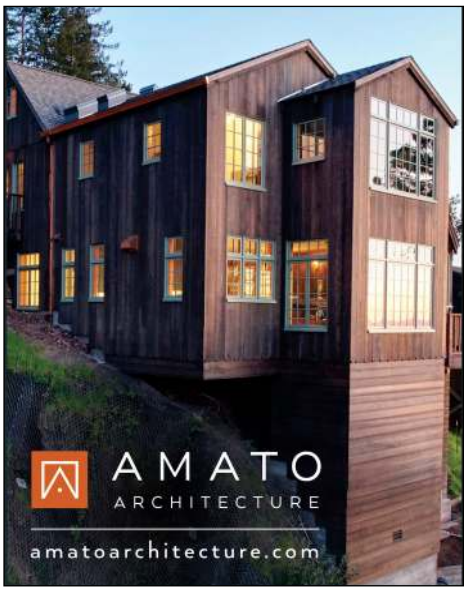
Billingsgate Seafood has become a new proprietor at Rockridge Market Hall, taking over from Hapuku Fish Shop as of February 1. Founded by chefs-turned-fishmongers **Adrian Hoffman** and **Ismael Macias**, and operating manager **Esteban Macias**, this will be the company's second retail location.

Billingsgate is the retail arm of Four Star Seafood & Provisions, a wholesale fish distributor. Their first location opened in 2020 in San Francisco's Noe Valley neighborhood. Last year, Hapuku's longtime seafood supplier, Jimmy Galle of Gulfish, merged his operations with Four Star. As a result of a mutual desire to provide traceable, sustainably caught seafood of the highest quality and freshness, Galle introduced Hapuku founders to the owners of Billingsgate.

"The opportunity to work with Billingsgate and their direct relationships with fishermen and fisheries was irresistible. Their tagline, 'Cook more seafood at home,' is what we're all about," said Sara Wilson, co-owner of Hapuku and managing partner of Rockridge Market Hall.

Since 1987, Rockridge Market Hall has been the cornerstone of the local business district. The Bay Area's first European-style food market is a collection of owner-operated shops that supply the building blocks for home dining, creative cooking, and festive entertaining.

Visit rockridgemarkethall.com or billingsgatesf.com for more details. ■







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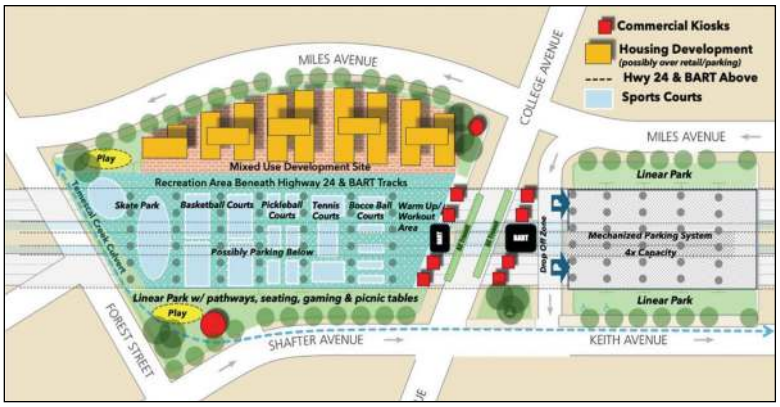
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Envisioning Rockridge's Future

by Tom Lollini, FAIA, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

In the coming year, as Phase 2 of Oakland's General Plan Update process develops approaches to the future of land use, transportation, open space, recreation, and infrastructure, the Rockridge Community Planning Council will be working on developing a Community Vision Plan to explore initiatives that reflect community aspirations in these aspects of planning.

The plan seeks to increase economic diversity through increased access to housing (see Sept. '24 *Rockridge News*, "How New State Housing Laws Could Reshape Rockridge's Future"). It will also include brainstorming to create a more vibrant, walkable, sustainable, and secure environment for existing and future residents — young and old.



Author concept of Rockridge BART's revitalization
(for illustration/brainstorming purposes only; not a proposal)

These might be specific initiatives to make our streets greener, brighter, and safer, or safety measures at the intersections of busier streets to reduce congestion, emissions, and the risk of accidents, such as adding roundabouts or bulb-outs that increase sidewalk space and shortening street crossing distances.

Other initiatives may be broader in vision and scope, such as redesigning our southern and northern gateway intersections at College and Claremont, or Broadway from 51st Street to Broadway Terrace where four primary arterial streets come together in a daily snarl of traffic congestion at the same time four bus lines and hundreds of high schoolers attempt to navigate this series of five unsynchronized traffic signals. Improving their functionality for pedestrians, bicycles, transit users, buses, trucks, and other vehicles is critical as nearby properties hold potential for thousands of new housing units and commercial space.

Another zone of interest is the heart of College Avenue, anchored by BART, which provides up to two million passenger trips per year. This 400-foot-wide, 8-acre site is currently a dead zone that divides the experience of this storied avenue in half. What was once the seasonal Temescal Creek is now six acres of parking shaded by the highway, with BART tracks hovering 50 feet overhead.

How might we dream about transforming this area into something that unifies Rockridge rather than divides it? Could the housing include a new Trader Joe's, freeing up its existing site for even more housing? Could the parking lot become a recreation area featuring a skate park, basketball, bocce ball, or other type of court? How could the redwoods be protected? Could the Shafter side become a linear park featuring gaming tables, play structures, or provide other activities? Could a portion of Temescal Creek be daylighted to bring it back to life? Could sidewalk kiosks beneath the freeways enliven the passage from one side to the other along College Avenue?

Bring your thoughts and ideas, big and small, to the community visioning process. Email landuse@rockridge.org for more details on how you can become involved. ■

RCPC **Land Use & Transportation Committee Joint Meeting**

Wednesday, February 19
7:30pm-9pm

Meeting will be held on Zoom.

For details, email landuse@rockridge.org

RCPC to Hold Joint Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting

Topic: Oakland General Plan Update/Phase 2 (GPU2)

— by Tom Lollini, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

As presently scheduled, the Oakland Planning Department anticipates releasing Draft Land Use Alternatives sometime this spring and adopting Phase 2 Elements in the fall of 2026.

There are four Elements in GPU2:

- Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) Update
- Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) Element Update
- Noise Element Update
- Infrastructure and Facilities Element (new)

The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the intersection of land use, transportation, open space, and infrastructure, as well as public safety, and how these might best serve the needs of our neighborhood, given planned increases in housing and population envisioned in the Housing Element that was adopted in 2023. This discussion will dovetail with RCPC's Community Vision Plan process.

On **Monday, February 10**, RCPC will be holding a Town Hall to kick off the long-discussed Community Vision Plan process to engage and inform our community of the transformational changes and opportunities that the recently adopted City Housing Element might yield, build support for the opportunities and diversity it might bring, and discuss ways to articulate and advocate for future investments in other areas, whether they be public safety, streetscapes, open spaces or transportation (see companion article on left). ■

RCPC **RCPC sent a letter to OakDOT Director Josh Rowan about the Hillegass/Colby proposed pilot. To continue our commitment to transparency to the Rockridge community, we are sharing this lettter below:**

January 9, 2025

Dear Director Josh Rowan,

On behalf of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), we appreciate your effort to address the ongoing traffic safety concerns in the area east of Telegraph, west of College, and between Alcatraz and Claremont Avenues. As the working group begins to take shape following the December 4th meeting, we would like to confirm our participation and offer suggestions regarding the group's composition to ensure it reflects the diversity of perspectives across the affected areas. We would also advise for the working group to be created and to start meeting as soon as possible.

RCPC is pleased to nominate Muhammad Alameldin and Eli Kaplan to serve as our representatives in the working group. We will bring valuable experience and a commitment to collaborative, community-centered solutions that will help move this process forward.

To ensure the group is representative and effective, we recommend a total of 10 members, including our two RCPC delegates. Specifically, we propose the following composition:

- 6 members from the area most impacted by traffic issues (bounded by Telegraph, College, Alcatraz and Claremont)
- 2 traffic engineers that reside within the Telegraph, College, Alcatraz and Claremont neighborhood
- 2 representatives from RCPC (Muhammad Alameldin and Eli Kaplan)

This structure ensures that the voices of residents from the most affected areas are central to the process while also bringing technical expertise and a broader neighborhood perspective. We believe this balance will help create a transparent pilot program that prioritizes safety and reflects the needs of the community. Additionally, we recommend that the end date of the working group be set to three months from when the group first convenes. An alternative pilot project should result from this working group, and RCPC understands that the working group does not have an official "vote" on what is ultimately decided by OakDot.

We also have a couple of questions:

- When will this working group be finalized and how will be it announced?
- How often will they meet with you? We suggest once a month until the end of the three month deadline.

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration and leadership on this critical issue. We look forward to working with OakDOT, Councilmember Zac Unger, and all members of the working group to make meaningful progress in improving traffic safety and quality of life in Rockridge.

Sincerely,

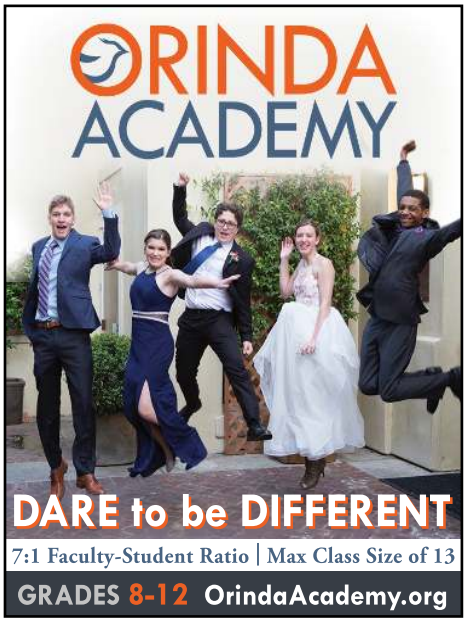
Casey Farmer
Chair, RCPC Board of Directors

Muhammad Alameldin
Transportation Chair, Rockridge Community Planning Council

Great Backyard Bird Count



Help count birds from February 14 to 17 when the world comes together to count as many as possible. Visit www.birdcount.org for details on how to participate.



Message from Zac Unger
District 1 Councilmember



Happy New Year, Rockridge

My name is **Zac Unger** and I'm your new City Councilmember, replacing Dan Kalb who stepped down after three terms. I'm extremely honored to be here and I appreciate the support of everyone in the district. I'll spare you the full bio since I knocked on about 9,000 doors during the campaign, and you've heard enough of that. The short version is that I'm a lifelong Rockridge resident who lives on the same street I grew up on, and I was an Oakland firefighter for 27 years. My kids all went to Chabot, Claremont, and Tech — go, Bulldogs! — and my wife, Shona, owns a small business downtown.

We've all decided to live here because we love this town and our neighbors. When I was growing up, Oaklanders had a chip on our shoulders because we were the scrappy underdog who always managed to pull out a win. But those wins have gotten harder to come by. Crime, blight, and municipal dysfunction are very real stressors in our daily lives. However, while I heard a lot of concern when I was knocking on doors, I didn't find people who were ready to write off Oakland and give up. Instead, I met people who wanted to dig in, work hard, and improve our home. I'm one of those people.

To that end, we must embrace modest politics that focus on the basics of what a city can provide realistically. We are at our best when we focus on the (sometimes dull) pragmatics of problem-solving, and at our worst when we find ourselves within the confines of larger ideological movements. I'm hoping this current council will write fewer new laws and enforce the ones we already have, making sure they work instead of just being able to say, "I passed that."

We can do anything in Oakland, but we can't do everything. That's the ugly truth of our budget situation. Our financial problems are real and significant, but they are not insurmountable. We need to take a deep breath and focus on the core functions of a municipality; public safety comes first. This means the Police Department, but it also includes the Fire Department and effective data-driven violence prevention programs like Ceasefire.

Maintaining our infrastructure is also key to public safety. We need to make Oakland a more friendly place in which to do business. This doesn't mean relaxing environmental or labor standards; it means reducing red tape and helping businesses succeed rather than standing by and watching them struggle. And finally, the failure to provide adequate, affordable housing is the moral failure of our era. The City of Oakland alone can't build our way out of the crisis, but we can create enough dignified temporary housing to get people off the streets while simultaneously incentivizing the creation of new housing.

My commitment to you is to be open and available. I'll admit right now that I'm not going to be able to solve every problem. A City councilmember isn't allowed to direct city staff, so I can't say, "fix this street before that one," but I can certainly be your conduit and advocate for those things that are important to you. We won't always agree, but you have my word that I will listen and learn respectfully and do my level best to respond to you quickly.

Please stop me and say hi if you see me in the neighborhood. I also invite you to sign up for my newsletter. Even if you already received Dan's, you'll need to sign up for mine; send an email mmalsin@oaklandca.gov with "Newsletter" in the subject.

Thank you for placing your trust in me. We've got a lot of hard choices ahead of us and I'm looking forward to putting in the work alongside all of you. Let's go, Oakland! ■

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

The next meeting will be held on:
February 13, at 7pm,
Rockridge Library Conference Room, and on Zoom, with special guest **Zac Unger**, the new District 1 City Council Member.

For details and Zoom link, visit
www.rockridgencpc.com





Claremont Middle School's Annual Pancake Breakfast

by Tiffany Chan

The Rockridge Community is invited to join Claremont Middle School at their 15th annual Pancake Breakfast on **Saturday, February 22** — hosted by the Masons at the Masonic Temple on College Avenue. The hearty menu will include a full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, fruit, coffee, and tea. This is also a rare opportunity to tour the interior of the historic Masonic Lodge in the heart of Rockridge.

In addition to the syrupy goodness, amazing raffle prizes will be offered at each seating. **The three seating opportunities are at 9am, 10:15am, or 11:30am** — there's room in even the busiest of schedules to attend.

Tickets purchased at the door cost $15 and will be on sale pending space availability. Purchases can be made using cash, check, or credit card. Tickets are also available for purchase online, with no service charge, payable by credit card or via PayPal. Children under 5-years-old eat for free and do not require a ticket. When you purchase online, you'll have the option of printing tickets, but no need; your name will appear on the event guest list at check-in.

Seating is limited, so reserve your breakfast tickets early. The lodge is a few blocks south of Rockridge BART at 5449 College Avenue. Visit claremontms.org/pancake to purchase your tickets today. ■

Dogs of Rockridge

Obi is a 4-year-old yellow labrador retriever who likes to counter surf and take walks. He is named after Obi Wan Kenobi from Star Wars because not only was he born on May 4 (Star Wars Day), but his dad's name was Luke, so the kids said he was a Jedi puppy and needed a Jedi name. He is trained to bring in the newspaper and is a total snuggle puppy!





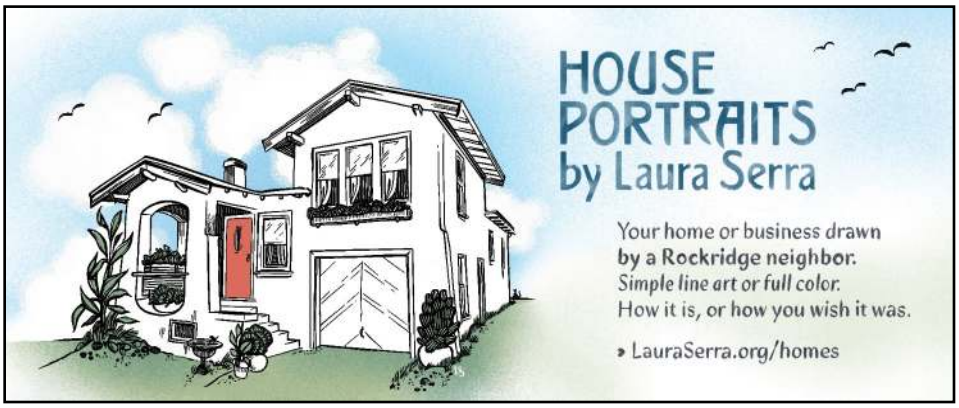
Lilly, a protective and loyal Papillon, was found at Petfood Express in The Ridge shopping center. She lives with her two moms, Jen and Pat, as well as her best friend Sassy, a chihuahua/dachshund mix. Lilly is quite smart and active. To channel that energy, she attended two semesters at Canine Circus School in Emeryville. Every night at 6pm, without fail, she finds her loudest squeaky toy and gives it her all until dinner.

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.









eyes on Rockridge

continued from front page

usual, a large Americano, at Hudson Bay Café — the coffee shop that has dominated the corner of College and Hudson for more than 40 years.

Safir, who lives about a block away and works from home, was a regular customer even before owners **Sadri Manjelessi** and **Tanya Anderson** took it over 20+ years ago. At that time, he said, "It was worn down. It was more subdued. It has been transformed by Tanya and Sadri."

"During the pandemic, this was a life-saving place," said Safir, "It kept you sane." Then, and now, he chooses to sit at an outdoor table closest to the side door, where he says the internet signal is strongest. "I probably know 20 people," whom he counts as coffee-house friends.

"It's all Tanya," Sadri says of his wife of 21 years this March. He gives her full credit for creating the cafe's vibe. "She's very good at the hospitality aspect. It's a community. We try to make it a comfortable setting for the locals and those who come from as far as the Lakeshore area."

It's Tanya, along with her young baristas, who is a fixture behind the counter, greeting and waiting on customers primarily through the morning hours when coffee and food



Long-time regular **Ben Safir** loves "the non-corporate atmosphere" of Hudson Bay Cafe.
Photo by Judy Berne

service is at its peak. Sadri, a nurse who has kept up his credentials, is less of an onsite presence. He does the scheduling, maintenance, shopping, and helps with the hiring process. Importantly, Tanya said, "observationally," he picks up on things she might not see from her perch that need attending to.

"We met at McNally's (the Irish pub at 5352 College)," Tanya said. "I was there for a friend's birthday. It just shows you really can meet the love of your life at a bar." Their three boys, **Ian**, 20, **Q**, 19 (both in college), and **Oden**, 15 (a student at Oakland Tech), have all worked stints at the cafe.

Tanya got her first job as a barista at the age of 18 and then spent nine years at Peaberry's Coffee and Tea, at the corner of Market Hall — the spot which Highwire Coffee just vacated to move next door. "You need to have someone who understands the industry," Sandri said. "You could be in Beverly Hills and still go broke.

"When we first took over, it was everything coffee," he recalled. "The only food was a bagel and cream cheese." Now, in addition to a broad range of coffees, decafs, and teas, their menu consists of a full line of house-made hot and cold breakfast and lunch sandwiches, a "soup of the day," salads, sides, tasty confections from local bakeries, as well as a selection of beer and wine. Their menu, Sadri says, stays fairly consistent. "We eat here every day, and we don't serve anything we don't like. We're not into trends. Our staff (of 12) doesn't have to go up the street to get food. We make sure everything here is safe and good."

Hudson Bay stayed open during Covid by providing seating outside, gradually re-opening the interior as the pandemic waned. "We never laid anybody off. We just kept on going." He is justifiably proud that "our kitchen manager **Findencia** has been with us 15 years, the main cook for 13 years, and the second guy, five years."

Before California College of the Arts closed its historic Rockridge campus, Sadri said they went out of their way to hire CCA students for the front of the cafe. Now, "We try to hire local kids to give them some experience so they have a backup field during college."

Case in point is **Jocelyn Spaulding**, an Oakland resident studying radiology at the Peralta Colleges. "I've been doing coffee for three years, at Hudson Bay Café for six months, and I really love it. I've bonded with so many regulars here. I love hearing their stories and how they're doing."

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page



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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

Rockridge resident **Scott Hicks** biked over from the Claremont Avenue area with the cafe as a destination. "They have a much more diverse menu than other coffee shops and a fair amount of outdoor seating where I can sit outside and people-watch."

"I'm here once or twice a week," **Brian McKillips** said over a decaf and his computer. The cafe is convenient to his Rockridge home and he finds the atmosphere helps him concentrate.

Longtime Rockridge resident **Beth Johnke** has been a once-or-twice-a-week customer for 20 years. "It's close to home, and it's not a chain. I like to support local businesses. It was a drop-off and meeting place when my daughter was in middle school at Claremont. I run into neighbors and friends there. Plus, the coffee is good, and the staff is friendly."

Drew Pannell, a former Rockridge resident, has been a customer since he used to drop off his son at preschool 15 years ago. Now, he drives from another part of Oakland because, "It has the best coffee and the best atmosphere… I think it's the best coffee shop in Oakland."

Hudson Bay is open Monday-Saturday from 7am to 5pm, closing an hour earlier on Sunday.

*If you know of a neighborhood story waiting to be told, contact **judyberne@att.net**.* ■

Support Chabot Elementary's Annual Auction

by Sheila Viswanathan Varshney

New Year's may be over, but it's never too late to add "support public schools" as a feel-good resolution. Chabot Elementary's PTA is hosting its annual auction this March. The auction raises funds to support art, science, music, library enrichments, small group reading and math specialists, and equity and inclusion programming for the nearly 600 students who attend Chabot. We are already aware of district-wide budget cuts for the 2025-2026 school year, so we're reaching out to the local community for additional support.

How can you help? There are two ways. First, we are seeking company sponsors for the auction. Multiple sponsorship tiers are available; they are a great way to get your name in front of the Chabot community. Second, we are looking for donated items for the auction. This could be anything from music lessons to sporting event tickets to a weekend stay at your vacation property. It's donations big and small from the community that make the auction special every year.

All donations are greatly appreciated. To support the school, email chabot.auctiongala@gmail.com by February 20, 2025. ■



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Business Anniversaries, Comings and Goings…

Alison Bagby and **Eric Tucker** of Millennium Restaurant Celebrate 10 Years in Rockridge



Photo by Anna Marks

Millennium opened in San Francisco's Abigail Hotel in 1994 with the goal of providing a contemporary dining experience that rivaled other fine dining — only vegan. The restaurant lost its lease when the hotel changed hands, and they moved across the bay. **Eric Tucker**, co-owner and chef, works long days creating seasonally inspired menus while his partner **Alison Bagby** brings a love of people and a passion for hospitality. Together, they have kept a sustainably run, iconic restaurant with an eclectic mix of gourmet dishes.

"Our concept has not wavered. We offer globally influenced, plant-based cuisine using seasonal local organic produce from a network of local farms. To me, it is California cuisine or Bay Area cuisine," says Eric.

Millennium was featured as one of the world's top 25 vegetarian and vegan restaurants by *Food & Wine* magazine. Diners can enjoy the covered, heated garden patio where they often host special events and parties.

Millennium is located at 5912 College Avenue and is open Tuesday to Saturday, 5pm-9pm.

Amy Thomas of Pegasus Books Celebrates 30 Years in Rockridge



Pegasus Books (formerly Pendragon) was launched by **Matt and Karen Wyse** in 1971, and the location was chosen because Karen ran a vintage clothing store down the street, the fabulous Bizarre Bazaar, and wanted to stay in the neighborhood. **Amy Thomas** began as a bookseller in 1980 and bought the store 25 years ago.

"We love the building, and over the years have taken over the whole space. We are a general bookstore selling lots of new books in all categories for all ages, but our specialty overall has to be our outstanding selection of used and sale books. We travel, even to England, for great books for our shelves and tables… something wonderful for all budgets.

"We also sell hundreds of greeting cards by makers locally and around the country, and bookish gifts because they crack us up."

Pegasus is located at 5560 College Avenue and is open 7 days a week from 10am to 8pm.

• College Avenue welcomes **Forge Pizza** to the neighborhood. They will be taking over the location occupied by **Beer Baron** for the past six years at 5900 College Avenue.

• **Sebie Samnot** and her husband **Mesfin Goti,** who immigrated from Ethiopia, recently purchased **SunShine Laundromat** at 5233 College Avenue.

• **Devon Gregori** is moving out of her shop at 5540 College Avenue. Find her at local craft fairs and online at devongregori.com. ■

Preparedness Classes Available

The City of Oakland is offering emergency planning classes for Oakland residents. Learn to identtify and anticipate hazards, reduce hazards in the home and workplace, and apply basic lifesaving medical techniques to better support yourself, your immediate family, and your home. This training is great for individuals who just need basic information and general awareness for themselves.

To sign up for classes, vist www.oaklandca.gov/events/personal-emergency-preparedness-pep-class-february-2025. To co-host a session, visit CORE@OaklandCA.gov. ■



Leah Rothstein Discusses *Just Action* at RCPC/ WOCAN Event

by Casey Farmer


Photo by Anna Marks

On January 16, RCPC co-hosted an event with College Avenue Presbyterian Church and West Oakland Cultural Action Network (WOCAN). Dozens of residents from across the city gathered to hear Oakland author **Leah Rothstein** speak about the book she co-wrote with her father **Richard Rothstein**, titled *Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under Color of Law.*

Leah began her talk with an overview of an earlier book, *Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,* written by her father. As one critic surmised, "Rothstein demolished the *de facto* segregation myth that black and white Americans live separately by choice, explaining how federal, state, and local government policies are directly responsible for segregation."

Leah summarized *Just Action's* many sections, including the impact of single-family zoning (including the segregation we see today), the wealth gap between blacks and whites (directly correlating from the barriers of homeownership for African Americans such as redlining (restrictive lending and deed covenants that made homes in some areas off-limits to minorities) and the opportunities for change through land trusts.

Within *Just Action*, there is a subsection titled, "Placing 'Black Lives Matter' signs is not enough," where the author writes, "discriminatory and unconstitutional practices would diminish if residential desegregation declined and diverse neighborhoods became commonplace… we're all in this together. Let's get moving."

Solutions to Address Segregation

- Volunteer. Help identify housing discrimination by serving as a tester who inquires about listings and then reports on their experiences (www.fairhousingnorcal.org/tester.html).
- Rent your unit through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as Section 8, a federal housing program intended to help address segregation (RCPC hosted a forum with Oakland Housing Authority in 2023; email TCarpenter@oakha.org).
- Support Land Trusts that purchase housing to intentionally reduce housing costs. (Land trusts own the land and rent or sell it to low- and middle-income folks).

Rothstein's talk was followed by a lively dialogue where participants shared experiences of enduring impacts of housing segregation in Oakland, including the consequences on policing and education.

West Oakland Cultural Action Network is hosting a "Just Action Working Group." Email Dave Peters at oakblwt@gmail.com to get involved. ■

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Letter to the Editor

Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers Were Banned in 2020

Dear Editor: On October 6, 2020, Oakland City Council unanimously adopted Ordinance No.13616 C.M.S., adding Chapter 8.64 to the Oakland Municipal Code. The ordinance states that no person, including homeowners, landlords, tenants, gardeners, landscapers, and employees, "shall operate any combustion engine-powered leaf blowers or string trimmers in Oakland in either public or private settings."

Although the city began enforcing this ordinance in 2021, gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers are still widely used in Rockridge today. I see people using them not just in residential spaces but also at schools and in parking lots, including BART's and the DMV's. This continuing noncompliance undermines the ban's intent to reduce noise pollution, environmental harm, and air pollution in our city. It affects those who struggle with asthma, allergies, and respiratory issues.

I'll be the first to admit that the ordinance isn't perfect. The city did nothing to provide financial assistance or grants to help small landscaping companies transition to electric or manual alternatives. Additionally, the ordinance doesn't recognize that landscaping crews work across different municipalities with different rules and regulations. Still, this doesn't excuse the continued use of banned equipment.

Here's what you can do to help: First, if you use a landscaping service, please confirm they're not using gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers. If your landscaper is unwilling to ditch these tools, switch to a different landscaping service. Plenty of crews in our neighborhood are doing the right thing… I recommend asking for their business cards.

Second, say something if you see someone using a gas-powered leaf blower or string trimmer. If they're not receptive to adhering to our local laws, then you can report violations through Oakland's 311 service. However, be warned that 311 doesn't currently have a reporting option that accurately captures these violations. Therefore, contacting Councilmember **Zac Unger's** office may be easier, especially if you see violations happening at BART, the DMV, commercial parking lots, schools, or city property.

Lastly, if you see someone following the rules, please take a moment to thank them for doing their part. This ordinance was passed in 2020 to protect our community. It's time we all step up to ensure it is followed so we can make Oakland a healthier place to live.

Karen Delacroix
Chabot Road ■



Neighborhood Agreement with JCCEB Finalized

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board Member

In 2021, the Jewish Community Center East Bay (JCCEB) began partial office occupancy of the Dreyer's/Nestlé site bounded by College, Claremont, and Chabot Avenues. The property had been acquired by philanthropist **Moses Libitsky** with the aim of its becoming a second campus for JCCEB office and programmatic activities. The JCCEB had, and continues to have, an active campus in North Berkeley. The plans also called for the site to become a centralized office location for other Bay Area Jewish nonprofit organizations.

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) convened a Town Hall meeting in late spring of 2022 where JCCEB presented its proposed plans for the property. The initial proposal included a large recreational field on top of a parking garage, a pre-school childcare program, special event programming, office use by multiple Jewish nonprofit organizations, and retention of the College Avenue retail stores. Though Rockridge residents at the meeting welcomed the JCCEB to the neighborhood, there were concerns regarding traffic, noise, and parking impacts due to new community education and community assembly uses.

After the meeting, RCPC and JCCEB convened a working group to discuss the JCCEB's plans and its impact on the neighborhood. From the beginning, the group included the JCCEB's planning team, RCPC board designees, and representatives from residents of Chabot between College and Claremont who would be most immediately impacted. Over the next two-and-a-half years, there were approximately 20 working group meetings that led to changes in the physical and operational plans for the site in stages.

JCCEB, see next page

JCCEB, from previous page

Almost immediately, the JCCEB abandoned plans for a parking garage and athletic field, both as being too financially ambitious and in response to neighborhood concerns. The physical site changes that will take place are modest and mainly involve creating a new ground-level entry to the College Avenue office building from the Chabot parking lot, and an expanded landscaped recreational area in the middle of the site.

From the beginning, discussions mainly focused on mitigation measures to improve pedestrian safety at College and Chabot and lessen the anticipated impact of increased traffic on Chabot between College and Claremont. Parking and noise issues were also major concerns.

Traffic Mitigation Options

As a result of these ongoing discussions, the JCCEB and the City of Oakland agreed to include new pedestrian safety measures at the College and Chabot intersection in project approvals, with the JCCEB paying the costs. These involve constructing a bulb-out at the northwest corner, installing Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons across both College crosswalks, and relocating both College bus stops to the far sides of the intersection.

Further changes affecting project terms and conditions occurred in anticipation of, at, and after the Planning Commission hearing on November 6, 2024.

Based on transportation and noise consultant reports, additional mitigation plans regarding controlling vehicle access, special event parking, and noise-control fencing are part of the conditions of approval.

At the hearing and in response to neighborhood concerns, the JCCEB agreed to withdraw a proposal to allow use of the Claremont parking lot for pickleball courts during non-parking hours. It also agreed, as conditions of approval, to restrict event ride-share drop-offs and pickups to the old Yoshi's site on Claremont, and to use the Claremont parking lot driveway as the vehicle ingress and egress point for cultural programming, special events, and for construction vehicles (during construction).

On a 4-0 vote, the Planning Commission approved the project.

Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)

After the hearing, the working group engaged in further discussion that led to a negotiated Community Benefits Agreement effective November 15, 2024. A CBA is a contractual agreement between a developer, such as the JCCEB, and neighborhood groups, where each side gets something in exchange for giving something up. In this instance, RCPC and the immediate Chabot Road neighbors, organized as the Chabot Village, agreed not to file an appeal of the Planning Commission decision to the Oakland City Council.

In return, the JCCEB agreed to additional limitations on programs and special events, including amplified outside sound and small-ball court usage. The JCCEB further agreed to use Claremont Avenue for drop-offs and pickups for after-school and summer camp programs as long as such programs are initiated; to experiment with making right-turns only in and out of the Chabot parking lot for childcare drop-offs and pickups; and to allow space for neighborhood meetings when the site is otherwise in use.

Lastly, the CBA establishes a Neighborhood Committee that will meet at least twice a year to resolve any potential site and programmatic issues of neighborhood concern. The first meeting was scheduled for February 7.

The JCCEB anticipates that demolition and construction will begin at the end of March and that all site development work, including outdoor landscaping, will be completed by the end of February 2026.

A link to the CBA can be found at https://rockridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RCPC-JCC-Neighbor-Relations-Agreement-111524.pdf ■





Urgent Need for *Rockridge News* Block Captain

by Susan Montauk, RCPC Distribution Manager

Block Captain **Lynn Delaney** stepped down from her many years' service delivering the *Rockridge News* for the Broadway Terrace route. Since then, we at the *Rockridge News* have been putting out notices asking for a volunteer replacement. So far, no luck, and if we can't find a replacement, Broadway Terrace residents will lose delivery. We do not want to give up on blocks within RCPC borders, and there has never been a vacancy that some generous community member didn't step in to fill.

Even if you don't live on Broadway Terrace (near College Avenue), we would welcome your offer to become the area's next Block Captain. The route takes about 20-30 minutes, and is a great way to get to know your neighbors. Please let us know if you are that person.

- **Route 08B: Both sides of Broadway Terrace, odd numbers from Broadway to 5409, even numbers from Broadway to 5400.**

Please volunteer: 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. ■





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College Preparatory School's 30th Annual Used Book Sale

by Christa Laib

Celebrate 30 years of used books at The College Preparatory School's renowned annual sale. Shop thousands of gently used books for adults, teens, and children including many recent and popular titles in excellent condition. With additional media, vinyl, puzzles, and a selection of vintage/antique books, there's something for every age and interest.

Shop Saturday, March 1, from 10am to 4pm; and **Sunday, March 2, from 10am to 2pm.** Most books are $1 to $3 (specialty books are slightly higher). There will be a bag sale all day Sunday — only $8 per bag. The sale is being held at the school in the Buttner Auditorium (with ample free parking), located at 6100 Broadway.

Contact Bookfair@college-prep.org or call (510) 652-0111 for more info. ■

Watercolors of San Francisco by Wendy Soneson

by Adrien Martins, Age 10, Chabot School Student Reporter



I saw a preview of a new show coming to the Rockridge Library. Come and see all of Wendy's "I Love SF" paintings in person at the Rockridge Library. You will not want to leave because the paintings are so immersive that you will feel like you are in San Francisco. Buy one for your house, friend or grandparent… trust me they will love It.

The exhibit runs February 1-26 at the Rockridge Library. ■

Rockridge Library
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For Children
Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am.

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

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

Tinker Tuesdays: Join us for various crafts for children every Tuesday at 3:30pm. All ages welcome, children under 8 must bring a grown-up.

Origami for All: Every third Tuesday at 4 pm (2/18). All ages welcome.

For Teens, Ages 12 to 18
Teen Advisory Board: Second Wednesdays (2/12); 4pm-5pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library.

For Adults
Adult Crafting Series: Tuesdays 6pm-7:30pm.

Collage Cards: Feb. 4. Explore your creative impulse and make original cards in a relaxed and fun environment. All materials are provided.

Rockridge Gardening Series: Native Plants: Saturday Feb. 15, 2pm-3pm. The U.C. Master Gardener Program of Alameda County will teach us about the beauty and benefits of plants specifically tailored to our climate.

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, 3:30pm-4:30pm. Please call 510/597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. February's book is The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters.

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

1-on-1 Technology Help: Every Saturday, 10am-12pm. Come with your devices and technology questions and our volunteer tech guru will help you get sorted. First come first served.

Library Hours:
Mon, Thurs, Sat 10am to 5:30pm
Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 8pm
Friday, noon to 5:30pm.

Holiday Closures:
President's Day – February 17

Please see the online calendar at www.oaklandlibrary.org/events for events throughout the city.

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 the March 2025 issue is: February 21, 2025 (available March 8).

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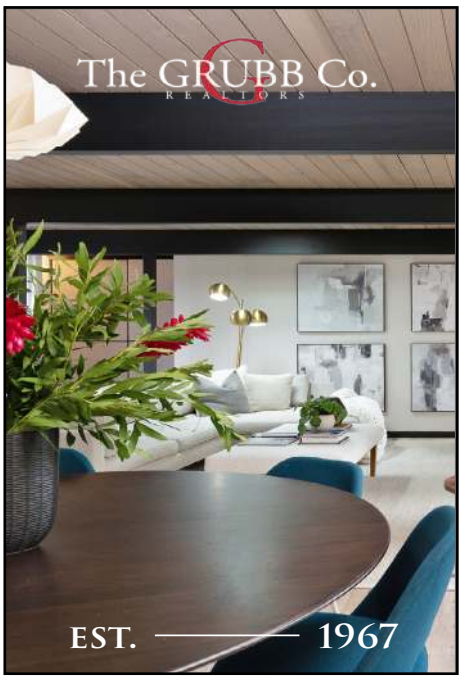
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