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

Listening Sessions and Pop-ups Inform Rockridge Community Vision Plan

by Casey Farmer and Kristen Belt, CVP Co-Chairs, RCPC Board Members

During the month of March, hundreds of residents weighed into the RCPC Community Vision Plan (CVP) process. First, we held three pop-ups around the neighborhood guided by community engagement experts and Rockridge residents **James Rojas** and **John Kamp**. They produced a map of Rockridge and provided participants with tactile materials to envision what they wanted to see in the neighborhood — using their hands and imaginations. These well-attended events were hosted in multiple locations where residents regularly gather — the Rockridge Library, Safeway Plaza, and the Farmers Market.



Photo: Casey Farmer

RCPC Board Members engaged the community at the March 20 meeting.

On March 20, RCPC held its CVP "Listening Session" at Claremont Middle School, and over 125 residents attended. We started with an update on what we've learned from the community thus far and then broke into small groups for brainstorming discussions on the five key focus areas: Mobility, Open Space / Green Infrastructure, Sustainability / Resilience, Commercial / Community Uses, and Housing. You can see resounding themes and interesting ideas from the word cloud image displayed on the following page.

Rockridge CVP, see next page



Fresh Finds on Rockridge's College Avenue

by Carol Kasparek

Rockridge's independent businesses cultivate a close-knit community vibe, and College Avenue is the heartbeat of our dynamic retail district. Coming to the neighborhood are some exciting new spots and a couple of relocated gems.


Photo: Carol Kasparek

Owners Matthew Giles and Anthony Mack take Veranda from pop-up to storefront.

Veranda

Matthew Giles and **Anthony Mack** have evolved their home interior business in Veranda from landscaping, to design consulting, to Rockridge pop-up, to a permanent storefront at 5931 College Avenue. Mack and Giles opened the pop-up last fall after closing their downtown Oakland location. Rockridge District Association (RDA) manager **Chris Jackson** saw the positive response to the pop-up,

Fresh Finds, see page 3

Rockridge CVP, from front page



Please join us on **April 27 at 4pm** for coffee and a strategy workshop at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Avenue**.** Participants will be invited to evaluate the ideas generated from the meetings, pop-ups, and surveys and provide feedback on which to prioritize.

"I highly recommend getting engaged in this plan. Amidst everything going on this wild world, making a difference locally is very fulfilling," says **Jana Good**, new RCPC Board Member and Manila Ave resident.

To attend the meeting, RSVP to Chair@rockridge.org. If you are unable to attend any of our meetings but have ideas to share, please submit them through our survey, which you can access via the QR code on the front page, or at www.Rockridge.org. ■

Community Engagement Pop-Up



Photo: Tom Lollini

Residents shared thoughts and ideas at one of three interactive pop-ups. "Dozens of people stopped by to build a better Rockridge using small buildings and landscape elements," noted James Rojas.

RCPC Board Election Update

by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair

In February, RCPC announced its annual election. Six candidates filed by the deadline for the six open seats, so **there will not be a board election this year**.

Congratulations to **Gary Barg**, **Jana Good**, **Robbie Tasker**, and **Paul McDonnell,** who will be joining the board in April, and to **Star Lightner** and **Mark Aaronson,** who will be serving new terms on the board. We will share the bios of the incoming board members in the May newsletter.

Huge thanks for the many contributions of outgoing board members **Ken Rich** (4 years of service) and **Louisa Bukiet** (3 years of service). Both of them were instrumental in pushing forth many RCPC efforts, including ensuring strong financial management — both served as RCPC Treasurer during their terms. ■



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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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.

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Fresh Finds, from front page

and helped the partners secure the space left by the recent departure of the Sunday Bake Shop. While still working as teachers, they quickly converted the space to showcase their home goods.

The current location embodies their commitment to "comforting, inspiring, timeless pieces." Their signature indoor-outdoor aesthetic, soothing color palettes, and environmentally friendly household treats and essentials are beautifully displayed in the compact space. A wide variety of products are available to enhance a home, including Eucalyptus steam tablets that convert any shower into a spa treatment and throws and pillows that are softly woven from natural fibers sourced from local vendors.

Veranda offers a quarterly subscription service that includes a box of items not yet on the shelves and the opportunity to attend a private gathering at the store. "We want to enjoy the newest selection with our customers and enhance a sense of community," offers Mack. For features and gatherings, see *verandaoakland.com*.

Preserved

For 10 years, Preserved has been a destination — first in Piedmont, then Temescal — for resources to create all things fermented, preserved, canned and cultured. "Rockridge was always our number one destination… I didn't know if I could break in," admits Preserved owner **Elizabeth Vecchiarelli**. She made the break by securing two storefronts at 5550 and 5540 College Avenue. The new location will allow for an expansion of its thriving workshop and event space, while increasing its distinctive retail selection for home fermentation, brewing, and canning.



Photo: Felicia Kieselhorst

After ten years in Temescal, **Elizabeth Vecchiarelli** will be moving her shop to Rockridge.

They plan to open later this spring.

"The business model is all about education," explains Vecchiarelli, hence the permanent teaching space under construction. "We want to de-mystify the "B" word, bacteria, and remove the fear factor." She, along with several members of her staff, has formal nutritional training. Vecchiarelli lives up to her "fermentation fanatic" moniker by conducting kombucha, sourdough, and kimchee classes — including their health benefits. Bitters for best cocktail or digestif, as well as instructions on marmalade, pasta, and chocolate, are also on the schedule.

The new location presents a fantastic opportunity to offer a diverse range of culinary tools. The team will handpick unique items that are hard to find in the Bay Area, so customers won't have to search online or sift through countless similar products. Whether you're looking for premium or budget-friendly options, each tool will be thoughtfully selected for its specific use, ensuring top-quality choices for every need.

"Every major city has a great independent kitchen store" asserts Vecchiarelli. Preserved intends to be that destination for Oakland and beyond. Workshop schedule and product information available at *info@preservedgoods.com*.

Fresh Finds, see next page

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Fresh Finds, from previous page



Owner **Prinya Phairot** of Delicious Thai

Delicious Thai

Browsing the menu at Delicious Thai is like taking a journey through the rich history of owner **Prinya Phairot**. She proudly brings three generations of her family's cherished recipes to Rockridge, now serving them up at 5299A College Avenue.

Phairot grew up in a Bangkok suburb., where, she says, "it was very common for almost everyone in the neighborhood to have some sort of food business." At 8 years old, her first mission was to "guard the ingredients" as her mother and grandmother moved through the market, gathering what's needed for their specialty noodle stall. She moved on to pounding garlic — preparing the "tiny but powerful cloves." She was carefully instructed on the perfect frying method. "Everything must be perfect in the pan."

Phairot has found a true sense of community in her new home. "Oakland welcomed me," she says warmly. She relocated to the area with her husband, a retired healthcare administrator turned photographer from Northern California. Before opening her own spot, Phairot helped run a cousin's Thai restaurant in Martinez. During the pandemic's impact on the restaurant, she cared for seniors in the area, which led her to discover Rockridge. When the lease was signed on January 1, with the support of a thoughtful landlord, she felt ready to "bring my ancestors with me" and make her vision come to life.

Her special Tom Yum sauce is a highlight of her Mom's Menu and Signature Menu. Khao Soi chicken and beef are infused with her perfected garlic oil. The Butterfly Pea Tea is a visual delight, the blue hue turning purple when squeezed with a lemon.

The name "Delicious Thai" has a deep meaning for Phairot. One of her beloved senior clients was a man who tended an herb garden, teaching her about slow-cooking meats and even cooking for her with dishes from his Chicago roots. Whenever she cooked his meal, he declared the food "Delicious!" She honors his gift with the charming use of this name.



Owner **Michael Karp** says Forge Pizza will be open mid April.

Forge

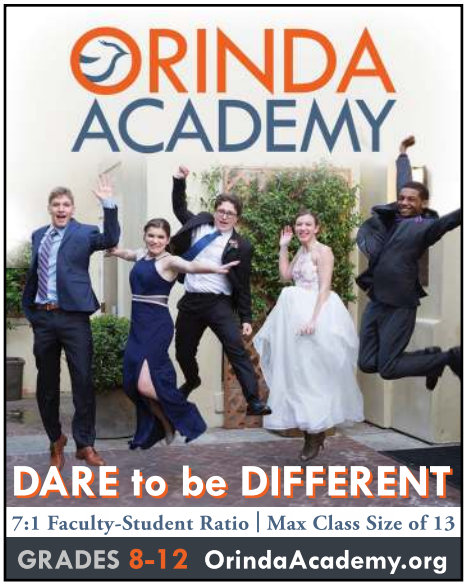
Coming this spring, the spacious indoor-outdoor spot at the corner of Chabot will be the home of Forge. According to owner **Michael Karp** (see photo above), the menu will feature Neapolitan-style wood-fired pizza with "elevated California cuisine." Their chef will create a menu that includes items from their Napa location and the former Jack London location, but incorporating East Bay contributions. "I love to localize," Karp says. Residents can get a preview of the cuisine at their location in the Oakland International Airport.

Karp fell in love with Rockridge after years of developing corporate and independent restaurants. He has a long history of creating venues for entertainment and sports figures in the Bay Area and worldwide. Karp opened his location in Orinda in 2010, called the A24. He has already connected with the community on this side of the tunnel by partnering with Cal Bears and supporting local charities. The Forge wood-fired pizza truck can be found throughout the area at community and nonprofit events.

Forge will bring more than good food to the Avenue. Performers will

Fresh Finds, see next page

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Fresh Finds, from previous page

provide acoustic music throughout the year. Karp attends live music shows every week and wants neighbors to enjoy the same experience. Changes to the 5900 College Ave location include a canopy to cover the patio and new furniture throughout, with heaters to allow for year-round use of the space. "We see the patio as an extension of the restaurant," says Karp. "We will be in amazing culinary company by coming to Rockridge."



Crossroads Trading

Crossroads Trading is coming to the broad storefront formerly occupied by Rockridge Furniture at 5601 College Avenue. Now at the corner of Chabot and College, Crossroads will move their recycled clothing business this summer. "We were presented a great opportunity to return to our original stretch of College Avenue near Market Hall and the BART Station," says Director of Marketing **Gina Nowicki**. Selection and consignment opportunities at the current location will continue at the new site.

Sellers can submit items through online registrations or by walking in at any time. Customers will find a full range of leisure, athletic, formal, and designer wear. Jewelry, shoes, and accessories will also be available. All clothing is sourced from the public, keeping the business local.

"Our Rockridge store reflects the most popular trends, styles and labels in the neighborhood," confirms Nowicki. Check out their website for selling options for your trendy Rockridge threads and other information at *Crossroadstrading.com*. ■

RCPC Land Use Committee

In lieu of an April LUC meeting, all are invited to the next phase of the

Community Vision Plan
April 27

For details, see front page or email chair@rockridge.org

RCPC 2024 Financial Statement

Income	
Contributions	$ 305.00
Rockridge News	$ 50,947.51
Kitchen Tour	$ 31,150.03
Other	$ 3,147.44
Total Income	$ 85,549.98
Expenses	
Rockridge News	$ 47,978.78
Contractors	$ 5,810.83
Insurance, Permits, Sales Tax	$ 3,888.00
Misc Admin & Program Expenses	$ 2,171.75
Taxes, Licenses & Fees	$ 2,223.35
Events	$ 1,852.70
Total Expenses	$ 63,925.41
Net Income (RCPC)	$ 21,624.57
BALANCE SHEET	
Assets	
Savings/Checking/CD Accounts	$ 104,556.39
Equity & Liabilities	
Legal Fund Reserve	$ 55,000.00
Equity	$ 27,931.82
Net Income	$ 21,624.57
Net Equity & Liabilities	$ 104,556.39

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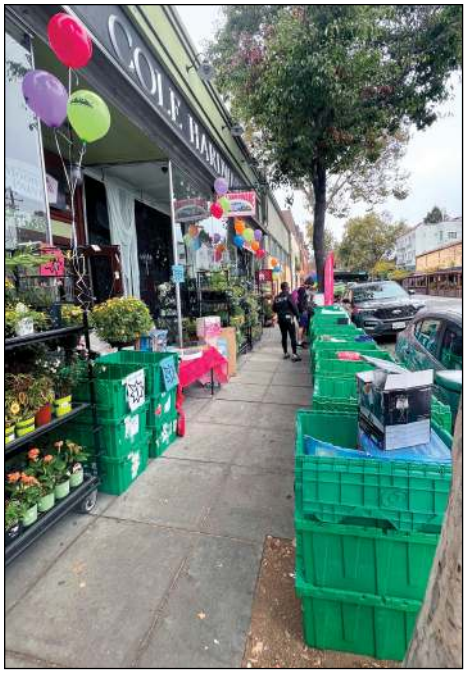
Treasures and Great Deals at the Rockridge Sidewalk Sale

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association

Rockridge retailers are organizing a district-wide sidewalk sale on **Saturday, May 10** (times vary for each participating business). Taking place on Mother's Day weekend, this is a great way to shop for Mom or spend quality time with her. In addition to sales, some shops are hosting pop-up vendors and prizes, like the $100 raffle hosted by designer fashion boutique FIT (5707 College Avenue).

Families can get engaged at Blick Art Materials (5301 Broadway), which is hosting sidewalk chalk art and paper drawing pads for people of all ages to get creative. Lavendar, who works with Elizabeth H at 5431 College Avenue, will offer Fairy Hair installations for only $30 (lasts 6-8 weeks). European Wax Center will pamper mom with 10 percent off their Ultimate Eyebrow Service.





Come for the great offers, and stay for the delicious food. Rockridge Market Hall is bringing back their very popular Indie Food Fest where you can taste, meet, and chat with some of their favorite independent food makers. Belly, at 5634 College Avenue, will offer free food samples outside their restaurant.

The Rockridge Sidewalk Sale falls on the last day of Small Business Week — a great opportunity to connect with the community on the great value and irreplaceable experience of shopping locally. Dozens of Rockridge businesses will be involved.

Check for details as the event nears at www.RockridgeDistrict.com. ■

Earth Day Cleanup at Big Frog Park and Temescal Greenbelt

by Will Sheldon

In celebration of Earth Day 2025, a cleanup of Big Frog Park, Little Frog Park, and the Temescal Greenbelt (between Big Frog and Little Frog) will take place **on Saturday, April 19, from 9am to noon**. This year's Earth Day theme, "Our Power Our Planet," focuses on increasing the use of renewable resources and urging a global shift towards cleaner energy generation in the next five years.

Meet at the big oak tree by the Big Frog play structure on Saturday, April 19, from 9am to noon, to sign the waiver to participate.

Tasks include weeding, pruning, trash pickup, raking, sweeping, fluffing up the fibar© wood mulch around the play structure, and possibly applying a non-toxic sealant to the Big Frog play structure. Families and groups are welcome. Students needing service hours for school can receive a signed letter verifying their participation.

Please bring your gardening gloves, tools, and refillable water bottles. Some gardening gloves and tools will be on hand to lend. Coffee and snacks will be available to all volunteers. ■



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Join the Rockridge Cleanup Crew

by Christine Garofoli



Want to meet friendly neighbors and keep Rockridge looking great? The Rockridge Business District Association (RDA) is launching a neighborhood cleanup crew and you're invited to participate.

Inspired by other communities where neighbors regularly pitch in, we're starting a weekly, fun way to make a difference. Everything will be provided — gloves, trash bags, and litter pickers — all you have to do is show up and spend 20 to 30 minutes helping to tidy up College Avenue.

We meet up at the BART station and walk the avenue from Broadway to the Safeway Plaza, keeping our neighborhood clean and welcoming as we go. If interested, fill out this quick Doodle Poll indicating your availability at *https://doodle.com/group-poll/participate/e9GxNWBb*, or email Christine at *cgarofoli@gmail.com*. ■

Dogs of Rockridge

Kona Bair came from a litter of nine puppies mere days into Covid. Kona is a BoJack — half Boston Terrier, half Jack Russell Terrier. She lives on Desmond and will celebrate her 5th birthday this month. Kona's little brother, Kai, was adopted two years after by a friend in Alameda. He looks almost identical to Kona, except with shorter and stubbier legs.



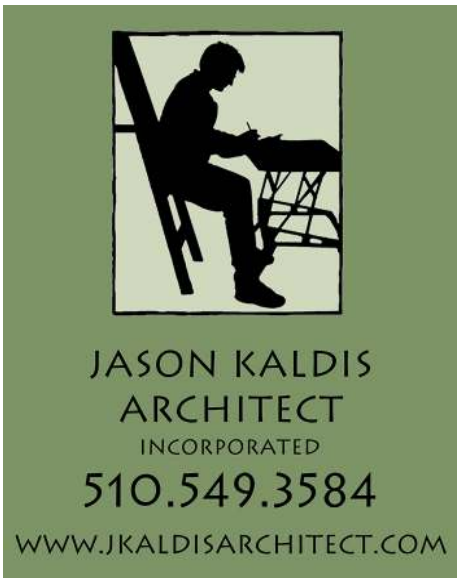


Jonni is a 3-year-old Border Collie mix. She loves people, her ball, her dog friends, and food — anything she can get her paws on because she has a voracious appetite. She has a lot of energy and enjoys waking her family up and singing in the morning. She is very sweet and always excited to meet new friends, especially on her morning walks around Bushrod.

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

A Red Schwinn Sets in Motion a Life of Cycling

by Judith Doner Berne

Scott Hicks, until very recently, had 20 bicycles – three in the kitchen, several outside the door of his studio apartment in Rockridge, where he has lived for 17 years, as well as four bike frames in his living area. The rest, he said, are "scattered around" in available storage spots. "I have too many bikes. I keep trying to thin the herd."

So, at a recent neighborhood yard sale, he reluctantly sold two of them — both vintage models — as well as one of his three motorcycles. "It would have been better to be a collector of stamps or coins," he said, with a touch of humor. "They could have fit in a drawer."

Hicks, now 66, has had a love affair with bikes since he was 10. His first was a red Schwinn like the ones that newspaper boys rode back in the day (yes, it was mostly boys then) in his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "It had wooden blocks on the pedals," designed to be removed as he grew taller. He rode it until, when he was 13, he and his two younger brothers got 10-speeds for Christmas.



Photo: Judy Berne

You just might see **Scott Hicks** riding around Rockridge on one of his vintage bikes.

"I was one of the few kids who rode their bikes to school," Hicks said. "Then I started logging longer rides. I rebuilt my mom's bike for her. I did a term paper on the history of biking. I pestered the local bike shop owner until he finally hired me to work there after school." As a 13-year-old, he had to have a note from the school principal to allow it.

That set in motion a life revolving around bikes — as a sport, hobby, and career. Hicks was part of the amateur bike racing scene for 20 years. He participated in road races for multiple days; in criterium races (mass start, multi-lap events where racers do a predetermined number of laps or ride for a predetermined amount of time); and in velodrome cycling on an oval-shaped track where riders race counterclockwise on fixed gear bikes with no brakes. It's been an Olympic sport since 1896.

"Bicycles are as much a hobby as a sport," Hicks said, and over the years, he has collected and ridden bikes of various types. "You have equipment to take care of, or you could have an accident." Does he have a favorite? Hicks demurred, saying: "That's like asking a parent who is his favorite kid. You just need the right tool for the job." For him, that's a single-gear for running around town, a mountain bike for riding on dirt, and a good road bike — like his Bianchi bike from the late '90s that he fitted with Campagnolo (a high-end brand) parts. Plus, "I have a shelf at home of

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page


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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

just bicycle books."

He worked at bike shops first in Pennsylvania and then the East Bay, including as an assistant store manager for Backroads, the Berkeley-based touring company when it had a retail bike shop. He then helped open a Start to Finish location in Berkeley, moving to assistant manager at its San Francisco store. Hicks was a customer service and warranty manager for Bianchi, the world's oldest bicycle manufacturing company (founded in Italy in 1885). And finally, he spent 17 years at Missing Link Bicycle Cooperative in downtown Berkeley, retiring ahead of its 2022 closing after 50 years of operation.

Hicks has found it tough to witness the parade of local bike shops that have gone out of business, particularly over the past decade. This includes the recent shuttering of two Berkeley stores — Berkeley Cycle Works on San Pablo and Trek Bikes on Shattuck (the Oakland Trek store is still open). Internet sales of bikes, parts, and accessories are, of course, a major reason. "Accessory sales are a big profit center," Hicks said.

In addition, Cal Berkeley students were a mainstay of the Missing Link co-op. But the advent of Uber and Lyft rider services, plus easy access to rental bikes, took their toll. "They no longer looked at a bike as an essential tool to get around on." Some students told him that if they invested in a bike, "It would just get stolen."

That isn't quite the story for Hank and Frank Bikes, which had been on College Avenue in Rockridge for 37 years before closing in 2023. For owner **Frank Dryer** (not the original Frank), the shop that catered to families and children shut down due to a rent increase and crime. "Our rent went up 50 percent during Covid," he said. "And we were broken into twice." His Lafayette shop remains open. "We retained 80 percent of our (College Avenue) customers."

Tip Top Bikes, located for 13 years on Telegraph Avenue in Temescal, also has a different tale. Store manager **Eric Crawford** said they've expanded since Covid despite the trouble of getting supplies during the pandemic — the final straw for other shops. In addition to selling a full range of electric and manual bicycles, they repair them too, "from the very highest-end bikes to a very basic bike from Walmart," he said. "If you're an older rider, electric- assist bikes open up a lot of potential," Hicks said.

His favorite local ride is up Tunnel Road to the Redwood Trail. "But more often, I ride around the neighborhood."

That's led to a new friendship. Fellow biker **Rob Manheimer** spotted Hicks riding down the street on a vintage bike a few years back. He recognized him from his visits to the Missing Link co-op. Manheimer, a Rockridge resident who is also a former racer, owns seven "mostly fitness kind of bikes. Scott's a fun, old-time, long-time cyclist. We share an amazing number of mutual (cyclist) friends on Facebook."

If you have a Rockridge story to tell, please email judyberne@att.net. ■





HOW MANY OFFERS?

One of the most interesting statistics we track on home sales is the number of offers received. The number of offers indicates how desirable/competitive a property is (or may indicate a uniquely low list price). Here's a recent analysis of the past 2 quarters in Rockridge sales:

	Q4 2024	Q1 2025
Number of homes sold	9 homes	16 homes
Avg number of offers	4.1	3.5
Low	1 offer	1 offer
High	8 offers	8 offers

So far we have seen a notable 77% surge in inventory in Q1 vs Q4 (election fears kept listings low in Q4), so given this sharp increase, the fact that the number of offers has remained fairly level, suggests to me a stable and fairly high appetite in the market for Rockridge homes!



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Turning Reclaimed Wood Pieces into Beautiful Art

by Skip Fogarty

When Long Island native **Jamie Gracer** first saw the Bay Area as a teenager on a summer road trip, he sensed he'd found his forever home. So, after medical school, he pursued a residency at Oakland's Kaiser Hospital.

"During those years, I rented a room up on Contra Costa and loved it. When my wife Judy (a retired rabbi) and I bought our home on Rockwell Street, I was excited to finally have a garage," Gracer explains. "But I came to find it was actually too small to park a car."



Jamie Gracer displays his Powermatic lathe in his converted garage workshop.

Decades have since gone by, and now the detached garage space has been transformed into a wonderful, well-organized wood shop. It's a woodturning studio with a bright yellow Powermatic lathe as its centerpiece. The brand proclaims itself as "The Gold Standard" of such machines.

"I was interested in wood shop in high school, but my father was an electrician and wanted me to learn how to fix televisions and such," he says. His studies, and then his busy psychiatric practice intervened, but his woodworking bug lingered.

"At a College Avenue street fair, I met a fellow with a booth displaying beautifully carved and finished wooden bowls and vases. My interest was reignited when he told me about a woodturning program in Pleasant Hill that offered adult education classes." Gracer is now an instructor there but prefers to call himself a teaching assistant. Additionally, he recently became vice president of the nonprofit Bay Area Woodturning Association, which offers workshops and hosts guest artists.

Each piece of his work on display in his home is unique. He works with a variety of woods, shapes, and finishes and often leaves naturally occurring "beauty marks" in his creations. A blond platter retains its rough, live

Woodturners, see next page





Woodturners, from previous page



By joining contrasting woods, Jamie achieves elegant, geometric patterns.

edge. A darker, acorn-shaped vase features a dramatic burl scar at the lip.

Gracer and fellow turners obtain their wood in a variety of ways. They often pick from the pile of a local arborist who leaves all varieties of his cuttings to be reclaimed. Other times, they hear of a desirable species being removed and swarm to the site with their chainsaws to claim large chunks that will become "blanks" for later shaping and turning.

His studio boasts a small pile of such chunks, which require years of curing and drying before they can be carved. Oak, acacia, redwood, and walnut are all suitable materials, but local eucalyptus and pine are not favored. The former is too hard and twisty, and the latter is too sappy and soft.

The walls of his converted garage are covered with racks of chisels (gougers and scrapers, he calls them), sandpapers of various grades, clamps, jigs, chucks, glues, and stains. He also has band and table saws, a drill press, and two grinders to keep a sharp edge on his gougers. He explains that a dull hand tool can add risks to the wood itself and to personal safety.

Most remarkable are projects that feature "segmented turning," where the artist fabricates intricate patterns by joining contrasting woods and achieving basket-like effects with elegant, geometric perforations. Some of Gracer's pieces reflect indigenous motifs and other traditional shapes.

"When I'm working, neighbors frequently stop and are curious what I'm up to. I invite them in for a look and tell them about the adult learning program that got me started. It's a converted auto shop at a high school with 16 lathes and workshops for beginners through advanced turners," Gracer explains. The Mt. Diablo school district sponsors the program, and it is a great way to explore the craft. What does Gracer do with his finished pieces? "I don't sell anything, but I love to offer my works as gifts. I also donate some of the better pieces to local charity auctions." ■

Learn more about the adult woodturning program:
diablo.asapconnected.com/#CourseGroupID=6490

Bay Area Woodturners Association:
www.bayareawoodturners.org.

Lower 48:
Gracer highlights one of his past instructors who runs a program for underserved youth — Turning People into Turning People. See www.lower48.org.

# of Rockridge

Holy Basil: Pho

5362 College Avenue



It took some time to discover **Holy Basil Pho**. As a vegetarian, I don't always find meat-free pho that flavorful, so I didn't seek it out. But a friend turned me on to the restaurant, so I tried it, and I'm happy I did. What I love so much about Holy Basil is the wonderful array of Specialty Noodle Soups that are similar to pho but even more satisfying.

On a cold or rainy night, or if I'm fighting a cold, I can't think of anything better than sitting over a steaming bowl of noodle soup. My favorite is Chili Lemongrass Tomato. I get the Vegetable version (as opposed to Chicken or Seafood) and always add soft tofu to my bowl. The tomato-lemongrass broth has such depth of flavor, and I love that the soup is chock-full of various vegetables — it's always a bit of a surprise to see what's in there.

On my last trip, the bowl included cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, bok choy, carrots, and various types of mushrooms… and at the bottom of the bowl are the excellent pho noodles. The dish also includes traditional pho toppings, such as bean sprouts, fresh herbs, jalapenos, and lime. Spending about $20 for such a satisfying, filling, and healthy meal as Chili Lemongrass Tomato soup is a huge win — check it out. ■

— Jana Good



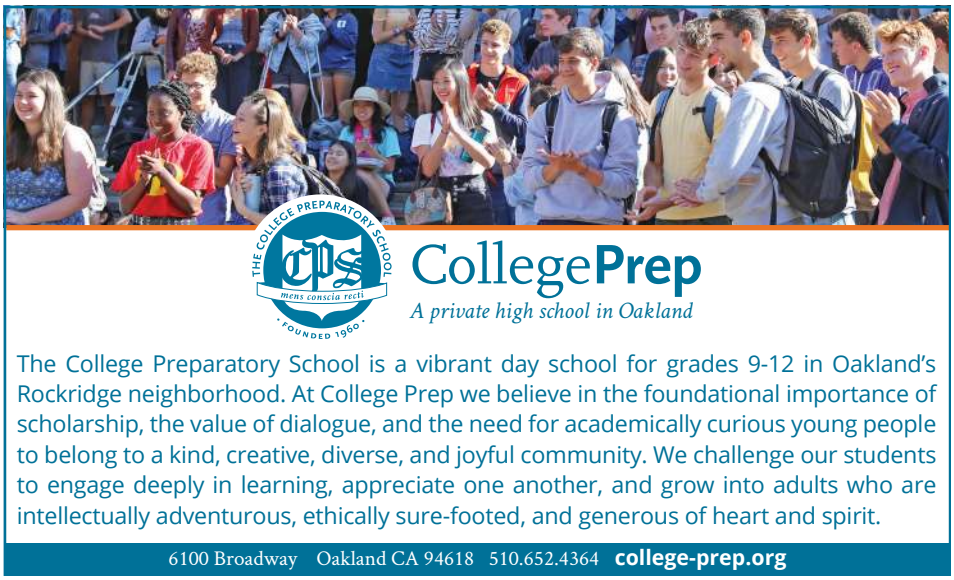
AC Transit Fare Adjustment and Clipper 2.0 Update

by Muhammad Alameldin, RCPC Board Member

The AC Transit Board of Directors has approved a fare adjustment set to take effect in two phases. Starting July 1, 2025, the local adult cash fare will increase from $2.50 to $2.75, while the Transbay fare will rise from $6 to $6.50. A second increase on July 1, 2026, will bring the local fare to $3. The decision, passed in a 4-3 vote, aims to maintain service while balancing financial impacts on riders.

To support affordability, AC Transit remains part of the Clipper START program, which offers a 50 percent discount for eligible low-income riders. Clipper and mobile fare payments will continue to receive a 25¢ discount.

Additionally, the Clipper 2.0 system is set to launch soon, introducing new transfer discounts. Riders transferring between AC Transit and one of 21 participating transit agencies will receive a $2.50 discount on their second ride within a two-hour window. If the second fare is lower than $2.50, the transfer will be free. Clipper 2.0 includes an open payment (pay by credit/debit card) as well. These benefits begin once Clipper 2.0 is officially released; more details to follow as the launch date approaches. ■





Traffic Safety Pilot Coming to Colby & Hillegass

by Muhammad Alameldin, RCPC Board Member

A new Slow Neighborhood Pilot is coming to the Colby and Hillegass neighborhood aims to improve safety, reduce speeds, and manage traffic flow. This effort is based on traffic data and community input. Although there is a limited budget, the goal is to make meaningful improvements in key areas.

To develop this pilot, the Slow Neighborhood Pilot Working Group conducted a traffic count on February 25, collecting data from 43 intersections during the PM peak and 34 during the AM peak. The group also worked with traffic modeling from the Institute for Transportation Studies at UC Berkeley to identify problem areas. Using this information, the working group has pinpointed key hotspots where potential treatments may be tested.

The pilot will last 120 days, per the commitment from Oakland's Department of Transportation Director, **Josh Rowan**. This timeline ensures the project remains flexible, with an opportunity to evaluate results before making permanent changes. Neighbors can expect regular communications on progress and adjustments.

A community meeting in April will formally announce the pilot and share details with residents. In the meantime, the working group will refine the final recommendations from the meetings held in March. While there is a brief delay in finalizing the results, the project is moving forward and next steps will be shared soon.

This pilot is designed to prioritize safety, accessibility, and neighborhood needs — with your participation. We appreciate the involvement of those who contributed to the traffic count, data collection, and feedback.

To stay up to date on meetings, email working-group-slow-neighborhood-pilot@googlegroups.com. ■

District Captain Opening Available

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

Many volunteers who deliver the *Rockridge News* to your doorstep have been doing so for decades now, some even since the first issue in 1986 — and we thank all of them. Sometimes, a volunteer must pass their job to another good community member, and this month, we say goodbye to **Beth Johnke**, who has served as the District Captain for Coronado, Desmond, Hemphill Place, and Merill Gardens for many years. Beth is moving, and she hopes someone in this area will take over her route. Thank you, Beth!

- **District Captain for Coronado, Desmond, Hemphill Place, and Merrill Gardens**

The District Captain (DC) receives the bundles of newsletters on their doorstep the first weekend of each month (except August). The DC delivers those bundles to the four Block Captains. The box contains four bundles with cover sheets indicating the number of papers and the name and address of the Block Captain, who delivers the papers door-to-door.

Call or email Susan at 510/547-3855 or smontauk@gmail.com if you are interested or need more information. ■

Claremont Middle School Golden Gala Auction and Party

Get ready for a night of fun, elegance, and giving back at the Claremont Middle School Golden Gala. The event is being held on **April 19, 2025, at the Rockridge Masonic Center, from 6:30-10pm**. This exciting fundraiser will support Claremont's students with a delightful seated dinner, refreshing drinks, lively dancing, and a thrilling live auction. It's the perfect mix of entertainment and charity — an event you won't want to miss.

Dress to impress with this year's "Gold" theme — sparkle and shine in your most dazzling attire for a chance to win the Best Dressed Prize. With only 50 raffle tickets available at $50 each, you'll want to act fast… and as a bonus, one lucky attendee will walk away with a $500 cash prize.

Enjoy a scrumptious dinner with friends. Tables of eight are available, and includes wine to keep the good times rolling. Want to support the teachers and staff? You can contribute to cover their tickets, helping them attend this special night at no cost.

Your participation helps fund essential programs for Claremont, including classroom technology, academic support, and enriching student activities.

Together, let's make a meaningful difference in our students lives.

Want to get involved? Contact jennifervrose@gmail.com to volunteer. Note: this is an adults-only event. ■

Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

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

The next meeting will be held on:

April 10, at 7pm

Rockridge Library Conference Room (and on Zoom).

Dianne Aguirre from the Neighborhood Law Corps will explain how the litigation unit operates within the Oakland City Attorney's Office.

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



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Rockridge Library
Author Series Continues:



Celebrate Spring Holidays at Market Hall

by Roberta Klugman



Photo: Cortesy of Market Hall

Spring is here, and so are the irresistible flavors of the season. From **April 11 through 19**, Market Hall Foods and Market Hall Bakery are rolling out a mouthwatering selection of Passover and Easter specialties. Indulge in house-made full meals, delicious heat-and-serve hors d'oeuvres, tempting starters, satisfying entrees, and decadent desserts – all crafted to make holiday celebrations unforgettable.

For Passover, choose from house-made charoset, horseradish, Scott's Famous Chopped Liver, matzoh ball soup, gefilte fish, mushroom matzoh kugel, slow-cooked brisket, and other holiday delights. The Seder Plate Essentials: Everything for the Plate includes charoset, horseradish, roasted lamb bone, long-cooked egg, parsley, and a box of matzoh for $32.

Desserts feature Pavlova and coconut macaroons. In-store shoppers will discover the deliciously dark chocolate-covered matzoh from San Francisco's Charles Chocolates and other Passover specialty foods.

Easter specialties, available April 17-19, include the popular hot cross buns, asparagus and feta quiche, grilled salmon, Fra'Mani sweet apple ham, and sweets from the bakery include holiday sugar cookies and fresh fruit tart. Spring is resplendently on display with Easter confections that showcase the delectable selection of treats for kids and adults, including a wide assortment of colorful gift boxes, tins, and delightful, Easter-themed chocolates from renowned chocolatiers.

Customers can fill their baskets with elegantly crafted chocolate Easter eggs from Italy and the U.S., confections, molded chocolate, Easter candy, marzipan, and, a customer favorite from Italy, the traditional Colomba, the symbolic dove-shaped sweet bread similar to panettone that can be served as a breakfast bread, coffee cake, or dessert.

All menus are available for pre-ordering online, and in the shop and bakery, first come, first served. **They are closed Easter Sunday, April 20.** ■

Visit Rockridge Market Hall for the second annual Indie Fest on

Saturday, May 10, from noon to 3pm

for an afternoon with artisan food makers from across the nation.

This market-wide food festival will feature tastings of cheese, charcuterie, olive oil and more

Bay Area-based food writer/editor Georgia Freedman will be signing copies of her new cookbook, "Snacking Dinners."

New in Rockridge:
5905Howell.com fully remodeled condo w/garage, patio, 3 blocks to BART

Pending:
1546Holman.com 2BD 1BA Craftsman Bungalow, landscaped yard, tree-lined street

Coming soon:
Maybeck style 4bd 2.5ba home on 20k+sqft lot, Bay Views

April is awareness month for Diversity, Autism, Earth, Child Nutrition, Keep America Beautiful, Hope, Volunteerism, Wildlife





Happy Earth Day!

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Rockridge Library
APRIL 2025

For Children

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am.

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

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

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

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

DIA: Diversity-in-Action Day special event. Mariela's Music Time: 4/24, Thursday; 10:30am. For ages 1-5.

For Teens, ages 12 to 18

Movie Day: Wednesday 4/9 2-4pm: Join us for a fun movie and popcorn and drinks.

Teen Advisory Board: Second Wednesdays, 4/9; 4-5pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning services you want to see.

For Adults

Adult Crafting Series: Paper Flowers: Tuesday Apr. 1th 6-7:30pm. Explore your creative impulse and learn how to make beautiful paper flowers. All materials are provided.

Cooking with Spring Vegetables with Chef Terry: Saturday Apr. 12th, 11am-12pm. Join us for this hands-on cooking lesson. Prepare and serve the season's best produce in a variety of recipes. Chef Terry will bring delicious fruits and vegetables from the farmer's market.

Rockridge Gardening Series: Container Gardening: Saturday Apr. 12th, 2-3pm. The U.C. Master Gardener Program of Alameda County will teach us how to maximize small spaces.

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 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. April's book is James by Percival Everett.

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

Artist's Open Studio: Every 3rd Tuesday, 2-4:30pm. **CANCELED for April**.
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.

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

Rockridge Seniors Rally for Democracy — *by Judy Berne*



Photo: Debbie Berne

Rockridge Seniors for Democracy rallied and carried signs at the southmost entrance to Rockridge on Saturday, March 15. "It really picked up the spirits of the people here," said **Ruth Feldman**, who lives at the senior residence Merrill Gardens where the "walk-in" began. More than 50 seniors lined up on both sides of Broadway — on foot, with walkers, and in wheelchairs. Signs protesting "actions that threaten the well-being of American families, their children, grandchildren, and future generations" prompted a cacophony of horns honking in support from passing cars and trucks. ■

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 May 2025 issue is: April 17, 2025 (available May 3).

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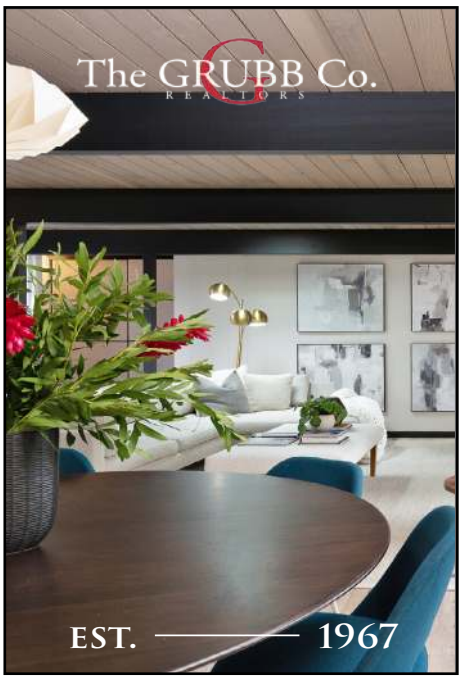
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Putting an ADU in the basement? Does it need lights? I've been doing electrical work in Oakland and Berkeley for over 35 years. Sutorik & Company; www.sutorikandco.com; Lic #397149. 510/655-3677.

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