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

Stroll, Shop, and Savor at Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association



Jade Cohen displays her artwok outside Bad Walter's Ice Cream.

Photo: Marcy Reed

The Rockridge District Association is once again hosting the annual **Rock-N-Stroll on Saturday, August 23, on College Avenue, from Alcatraz to Broadway** (with some activities also held on the immediate side streets). The free festival spans the entire day, with most activities taking place between 11am and 4pm.

Not your typical street festival, this event invites attendees to enjoy a leisurely promenade along a one-mile span that features over 20 street musicians, pop-up vendors, big sales with special offers, puppy treats and photo contests, food and beverage tastings, and more than 50 visual artists.

Rock-N-Stroll, see next page



Photo: Anna L Marks

Cafe owner **Semy Tecle** blends food and drink to match her family's rich, multicultural heritage of German, Eritrean, and Italian traditions. She strives to create a space where you can truly be "in the moment."

What's in Your Glass? It's More than Cocktails at Im Moment Kaffee

by Zoe Siegel

Step off busy College Avenue, descend four well-worn steps, and feel the hum of Rockridge fade into the low-ceiling warmth of Im Moment Kaffee (5254 College). Most locals never make it this far south, yet those who do discover Eritrean-meets-German soul food, disarming hospitality, and, new this month, a bar program that won't sabotage tomorrow's sunrise hike.

Owner **Semy Tecle** runs the counter like an open-plan living room. She remembers your dog's name, serves Chickpea Brot with crackly German bread, and asks if you've had enough to eat. Her family helps keep the wheels turning. **Asha**, fresh from the University of San Diego, juggles online orders, social media, and the occasional cameo behind the stove. **Saul**, a star striker bound for Division I soccer at UC Davis, shuttles espresso drinks between workouts. Husband **Meron** has teamed up with bartender

Im Moment Kaffee, see page 3

Get Involved, Make a Difference — Rockridge Gears Up for National Night Out

by Jana Good, RCPC Board Member

Oakland will join cities nationwide in observing **National Night Out (NNO) on Tuesday, August 5, from 5pm to 8pm**. NNO is an initiative that invites neighbors to connect, celebrate, and bolster community safety.

In years past, Rockridge neighborhood blocks have celebrated in a variety of ways. Neighbors have closed off their streets and held traditional potluck parties on the prescribed date, while others have worked with their neighbors to find an alternate date to hold gatherings like outdoor movie nights, or collective monthly soup nights (August typically finds

NNO, see next page

NNO, from front page

a lot of residents on vacation). All celebrations have a shared goal of connecting with neighbors.

By turning on porch lights, hosting block parties, or simply spending time outside with neighbors, residents send a clear message: our community is united and connected. National Night Out isn't just a night of fun — it's an investment in stronger, safer neighborhoods.

City of Oakland staff, Oakland Fire Department and Police Department personnel and elected officials will be out roaming the neighborhoods and will visit as many parties as possible.

To register your block party with National Night Out, see https://apps.oaklandca.gov/NNO/.

For more information, visit https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/national-night-out. ■

Rock-N-Stroll, from front page

Rock-N-Stroll holds a deep connection to the neighborhood and offers residents and employees an opportunity to shine. Each year, the event planning team issues a call for artists and musicians, with a special emphasis on Rockridge-connected talent. This is a one-of-a-kind Oakland experience that showcases the local wares, fine dining, savory sweets, and delicious drinks lovingly curated by local businesses in the district.

"As a proud Oakland Resident who is involved in the art scene here, I am always in awe of the incredible local artists that live in our neighborhoods," said **Marcy Reed**, a Rockridge resident and festival volunteer who spearheads the outreach for artists. Marcy not only helps find local talent, but goes one step further by helping place each artist's display tables inside or outside a Rockridge business that closely aligns with the artist's work and theme. In a sense, she's curating a gallery, with the gallery being the whole of Rockridge.



With over 50 artists participating, last year's event was one of the largest art shows in the region. That number is expected to continue to rise, with the only limitation being the number of physical locations available to accommodate them all. There are no street closures for Rock-N-Stroll, and with a limited amount of public open space, the district's merchants have adopted individual artists to pop up inside and/or outside their businesses. This is precisely the intended vibe — spotlighting the best of Rockridge, the people who live and work here. It's about community.

Artists and musicians of all ages are invited to apply; the deadline is August 1. The application includes a question about your connection to the district — a top consideration in the selection process. There is no application fee, and no charge for artists who are selected to participate. Musicians are paid for their performances.

It's family-friendly, and well-socialized pups are encouraged to join the fun. For additional details, or to apply as an artist or musician, visit *www.RockridgeDistrict.com/rocknstroll.* ■

The Rockridge News

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

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Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of the Rockridge News*, its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.*

Im Moment Kaffee, from front page

Shishir to craft a drink menu that matches Semy's aesthetic.

Come for the Vibe, Stay for the Fare and Music

The menu walks the line between wholesome and hearty, and everything is crafted in-house — from German loaves to bold spice blends. Every bite lands fresh and bright: Berbere-laced Habesha Foul, a buttery Salami-and-Cheese Pretzel, house-baked almond croissants, and Asmarino coffee — a nod to Eritrea's café culture. "Everything is cooked with care," says Semy, and it tastes that way.

"Agave syrups were my go-to," Shishir says, "until I realized how destructive quick harvesting can be." Now he sweetens drinks with Nogave — a blend of brown-sugar and orange-blossom honey — and keeps every cocktail under the strength of a typical glass of wine.

Come hear Accidentally on Purpose, or enjoy bi-monthly Saturday jazz dinners headlined by The Clifton Street Regulars, who, along with Nat Bolden & The State of Mind Blues Band, already draws a loyal crowd. All are designed to match the café's linger-longer ambiance. Once-a-month, tables push together for Stammtisch (the German "regulars" table)… the next one will be after the summer break.

On Saturdays, neighborhood saxophonist **Timothy Kyle Gleason** sets up

Semy is Having a Party!
July 19, from 3pm til?
with DJ Johnnycakes

outside while elders linger over Habesha Foul and Eritrean cyclists, still in their neon apparel, stop by to refuel mid-ride.

Oakland's First Café-Driven Low-ABV Bar

In Oakland, it's rare to find a low-ABV (low alcohol by volume) program rooted in a multi-generational café. In a city quietly grappling with loneliness, Im Moment offers something different: conversation-sparking drinks, hand-torn bread, and a seat that always feels like yours — a comforting remedy to a complicated world.

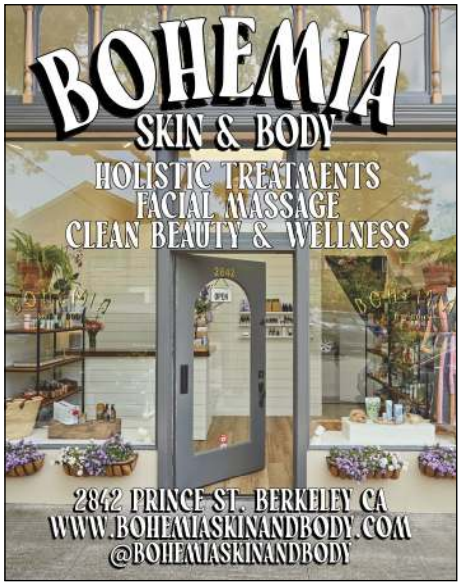
Drink names like Jugo Verde, Lionel, and Maradona are a salute to Argentina's soccer legends and a wink to the cafe's love of global mash-ups. Classic spritz fans can order a limoncello or Flora Prosecco — both light enough not to encroach on a good night's sleep.

Beyond the low-ABV list, Im Moment pours house-made honey wine, crisp German Rieslings, and a hand-picked lineup of German and Eritrean beers. Pro tip: match the imported Lambrusco with Semy and Meron's childhood favorite — an Italian mortadella sandwich — for a pairing that tastes like a shared memory.

Curious about zero-proof mixology? Craving a mindful aperitif? Don't miss the growing neighborhood bar culture on College Avenue and experience one of its favorite cafés. Slide down the steps, order a Jugo Verde, pair it with the Chickpea Brot, and watch College Avenue exhale — then step back out a bit lighter, clearer, and a little more connected.

Café hours: Wed through Sat, 8am-2:30pm and 3pm-9pm; Sun, 8am-6pm. Low-ABV bar hours: Wed through Fri, 3pm-9pm; Sat and Sun, noon-6pm. For updates, follow them on Instagram: @im_moment_kaffee. ■









Your Parks, Your Voice: Help Shape the Future of East Bay Regional Parks

by Devan Reiff, East Bay Regional Parks Principal Planner

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is launching a significant new initiative to shape the future of local parks, trails, and open spaces — and your input is crucial. The Park District is developing its next District Plan, a long-term strategic roadmap to guide decision-making over the coming decades.

This plan will not detail specific projects, but it will help set broad goals and priorities, ensuring the park system continues to meet community needs, protect natural resources, and adapt to a changing world. To begin the process, EBRPD is inviting residents from across Alameda and Contra Costa counties to **participate in a public survey, available now through July 31, 2025, at *ebparks.org/district-plan*.**



Boathouse and swim area at Lake Temescal

Photo: Anna L Marks

Take the survey today at:

ebparks.org/district-plan

Printed surveys in English, Spanish, and Chinese are available at Park District Visitor Centers, or by calling (510) 544-2325.

As the most extensive regional park system in the country — with 73 parks, 55 miles of shoreline, and more than 1,330 miles of trails — EBRPD plays a critical role in the East Bay's environmental health, recreation, and quality of life. The new District Plan will help the Park District remain a strong and responsive public agency amid changing climate conditions, population growth, and shifting community priorities.

With challenges such as the potential for sea-level rise affecting up to 40 miles of Bay shoreline, and increasing wildfire risks across the region, the District Plan will help guide environmental responses to ensure that these treasured open spaces remain accessible for future generations.

"This plan will reflect the values, priorities, and aspirations of the communities we serve," said General Manager **Sabrina Landreth**. "We want everyone to have a voice in shaping the future of our park system."

This is your opportunity to weigh in on what matters most — whether it's expanding access, preserving habitats, or enhancing recreation. Every response helps ensure the District Plan truly reflects the diverse needs of the East Bay.

The planning process includes three rounds of public engagement, starting with the survey and continuing with community activities later this year and into 2026. Let's build the future of our parks together. ■







Temescal Creek at Frog Park is Flowing Again

by Theresa Nelson

In early June 2025, the pump that fills Temescal Creek was turned back on, and for the first time in almost three years, the waters returned. Congratulations to The Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG) Committee, who worked hard during this time to get the City of Oakland and Alameda County to bring back the creek.

Why Was the Creek Turned Off?

It's complicated. First, Temescal Creek, for most of its length, does not flow naturally but is pumped up from culverts about 15 feet underground. Alameda County Flood Control District turns it on in the spring, usually around the FROG Earth Day cleanup, and turns it off again in October. When the 50-year-old pump broke, the County had to wait for more than a year to secure budget funding to have it replaced.

Second, high levels of blue-green algae at Lake Temescal, managed by the East Bay Regional Park District, will result in closing Lake Temescal for swimmers as well as turning off the creek flow. Blue-green algae can cause illness in children who touch or ingest the water and serious illness in pets who drink it. The Park District monitors these levels, and if they are too high, they will turn off the creek. During the last two years, the levels were high, so the water did not flow.


Photo: Anna L Marks

Finally, the City of Oakland is responsible for clearing the culverts and grates annually to ensure the creek can flow freely, preventing it from backing up and causing flooding. This spring, when they were clearing the grates, a significant blockage was discovered in the pond at Big Frog, which required heavy equipment to remove.

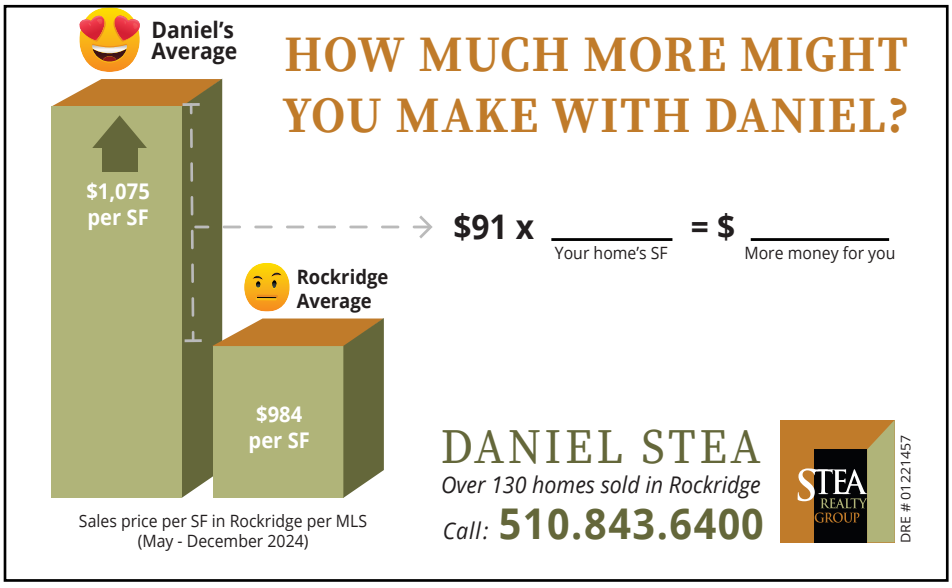
We are glad that the community, especially the children, can once again enjoy the creek, and we are grateful to the City of Oakland and the Alameda County Flood Control District for their assistance in repairing the pump and clearing the culverts.

The FROG Committee would like to explore the idea of a Temescal Creek Watershed initiative similar to the one at Sausal Creek *https://www.sausalcreek.org/*. Anyone interested should contact Steve Costa at *stevegcosta@gmail.com*. ■









Summer Market — A Celebration of Local Creativity

by Morgan Cecil and Laura Burnett

As a women-owned business and proud residents of the Temescal/Rockridge area, we're passionate about supporting local artists and hosting community-driven events that align with our long-term mission: to foster a vibrant, inclusive, artistic community. Summer Market was launched as a way to bring creativity and community together — right here in our neighborhood.

The market **takes place on Sunday, July 27, from 10am to 3pm,** and marks the beginning of an ongoing series featuring a handpicked lineup of local vendors offering curated vintage goods, original artwork, handmade gifts, ceramics, jewelry, beauty products, gourmet treats, plants, and more.

It's the perfect spot — right at the heart of the Temescal/Rockridge border **in an open, airy warehouse at 5305 Claremont Avenue** — conveniently located next to the Colombo Club and directly across from the Temescal Farmers Market and the Claremont DMV.

Whether you're coming to shop, try delicious food and drinks, explore our rentable event space, or tour available artist studios, we'd love to see you. Got an idea for an event? Let's talk!

Admission is free and open to all. There's ample parking nearby, and we're just a short walk from the Rockridge BART station and other public transit options. For vendor previews and event updates, follow us on Instagram: *@bricolellc*. ■

Join the RCPC Email List

Stay informed about the latest happenings, enter your name and email address under the "Join the RCPC Email List" online at *https://rockridge.org*.

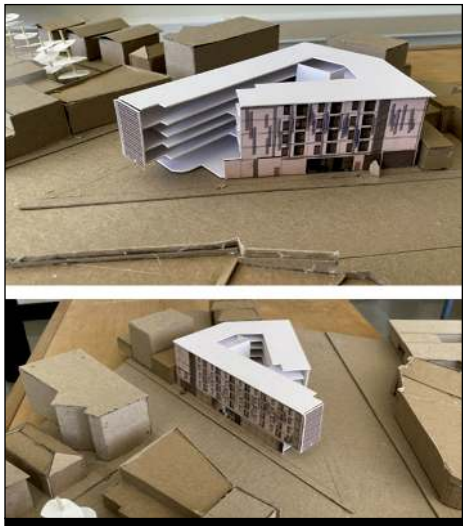
Affordable Housing Meets Open Space: Student Architects Tackle the Rockridge Triangle

by USF Professor Leslie G. Moldow, FAIA

If you are a Rockridge resident, you are likely obsessed with visions of what the vacant lot at Claremont and College could become. "A community park," say some, "affordable housing," say others.

In the Spring of 2024 and 2025, my second-year architecture studio classes from the Architecture and Community Design program at the University of San Francisco (USF) grappled with the oddly shaped site to determine if a happy union could be formed between park advocates and housing advocates.

The Architecture and Community Design program at the USF has a strong social and environmental justice focus, so assigning a site that could provide feedback to the Rockridge neighborhood was a good fit.



Student **Justine Balon** envisions a wraparound housing project with an inner courtyard/greenspace.

Rockridge Triangle, see next page

Greater Rockridge NCPC Elections

by Karen Ivy, Secretary, Greater Rockridge NCPC

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) will be holding elections for officers at its August 14th meeting. The NCPC meets every other month at the Rockridge Library and on Zoom. The purpose is to educate and inform Rockridge residents about current crime trends and provide guidance on how to prevent crime and increase public safety.

The NCPC has four elected officers, per its bylaws:

Chair: The Chair runs the community meetings and Steering Committee meetings and represents the NCPC at other neighborhood meetings. The Chair may delegate specific areas of responsibility to the Vice Chair.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair assists the Chair as needed.

Secretary: The Secretary maintains records of the proceedings from community meetings and Steering Committee meetings, and also keeps membership records for the Council and Steering Committee.

Treasurer: The Treasurer collects and records money payable to the organization and is the custodian of its funds. If necessary, the Treasurer maintains a bank account associated with the NCPC.

*For information, **email chair@rockridgencpc.com by July 21st.** Include the office you are interested in and a brief description of why. Questions welcomed.* ■

Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

Next NCPC Meeting Date:
Thursday, August 14, at 7pm

The upcoming meeting will be held in the Rockridge Library Conference Room, and on Zoom.

For details, or for the Zoom link, visit www.rockridgencpc.com.



Student **Isabella Quiroga** uses soft curves instead of rigid forms to create a human-centered experience.



Student **Justine Mikaela M. Juco** designed low-income housing for seniors with shared gardens.

Rockridge Triangle, from previous page

The Oakland Housing Element and zoning code designate the site as an S-14 zone, intended to facilitate housing production on those sites that the City identifies for housing. "Projects on these sites contribute toward meeting Oakland's needs for lower-income housing and receive By Right Approval."

The students were guided by an affordable senior housing program and unit design from a reputable East Bay nonprofit housing developer. They assumed the parking necessary for the project would be accommodated in a one-story, below-grade parking lot accessed from the southwest end of the site along Claremont Ave. The building, as per zoning allowances, could be five stories tall, and I directed that the ground floor feature the common areas necessary for senior housing, along with a clinic and an adult day care center.

Their task was to design a building that balanced the program's need for affordable senior housing units with the community's desire for additional public outdoor space.

The students, working individually, had only five weeks to design a building. Their solutions to the design problem illuminated several different approaches. The designs are purely conceptual, and do not represent anyone's specific intent to build a building on the site.

Many wrapped the units around a central atrium or open space, and offered the neighborhood a park by pulling the building back from the corner of College and Claremont. Some configured the building into a U-shape facing the corner that wrapped around an open space.

A few created a "cut-through" open space between the adjacent commercial property to the south and the south wall. Some out-of-the-box thinkers carved away the east façade to create a park along College Avenue.

The solutions varied in unit count from a low of 47 one-bedroom units to a high of 62. Generally, the fewer the apartments, the greater the open space available for either the neighborhood or building residents.

By engaging in this exercise, the students had the opportunity to tackle a real-world problem, and the community gained insight into what is feasible for our special triangular site in the heart of Rockridge. ■







eyes on Rockridge

Three Degrees of Minimal Separation, And a Return to Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

It's been nearly eight years since Rockridge triplets **Makana**, **Maile**, and **Keale Young**, then sophomores at Bishop O'Dowd High School, were featured in the October 2017 edition of the *Rockridge News*. The article headlined "Triplets Add Life to Street Where Their Mom Grew Up," and focused on how public relations specialist **Dana Young** and her attorney husband **Kaipolani** (Kaipo) raised their three daughters two doors down from the home where Dana grew up (and where her mom, **Marie Ciraulo**, still lives). It described the experience of what it's like being triplets.

Now, as recent graduates of San Diego State University (SDSU), they've been interviewed on NBC San Diego, NBC Bay Area, KTVU, and KRON, featured in People Online, and mentioned on Live with Kelly & Mark, as well as FOX5 in San Diego. They are slated to be on Inside Edition, in *SDSU Magazine*, and on CA Live. This is because they all graduated from San Diego State's Honors College not only *summa cum laude*, but with exactly the same degree — a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications, with an honors minor in Interdisciplinary Studies. And now, they all work at the same digital marketing agency.

The three siblings *were* separated during a semester abroad, each studying in a different city. Maile was in Rome, Keale in Florence, and Makana in London. "Studying abroad was more than just an academic or cultural experience for us," they agreed. "It was the first time in our lives that we were truly on our own. No built-in best friends or twin telepathy. There, we weren't part of a set. Being abroad forced us to make decisions independently and navigate challenges without each other."

How they ended up in the same field wasn't inevitable. Back when they were 15, and each was an Honor Roll Athlete, Makana said her interests were arts, singing, and math; Keale said history was her strength, "but I also like science. I might want to be a biologist," and Maile also picked science as her favorite subject.

Now, after undergraduate internships at a San Diego-based digital marketing firm, all of them were hired as social media specialists to help brands flourish on social media platforms. Makana works in fashion, Maile in lifestyle, and Keale in consumer product goods. "Amazingly, we can cross-share knowledge and help each other learn and grow in our new post-grad roles," they said, in a joint statement.



Keale, Maile, and Makana Young (left to right), as they graduated with honors and the same degree from San Diego State University.

Photo by Sidney Giles, Sidney Raye Photo.

"My mom's career in public relations had a big impact on my own path," Maile said. "I couldn't help but admire her communication skills and knack for negotiation. After doing a Public Relations internship, I realized I loved it. Though paid advertising is a bit different, her strengths in creativity and storytelling have definitely influenced my approach."

Makana and Keale agreed. "I always looked up to both of my parents," Makana said. "While I never directly went into PR, seeing how my mom genuinely loves her job inspired me to seek out my own path and eventually

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page

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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

led me to discover digital marketing." For Keale, "Seeing our mom in action definitely made PR and communications feel like a natural path."

When they were still in high school, Dana confided that she was dreading seeing them leave for college, "I think it's going to be really hard because I really like them." But guess what? Late July, all three will be moving back into their Rockridge home where they are able to work remotely. "We'll have more time with friends and family, which is really important to us," Maile said. She's excited to take CorePower Yoga classes in Rockridge and spend time at the pool at the Claremont Country Club. "I also enjoy outdoor walks, so after work you may find me strolling through the streets of Rockridge. And of course, I'm looking forward to exploring all the amazing food spots like Zachary's, Barney's, and Yimm Oakland."

After years of power tumbling and playing soccer, "We all found our own ways to stay active, whether it was hiking, working out, or trying different fitness classes," Keale said. "I really missed being close to my family, and now that we'll be back in Rockridge, I want to carry that lifestyle forward. I'm also excited to explore new interests outside of work — maybe diving into reading more, trying out art, or spending time vintage shopping. It feels like the perfect time to reconnect with the things that bring me joy and see where those passions lead."

My parents mean so much to me," Makana said. "I'm really looking forward to being closer to them. I've always loved the Bay Area and Rockridge holds a special place in my heart." In college, she got into sewing and upcycling. "I'd take pieces I found and transform them into something totally unique and totally me. When I'm back in Rockridge, I'm excited to keep growing those creative hobbies, and dive into the local thrift shop scene. It feels like the perfect place to be while I'm transitioning into this next chapter of my life."

Their advice to future graduates: "Study abroad," Keale urged. "It's amazing when you can immerse yourself in other cultures and broaden your perspectives." "Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and try something new," Maile advised, "College is what you make of it. Join clubs and get involved." "First and foremost, be yourself," Makana said, "Say yes to things that spark your success and no to things that don't."

Have a Rockridge story that needs telling, email judyberne@att.net. ■

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Delivering the News, Connecting Our Community

by Skip Fogarty

For years, I'd pick up a copy of the *Rockridge News* at the pub or library to peruse local happenings. Looking for something to fill suddenly empty hours in the early days of the Covid shutdown, I started reporting for the *News*. When my first story was published, I naturally wanted to share it with my neighbors. I contacted the newsletter's business manager about getting some extra copies and ended up agreeing to take on a new delivery route on my street.

It was gratifying to run into neighbors who said they enjoyed my articles. However, I realized many folks in my Upper Rockridge area were not receiving the paper. So, I started asking if others would take on a monthly route for their streets.

My friend **Silvia Hughes** agreed to cover all of Contra Costa Road — 90 papers in total. More recently, I ran into **Rhita Williams**, who I knew from Little League and our kids' school days, and she agreed to take on a long stretch of Buena Vista Avenue. After writing a story about a Hillcrest schoolgirl who published her own homespun newsletter on Romany Road, I recruited her family to take a smaller route of 40 papers. This new crew of "block captains" now blanket the neighborhood with nearly 300 newsletters each month.



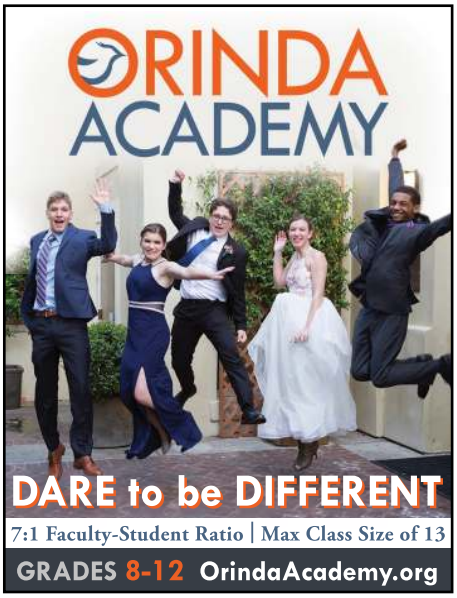
Photo: Anna L Marks

Volunteer newsletter carriers (left to right: Skip Fogarty, Silvia Hughes, and Rhita Williams) have successfully expanded RCPC district boundaries to include additional parts of Upper Rockridge.

Williams and Hughes are longtime Rockridge residents, both of whom lost their homes in the 1991 firestorm before rebuilding. "It's a small thing to do for my neighbors, it's good exercise and it gives me a feeling of contributing something back," says Hughes. Regularly seen walking her foster dogs, Williams, a retired telecom project manager, enjoys meeting new neighbors while delivering her papers. "It's easy, I'm out walking every day anyway, and it lends a sense of connectedness to deliver the *News*," she says.

The *Rockridge News* is the primaary vehicle for notifications to Rockridge Community Planning Council members. The added routes thus allowed us to petition the RCPC, which sponsors the *News*, to be included within the organization's designated boundaries. The board has recently approved our annexation — meaning we are now members and can vote in board elections and even run for a seat.

If you're interested in delivering the Rockridge News, contact Susan Montauk at smontauk@gmail.com. Even if you receive the News at your home, there are often vacant routes to be filled nearby. You can also find archived editions of the News, and subscribe to email notifications about local events at rockridge.org. ■







Rockridge News is Adding a Distribution Route on Woolsey

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager

We are expanding! The *Rockridge News* has added a new route to our already widespread Rockridge network… it's an easy but important one. The new block captain will deliver to about 15 houses on Woolsey Street. They pick up the route bundle at the central distribution house on McCauley the first weekend of the first Friday of each month (except August) and deliver the newsletters as soon as possible to each home's front porche. Please let us know if you live in the neighborhood and would like to volunteer to provide the newsletter to your neighbors.

- **Route 25A14: Woolsey Street, south side only, between Telegraph Avenue and Colby.**

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

RCPC Expands Boundaries

On June 5, the Rockridge Community Planning Council approved a revised description of RCPC membership boundaries, encompassing the streets and blocks approved by the board in February (see March 2025 *Rockridge News*).

The update includes an area downhill from Lake Temescal; the last block of Clifton Street, southeast of Broadway; the Ridge property; the former CCA site; and the east side of Telegraph Avenue north of 58th Street, together with North Street.

The new boundary also includes the south side of Woolsey between Telegraph and Dana (not part of the February board resolution).

To view the map, see www.rockridge.org, under "Boundaries."

Dogs of Rockridge



Tashi is a 13-year-old rescue mix originally from Taiwan. Tashi helps deliver the *Rockridge News* on Chabot Road, and especially enjoys stopping at the Boba shop as her last stop on the route. Tashi has many friends at Chabot Elementary and visits there a few times a week during her walks to and from school. She brings joy wherever she goes and has enjoyed living in Rockridge for the past 11 years.

I'm **Maisie**, a three-year-old Bernedoodle who adores playing, especially with other dogs. You can usually find me in pigtails, which calms people who are scared of big dogs. When you walk by my house, I'm barking because I want you to stop and say, "Hi Maisie!" I'm pretty sharp — I can sit, stay, stand, crawl, spin in a circle, and play hide and seek. I like sticks, balls and frisbees. I also love being with my humans, to whom I am fiercely loyal.



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

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Oakland's Electronic Billboard Agreement Raises Revenue, and Eyebrows

by Anna L. Marks and Carol Kasparek

On June 17, a week after the item was first introduced at the meeting of the Committee for Economic & Redevelopment, the Oakland City Council approved a 31-year contract with Becker Boards for the installation of five double-sided, electronic billboards on local freeways (with a 10-year option for renewal).

The Oakland City Council has been looking for new revenue sources as a way to lessen the City's substantial financial debt (according to the 2025 Alameda County Grand Jury Report, Oakland is projected to have a $265 million deficit for FY 2025–2027) and stands to receive an upfront payment of $1.5 million, and up to $750,000 annually once the signs are in place.

To offset energy demand (projected to be 40 megawatt hours each year), the city will receive an additional $11,027.80 per sign for a total of $55,139. This results in an increase in revenue for fiscal years 25/26 and 26/27 of approximately $2,332,500.

The contract states Becker Boards must remove 11 existing billboards within 15 years from the initial installation. The company will first need to purchase them from the current owners, including Clear Channel. The LED billboards will be installed at locations throughout Oakland from a list of 25. The one planned for 5638 College Avenue, facing Highway 24 at College and Keith, has been moved to the "alternate location list" for now.

The displays feature 24/7 paid advertising for businesses as well as free spots for local nonprofits and the City of Oakland — all in rotation for exactly eight seconds per ad per billboard, repeating every minute. The signs will be placed on private properties, with each owner negotiating directly with Becker, who noted, "We pay property owners fair market value for the leases, which are significantly higher than $30k/year."

Although the RCPC did not take a position on the project, the organization sent an informative email to its mailing list. "The board also sent a letter to the Oakland City Council expressing concerns about the lack of notice to the community, as well as substantive issues such as determining under what circumstances any alternate location would be utilized; how a specific alternate location would be chosen; and the possible impact a 40-year agreement could have on the City's abilty to implement its affordable housing strategy," said **Star Lightner**, Vice Chair of RCPC.

Many area neighbors also responded with concerns, including **Sara Wilson**, the owner of Rockridge Market Hall. "We're opposed to the rooftop version, the purpose of which is to distract drivers with advertising." Another Rockridge resident referred to a Veridian Group 2020 study describing the probability and detrimental effects caused by distracted drivers.

District 1 Councilmember **Zac Unger** considers it to be a "decent proposal" and voted in support of the bill along with members Brown, Gallo, Houston, Ramachandran, and Wang (Fife and Council President Jenkins voted no). He added an amendment limiting Becker to no more than two billboards per freeway, and noted that the billboards use light-blocking technology to direct the light towards the freeway and to minimize light exposure to nearby residents.

Unger said he has received overwhelming positive feedback from the more than a dozen nonprofits that will receive free promotional time on the LED screens, including The Black Chamber of Commerce, Asian Health Services, and the Unity Council.

As part of the agreement, **Nema Link**, Director-Land Development, is responsible for negotiating with property owners to place and remove the billboards. Both Link (*nlink@beckerboards.com*) and Unger indicated that the City Council will be monitoring the project and evaluating concerns throughout the process. ■





Letter to the Editor

Billboard Blight

Dear Editor: The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has long served as a sentinel in protecting the best interest of the Rockridge community. Unfortunately, RCPC appears to have missed the opportunity to inform us about the recent proposal to almost literally sell off the interests of Oakland's local neighborhoods in pursuit of funds to help alleviate the city's staggering financial crisis. Nevertheless, word seems to be spreading among Oakland residents that the city has given a billboard company a license to put up large electronic billboards along the freeways that run through the City.

The city's financial crisis is dire. However, this agreement doesn't appear to properly balance this influx of money against long-term damage to neighborhoods. Billboards have long been a blight in Oakland. It's not enough that we see large ads on the sides of most AC Transit buses. Large billboards overlook almost all of Oakland's major intersections, distracting drivers and degrading visibility of pedestrians.

These new large electronic billboards will be far more distracting, especially for drivers on the freeways running through the city. Yes, some existing billboards will indeed be removed, but the new electronic billboards will be far more intrusive and distracting. Additionally, they will be much more expensive to put up and maintain, and will likely use more electricity than the current ones.

There was a time, a few years back, when people discussed banning new billboards and gradually removing the existing ones as their contracts expired. It seems the budget deficit is overriding such ideas. Perhaps the Council would also like to rent out the large highly visible spaces on the sides of City Hall; and perhaps put product logos on the uniforms of Oakland's police and firefighters? Enough is enough, please reverse this agreement.

Stuart Flashman
Ocean View Drive ■

Letters, cont'd on next page

Rockridge Community Planning Council Responds to Stu Flashman's Letter

Within two days of learning of the billboard proposal, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) sent an email blast to its 1000+ listserv explaining the proposal in detail. Board members were encouraged to post the same information to neighborhood listservs. We received many responses from the community.

RCPC subsequently sent a letter to the Oakland City Council expressing concerns about lack of notice to the community as well as substantive issues such as determining under what circumstances any alternate location would be utilized, and then how a specific alternate location would be chosen from the list, as well as possible unintended consequences such as whether the installation of such billboards for likely a 40-year term could impact the ability to implement the City's affordable housing strategy.

RCPC has since been informed by District 1 Councilmember **Zac Unger** that the perceived lack of notification was no different than any of the other myriad agenda items the City Council considers each week. ■

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Miles of Memories: A Bittersweet Farewell to a Rockridge Favorite

by Carol Kasparek

The little feet of our neighborhood children will now have to journey a bit farther afield to find the best footwear for their travels — Golden Bug Children's Shoes & Clothes, at 5520 College, closed on July 13.

Emily Goldenberg decided to open a children's shoe shop eight years ago when her older daughter needed her first pair of shoes, and she found that there were only a few locations where they could choose, and try on, a wide variety of styles. This discovery led her to build such a destination in Rockridge. She stocked her shop with clothing inventory from her original Berkeley location to create what she envisioned — a welcoming, homey, old-school sit-and-fit retail experience.

She and her staff wanted people to feel as though they were walking into their own home and leave grateful for the many miles of comfort under their feet. Along with her five employees, Goldenberg worked hard to get to know the children and families who came into the shop. "We listen to the kids' jokes, learn their names, and reconnect with them every time we measure their feet. Besides a comfy fit, we want everyone to walk out feeling like they've been hugged. We are hearing sweet stories, especially how we have created cherished memories for families."

Her recent decision to shutter the shop was made quickly in response to rapidly fluctuating economic conditions. Vendors have been raising prices, leading to concerns about their ability to fulfill her orders. Production lag time increased for a variety of reasons, and shipping had become unreliable, especially from brands in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand.

"We did not want to delay a decision in a way that would be detrimental to our staff. Making the announcement over a month in advance gave everyone time to adjust and make plans for the future."

Emily's future includes running her Zumba business (*Emilyisgolden@gmail*), while any retail incarnation has yet to be determined. ■







Letters, cont'd from prevoius page

Letter to the Editor

Lake Temescal Dredging

Dear Editor: The East Bay Regional Park District decides the future of Lake Temescal in its District Plan and budget this September. It is crucial to dredge Lake Temescal to ensure its survival as a recreational jewel in the park system. Previously 80 feet deep, it is now 12 feet at most. This contributes to toxic algae blooms and high bacterial counts, which means no swimming.

Key efforts regarding Lake Temescal include dredging to remove nearly fifty years of sediment, much of it contributed by transportation construction (freeways, BART). The sediment needs to be hauled to appropriate locations. This will improve water clarity and toxicity from blue green algae and allow open water swimming and swim lessons to underserved communities.

Innovative approaches such as connecting the lake to the San Francisco Bay shoreline and improving flow in the bay will contribute to ecosystem restoration, but the dredging must be done. The park will be temporarily closed during some of this work.

It is urgent for as many folks as possible to participate. **The survey must be completed by July 31**, and can be found online at *https://www.ebparks.org/district-plan*. *(Also, see article on page 4.)*

Robin Slovak ■

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Medical or Fire Emergency Only:
510-444-1616
Police Emergency: 510-777-3211
Police Non-Emergency:
510-777-3333 (Press "0")
BART Police: 877-679-7000
(or text: 510-200-0990)
Waste Management: 510-613-8710
EBMUD: 866-403-2683
City Call Center: 311 or 510-615-5566
PG&E: 800-743-5000

Rockridge Library JULY 2025

Summer Programs for All Ages Have Begun.

Sign up online or come by the library for your reading and activity log and events calendar.

All Ages Silent Book Club: Fridays; 3:30pm-5pm every week.

For Children:

Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am

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

Build, Make, Play Crafts: Thursdays; 4pm. New craft every week.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays; 4pm. Practice fluency with Scout or Gladys.

Special Summer Events for Children (up to age 12) on Tuesdays at 6:30pm:

Kamishibai Stories: 7/15–Paper theater with Erica.

Pop & Go Puppets: 7/22–Funny, engaging, charming!

Mike the Magician: 7/29–Astonishing and fun!

For Teens, Ages 12 to 18:

Decoupage Shells: Wednesday, 7/16: 3pm-4pm
Tiny Art: Wednesday, 7/23: 3pm-4pm
Clay Magnets: Wednesday, 7/9: 3pm-4pm

For Adults:

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

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. July's book is *Birnam Wood*, by E. Catton.

Needlework Circle: Every Thursday, (time change for July), 1:30pm-3:30pm. Bring your yarn and fiber arts projects to the Rockridge Library. Build community, share your passion, learn, have fun!

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

One-on-One Technology Help: Every Saturday, 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm. Come with your devices and technology questions and our volunteer tech gurus will help you get sorted. First come first served.

Adult Crafting Series: On summer hiatus.

Rockridge Gardening Series: On summer hiatus.

AI Safety Awareness: Wednesday July 30, 6pm-7:30pm. Understand the risks and benefits of frontier AI research.

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

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

5366 College Avenue, at Manila; 510-597-5017

RN Classifieds

List your 36-word message here for only $24 (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 SEPTEMBER News is: AUGUST 18, 2025 (available Sept. 6).

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Back by Popular Demand: The Rockridge Trio

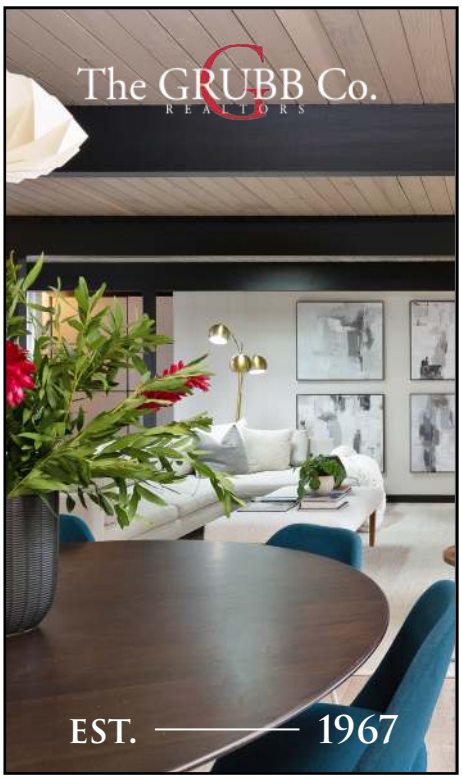
by Danny Beagle

If you missed the performance of the Rockridge Trio last month, here's your chance. They're scheduled for a return performance at the **Rockridge Library, Saturday, July 12, at 2pm.**

They'll be playing a free concert in the main reading room with music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Franz Joseph Haydn, and a few surprises. Members of the Rockridge trio include flutist **Danny Beagle**, a 50-year Kales Avenue resident, as well as flutist **Steve Shapiro** and cellist **Kristel Leoew**. They love making music for the neighbors! ■

"Yard Sale for Democracy" on Thomas Avenue

Resist by not resisting the purchase of cool, used treasures on **Sunday, August 24, from 9am to 2pm**, when residents of Thomas Avenue will be holding a multi-family Yard Sale for Democracy. Proceeds benefit the ACLU and other grassroots anti-Trump organizing. Want your street to take part? Are you a craftsperson/artist who'd like to donate work for sale? Email Ilana at debare@well.com. ■



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