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

Big Dreams, Small Space: Inside Rockridge's Newest Gathering Spot

by Carol Kasparek and Gary Fine

When **Alexis Madrigal** says, "I'm an Oakland maximalist," he's not just expressing hometown pride — he's laying the foundation for something bigger. For Madrigal and his partner **Sarah Rich**, Oakland isn't just where they live; it's where their vision of true community is taking root. Through a lifetime of seeking connection, they've learned that belonging is built, not found. That belief now pulses through Local Economy, their new gathering space at 6028 College Avenue, where coffee, conversation, creativity, and care for one another will converge. It's a deeply personal project born of shared values, designed to offer Rockridge something rare and vital — a space to come together with intention.

Alexis and Sarah bring a wide range of experiences and personal journeys to the project. From her late teens, Sarah was a member of intentional communities and cooperatives in the East Bay. "We did everything together," she noted. The groups were the center of their life. She has led brand building for local businesses, including Good Eggs and Heath Ceramics. She is also the founder of the Department of Invisible Labor, which brings awareness to unseen, mundane, essential work.



Alexis was born in Mexico, where he lived for several years before moving with his family to Los Angeles and then to rural Washington state. In the small town of Ridgefield, he saw his mother "decide to be a force for civic good," with her participation in social and political organizations.

"We've been craving a way to connect people and strengthen local

Local Economy, see page 3

New Development at 6230 Claremont Avenue

The Rockridge Community Planning Council will be monitoring the planning and permitting of the redevelopment of the former blood bank site on Claremont near College, now proposed by the Ellis Partners/Spirit Living Group as a senior living project. We will be especially attentive to the affordability of units, design and structural features, neighborhood impacts, and community benefits. Please submit comments to landuse@rockridge.org.

Meet with the Developers — Ellis Partners & Spirit Living Group

Date: Wednesday, September 17

Time: 7pm to 8:30pm

Location:
College Avenue Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue

(More info on page 7)



Supporting Local Businesses Has Never Been Easier

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) — a nonprofit that supports our local business community — rolled out a new website, www.RockridgeDistrict.com, to make it easier to find what you need and to support the neighborhood businesses. The website introduces a robust events calendar, business spotlights and directories, a district gift card, wellness blog, and mental health resources.

Rockridge District, see next page


Photo: Sydney Arkin

Devan Meneses, owner of Devan Gregori, uses her Rockridge Card at Bad Walter's Bootleg Ice Cream.

Rockridge District, from front page

Whether you're looking for something engaging to do, want to learn more about a business, are working on your fitness regimen, or want practical mental health tips, the website brings all of Rockridge to your fingertips. And, the new Rockridge Card (available at www.RockridgeDistrict.com) offers something for everyone.

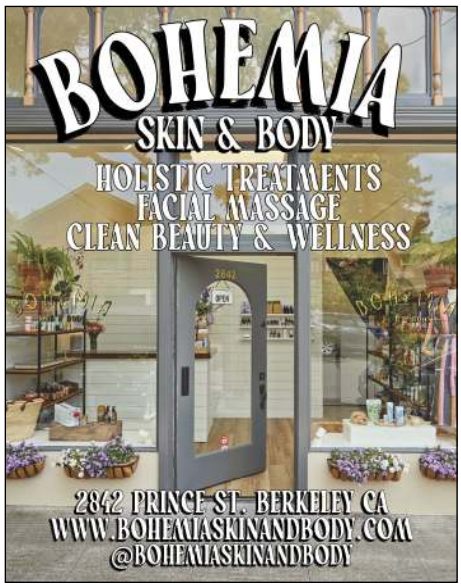
"It's the ultimate gift card to give and receive — shop what you love and keep our local shops thriving," said **Devan Meneses**, owner of Devan Gregori, and a Rockridge resident. "What a treat it is to shop Rockridge. I prefer paying with my phone instead of carrying a wallet around, so I added the Rockridge Card to my Apple Wallet, which made it very convenient to use."

Gift card holders can take their pick of Rockridge's best restaurants, shops, salons, and other goods and services where the card is accepted (now redeemable at over 37 locations, and growing). You can even purchase Rockridge Cards in bulk for gifting to coworkers, schools, or large groups.

Katy Winter, owner of Vita, understands the underlying importance of the gift card program. "In the days when everything can be ordered online and delivered to your doorstep, it's more important than ever to shop local. If you enjoy combing through home goods stores, bookstores, wine shops, and bakeries, we need to keep these places alive by giving them our business. Shop local!"

The new RDA website also offers an event calendar covering a wide range of happenings in the district — from author readings, to live music, to crafts workshops, and more. Whether you want to go out tonight or next month when family is in town, you can plan all your entertaining without leaving the neighborhood. There's a visual business directory and profiles of local business owners. Have a special event coming up? The directory includes a list of all the venue rentals and catering options available in Rockridge.

Next time you are looking for something to do or somewhere to go, start at www.Rockridgedistrict.com, and support our local community. ■







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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Are there topics you'd like to see covered in the *Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* distributor? We'd love to hear from you.

Want to write a Letter to the Editor? Letters are limited to 350 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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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.*

Local Economy, from front page

networks. Local Economy will be a "place where a lot of different things will happen, and all of them will serve community." Central to the space will be a long wooden table handmade by a neighbor — the heart and soul of the activities envisioned for the enterprise.

"We will be holding workshops and events, hosting readings and pop-ups, serving excellent coffee, selling goods from independent makers, and building a space where we can collectively experiment." They believe every community needs an anchor, which is what they plan to provide.

Local Economy will offer a coffee cart run by Painted Leopard Coffee featuring specialty blends from El Salvador, and a retail section for local artisans. Planning has already begun on events and promotion with retail neighbors — East Bay Booksellers, PlanterDay, Re-Up Refill, and Redfield. Their association with Coyote Media and the Oakland Review of Books could bring the literary community together for regular gatherings.

Also being considered are community preparedness trainings to help the neighborhood prepare personally and collectively for potential crises. Neighbors can participate in the process by submitting their ideas through the repurposed mail slot, now serving as a suggestion box; thirty events and workshops are scheduled already for this autumn.

A unique aspect is their membership program, which includes special invitations, discounts, and ongoing access to a variety of community-focused activities. The tiered subscription model provides opportunities for non-members to participate. Over 120 new members have already signed on, with more coming each day (information on memberships and events can be found online at thelocaleconomy.com.)

Sarah and Alexis invite Rockridge neighbors to join them around the table on:

Opening Day
Wednesday, October 1
6028 College Avenue

Sarah will be at the shop full-time. She envisions programming where children can gather, including their own two children. "With all these grownups talking about the state of the world … they can see us building something." The tiny space can "add a light side to the darkness."

Alexis currently co-hosts KQED Forum, and was previously an editor and writer for The Atlantic, and co-founder of the COVID Tracking Project. He authored *Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology* and *The Pacific Circuit: A Globalized Account of the Battle for the Soul of an American City.*

Rockridge is fortunate to have neighbors dedicated to fostering an expansive sense of home for all of us. ■

Enssaro Ethiopian Restaurant Comes to Rockridge

The Enssaro family is excited to relocate their Grand Avenue restaurant, Enssaro, to 5897 College Avenue. Pending inspections and final approvals, they plan to be open next month.

The Rockridge menu will feature all the Grand Avenue favorites, plus a few new dishes, including Ethiopian flatbread with toppings, spiced chicken wings, and cauliflower wings. They plan also to introduce a spice corner where guests can purchase the same spices used in their kitchen.

"One of the experiences we're most excited about is hosting traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremonies on weekends, with beans freshly roasted in front of guests and brewed in a clay pot (Jebena). And for the first time, Enssaro will have a backyard, perfect for private events and intimate gatherings," says family member **Nesanet Tamirue.**

"We're grateful for the warm welcome from the Rockridge community and can't wait to share our authentic food, traditions, and hospitality with you in our new home." ■



Photo: Chris Jackson, RDA

Rachel Perls has completed a new mural of matilija poppies, fondly called "fried egg flowers," for the Enssaro family. "I love how their delicate paper white petals sway and dance in the breeze. Another in my series of temporary public art projects, this piece is meant to discourage graffiti while drawing attention and excitement in anticipation of the opening."

A special thank you to Cole Hardware for paint donations, and to the Rockridge District Association.

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How Should Oakland Grow? Let the City Know Your Views

by Thomas Lollini, FAIA, RCPC Land Use Committee Chair

As its next step in the update of Oakland's General Plan (GPU2), the City of Oakland has released *"Oakland for All: Options for How We Stabilize and Grow."* This report (available online) explores conceptual alternatives for how Oakland could stabilize and grow over the next 20 years, such as where new homes, jobs, parks, and transportation might go.

It includes a summary background on past and current planning efforts, key data about the City's future, and three options for what growth might look like. Community priorities and technical research shape these options, and the report compares each option across a range of goals and considerations.

The report is a tool to help Oakland residents learn more about the General Plan and share feedback. Your feedback will help shape a "Preferred Plan," which will go into more detail on specific policies and actions related to land use, mobility, open space, and other quality-of-life topics.

The report lays out approaches and assumptions regarding land use, including current projects in the entitlement pipeline, all aspects of the 2023 Housing Element Update, the Downtown Development Plan, and the fact that some development will occur outside of targeted development areas. The three options for Oakland's growth are followed by an excerpt of each concept diagram, illustrating how they might be realized in our neighborhood.

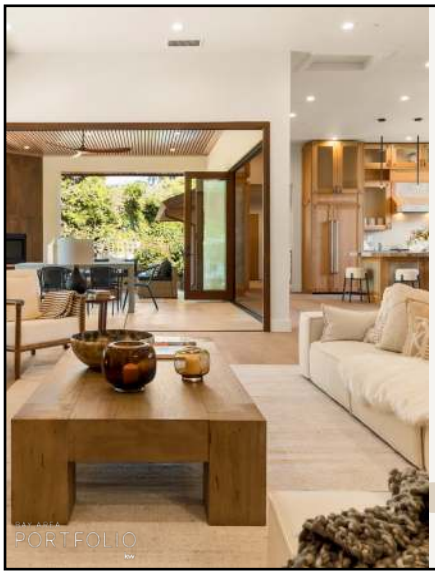
The report poses questions highlighting where input is needed most to help shape a plan that works for everyone. Questions in the report correspond to a survey, available until September 24 at oaklandgpu.mysocialpinpoint.com, or as a paper version available at City Hall (contact generalplan@oaklandca.gov for copies). **Online and paper copies of the survey must be returned by September 24, 2025**.

Additionally, if time is a concern, the survey includes a summary of the options, allowing participants to complete the survey without reading the entire report. Comments on this report or any part of the GPU2 process may also be sent to the project team at generalplan@oaklandca.gov. Most of the potential housing development sites in Rockridge could qualify for these various incentives, thus reducing time from planning to completion.

To learn more about what this all might mean for Rockridge and, more importantly, the rest of Oakland, visit the links above to join the fun and share your views… and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same. ■

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A Breakdown of Recent Updates to CEQA

by Star Lightner, RCPC Board Member

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires State and local agencies to identify and publicly disclose the environmental impacts of proposed projects before approving them, using a three-step process:

1) Determine whether a proposed activity constitutes a "project"; if so,
2) Determine whether the project qualifies for an exemption from CEQA; and if not,
3) Determine whether the project is likely to have environmental impacts, and if so, mitigate them as appropriate.

CEQA is primarily an informational statute. Even when environmental impacts may be significant, an agency has the option of issuing a statement overriding considerations and approving a project anyway, as long as the proper environmental information has been shared.

Two new laws, AB 130 and SB 131, were recently passed with the primary goal of accelerating the approval of specific projects and facilitating required infrastructure. They provide new statutory exemptions to CEQA regarding infill housing projects; a mechanism to mitigate transportation impacts; exemptions for a variety of infrastructure projects; and targeted streamlining for projects that narrowly miss CEQA exemption criteria. The details of these bills are as follows:

Assembly Bill 130

AB 130 exempts infill housing projects from CEQA review on sites up to 20 acres in size (Builder's Remedy projects are also eligible, but only for projects on up to five-acre sites).

To qualify, a project must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be located within city limits and not be on environmentally sensitive, hazardous, or conservation sites;
- Must (1) be either previously developed with or predominantly surrounded by urban uses; (2) be consistent with either the general plan or zoning ordinance; and (3) meet at least 50 percent of minimum density for housing element sites.
- Must not require the demolition of a historic structure that was placed on a national, state, or local historic register prior to when the preliminary application was submitted.
- Must complete a mandatory but expedited tribal consultation process.
- Must complete a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and mitigate any hazardous substance release found, as well as the potential for exposure by surrounding properties or activities.
- Must meet certain labor standards.
- Allows project sponsors to mitigate transportation impacts through contributions to the Transit-Oriented Development Implementation Fund.

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) measure the amount and distance of automobile travel generated by a proposed project. A project that results in a significant increase in VMT may require mitigation to reduce the VMT to produce a less than significant environmental impact. Money generated by such mitigation will be used toward funding for affordable housing or related infrastructure projects, including infrastructure necessary for higher-density uses. However, AB 130 does not prohibit the lead agency from imposing additional fees or requirements on the project to mitigate transportation-related impacts.

AB 130 also expands projects qualifying for expedited litigation timelines. Such projects now include housing developments of four or more units that invest at least $15M and dedicate a minimum of 15 percent of units to lower-income households.

Senate Bill 131

Senate Bill 131 creates CEQA exemptions for infrastructure projects of statewide importance, such as rezonings that facilitate an approved housing element; wildfire risk reduction projects; water system improvements; nonprofit food banks on industrial land; and high-speed rail maintenance and passenger facility projects.

The bill authorizes streamlined review of "nearly exempt" housing projects — defined as those projects that would qualify for a CEQA exemption but for a single disqualifying condition. Such projects would undergo limited environmental review, limited to the single triggering condition.

The bill also mandates mapping of urban infill sites eligible for the new infill housing, which would facilitate faster site selection for eligible housing project sponsors. ■

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Join the Effort: Clean Up Frog Park for Oakland's 30th Creek to Bay Day

by Will Sheldon

In celebration of **Oakland's 30th annual Creek to Bay Day Cleanup**, a cleanup of Big Frog Park, Little Frog Park, and the Temescal Greenbelt (Redondo @ Clark to Miles @ Claremont) is being held on **Saturday, September 20, from 9am to noon**.

Tasks include weeding, pruning, trash pickup, raking, sweeping, fluffing up the fibar, and possibly applying a non-toxic sealant to the Little 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, if you'd like to borrow them. Coffee and snacks provided to volunteers.

Meet at the big oak tree by the Big Frog play structure on Saturday, September 20, from 9am to noon to sign the waiver to participate.





Terry Lee Honored for 50 Years of Service

Terry Lee began her Safeway career in 1975 and celebrated 50 years of dedicated service on August 15. A beloved presence at the 5100 Broadway store, she's known for her kindness, professionalism, and deep community connection. Terry's radiant spirit has touched generations of Rockridge shoppers, many of whom go out of their way to be in her line. Terry Lee embodies excellence in customer service and community care — a local treasure and true Rockridge gem.

*Thank you, **Keara O'Doherty**, Chief of Staff for District 1 Councilmember **Zac Unger**, for providing Terry's Proclamation. Thank you, **Joe Johnston** for sleuthing this story.* ■



A viral post on Nextdoor praising her for her milestone received nearly 1,000 likes.



Top photo: Joe Johnston

Photo on right: Anna L Marks



Proposed Senior Living Housing on Claremont Avenue

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board Member

Ellis Partners, Spirit Living Ellis Partners and Spirit Living Group have filed an SB 330 preliminary application with the City of Oakland for a new senior housing community at 6230 Claremont Avenue, the site of the former Red Cross blood bank donation center and office. The seven-story project is currently planned for 197 units across a spectrum of studio and one- and two-bedroom unit types. There will be independent living, assisted living, and memory care units.

The developers made an informational presentation to the RCPC Board at its August meeting. The RCPC Board has not taken a position on this project, which is in an initial stage of planning but is likely to move quickly through the Oakland permitting process during the next 6 months to a year. The developers plan to have a project website to update the community as plans unfold. An informational community meeting has been set for September 17 (see front page).

RCPC has contacted the site's property management team about blight and vagrancy issues and will continue to do so as issues arise. ■

Rockridge Transit Spotlight



Janae Hall: Rockridge BART Station Agent

by Robbie Tasker, RCPC Board Member

Janae Hall greeted me with a warm smile and the friendly disposition of a real "people person" when we met. It was no surprise, then, when she told me that her favorite part of the job was helping the riders. While her job as a Station Agent means she often monitors the safety of riders across the station, Janae told me that Rockridge is a station where any sort of violent incident is rare. Usually, Janae finds herself helping riders reunite with lost items and figuring out the new station gates.

"Some folks are really shy about asking for help, but I always tell them 'It's my job, I'm happy to!'" she laughed. Both "Regulars" and tourists appreciate her and her coworkers' work, and sometimes they leave little gifts as a thank you. Tourists love to tell her where to visit, should she ever find herself in their country, and sometimes leave her with an assortment of treats they've picked up on their travels.

As for the locals, there is one woman in particular who brings her little scraps of paper with bits of wisdom written on them. "She'll come in and tell me, 'I've been thinking of you,' and she'll manage to give me something that's exactly what I needed to hear that week."

So, next time you're at the Rockridge BART station, make sure to give Janae or her coworkers a wave and a thank you for all the hard work they do to keep us safe and connected to the rest of the Bay. ■

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Investing in Our Children: a Message from Your OUSD District 1 Director

by Rachel Latta

Hello Rockridge neighbors! For those of you who are just getting to know me, I'm a Bay Area native, a nurse midwife, a long-time District 1 resident, and your representative on the Oakland School Board. My husband and I have three children attending Oakland public schools — an 8th grader at West Oakland Middle School, a 5th grader, and a TK'er at Prescott Elementary.

As the only school board member who is also an OUSD parent, I show up to every meeting with one focus: our students. I know firsthand that our public schools are not only places where children learn, but also community anchors that strengthen and revitalize our neighborhoods. When schools are strong, families put down roots, local businesses thrive, and neighborhoods feel more connected. Investing in our schools is investing in the future of Oakland — they are the heart of our communities.

This year has shown what's possible when we focus on practical solutions that help students, families, and educators thrive. For the first time, OUSD issued a multi-year academic calendar that gives families the ability to plan, educators and staff the time to prepare, and students the consistency they need to be successful.

OUSD opened its first in-district Montessori program this fall at Brookfield. The program is an innovative, hands-on model that offers families a new high-quality option within our public schools. Both changes are the product of collaboration between educators, families, and community leaders — and they're proof that when we listen to our community, we create schools that work for everyone.

Here in District 1, we are fortunate to have stable schools with strong teacher retention, but, unfortunately, that is not the case for all Oakland schools. As parents, we know how important it is for families to build lasting relationships with teachers and to see those familiar faces year after year, knowing that the person guiding your child in the classroom is someone who understands them, their siblings, and their community. Every family in Oakland deserves that same strong foundation. Making sure every school has the resources to recruit and keep great teachers and staff is not just about fairness, it's about giving all of Oakland's kids the strong, stable education they deserve.

Our schools are strongest when families and community members know their voices matter in shaping the future of their community. That is why I share updates via a monthly newsletter, respond to every email received, and host a community coffee on the third Saturday of each month at 11am. Together, we can ensure Oakland's schools reflect the very best of our city and give every child the excellent education they deserve.

Please reach out to me at Rachel.Latta@ousd.org with your concerns and ideas, or to sign up to learn more about what I am working on. ■









Rockridge News Route Available Along Taft Avenue

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager



Taft Avenue Block Captain **Ruby Naughton** is leaving Oakland to start her first year of college. Thank you, Ruby, for your service, and best of luck! Ruby's departure leaves a vacancy for her delivery route on Taft Avenue. We are looking for someone who lives on her route or nearby to replace her, beginning in October.

The job takes about 20-30 minutes, and it's a great way to get to know your neighbors better. Please let us know if you are that person.

• Route 07D: Along 5900 and 6100 Taft, from Broadway to Manila

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

The Rockridge community is invited to attend the art opening for **Marc Foster Grant**

Marc is a local artist and designer who, along with his wife, created the internationally renowned clothing line, Jeanne Marc.

He will be presenting his latest collection of paintings exploring portraiture including Bad Bunny and Parker Posey.

Come meet Marc on Saturday, October 4, from 4pm to 7pm

Mercy Vintage
5505 College Avenue

Dogs of Rockridge



Albus "Albi" is a 6-year-old rescue who embodies the qualities of his namesake, Professor Dumbledore. His passions include playing with his ball, going on road trips, belly rubs, hiking through redwood groves, being the campground host, and spending time with his two-legged friends. He is deeply sensitive, daringly kind, and loves smelling the flowers of Rockridge.



Originally from Chicago, **Boon** (9, half Chow Labrador mix) and **Luna** (5, Red Fox Labrador) have recently relocated to the vibrant Rockridge neighborhood. They're looking forward to embarking on new adventures, discovering hiking trails, and enjoying the dog beaches where they can do zoomies and soak up the sun. Boon and Luna's unique personalities complement each other perfectly, making them the ideal duo for any new exploration.

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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eyes on Rockridge

Leslie Correll 1944-2025

by Judith Doner Berne

There's a void on our block and in our hearts. **Leslie Correll**, an artist and social justice advocate who was an integral part of the Rockridge community for decades, died on July 31 after a long battle with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). She was 81.

Like the forward-thinking person she was, Correll decided when she could no longer fight the disease, availing herself of California's "right to die" law. "It was so beautiful, so dignified and peaceful," said her best friend, **Anne MacLachlan**, who was among those at her bedside. "She had been in so much pain."



Despite her illness, **Leslie Correll** (seated right) wasn't going to miss the June meeting of her long-time book club with neighbors (left to right) **Beth Johnke**, **Nancy Bryan**, **Dona Turner**, and **Shirley Parini**.

Photo: Kaitlyn Johnke

As a long-time member of our neighborhood book club, "Leslie pulled herself together" to attend the group's June meeting, said block captain **Dona Turner**. "She came, she participated, even though she was quite unwell. I think she wanted to say good-bye." A few weeks later, in typical Leslie fashion, she texted Turner to say: "I'm going bye-bye sooner than I thought."

"It was typical that she never complained about her condition, instead making funny jokes about going to Kaiser, and until the end, she always kept up an incredibly cheerful demeanor," **Iris Stetson** said. The two Rockridge residents, friends for more than 40 years, met studying Flamenco dancing in San Francisco's Mission District. "Leslie's innate goodness — compassion, understanding, and concern for others — characterized my dear friend."

Already a Rockridge resident, in 1991 she inherited the home of her parents, **Alice Correll** and the renowned print artist **Richard Correll**. She also inherited her dad's artistic talents and both parents' activism. In the book, *Richard V. Correll Prints and Drawings* (2004) that Leslie, their only child, championed, contributed to, and edited, she wrote: "All three Corrells were involved with the anti-war and anti-nuclear movement, the civil rights, women's, and environmental movements, and in the drive for increased rights for Chicanos and Native Americans."

Leslie's mother, Alice, in her 90s, could be seen holding protest signs, sitting on the sidewalk outside Otterbein Manor, the senior community near to College Avenue where she had

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page

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

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Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

subsequently moved.

At that time, Leslie described herself as "a multimedia artist and consultant in product design, development, and marketing for women and minority artists in the United States, and those practicing traditional crafts in several countries." Her personal research interests, she wrote, "center on textile and fiber arts and their social and economic importance to Indigenous communities."

Under the logo of Correll Studios, Leslie created and sold her jewelry in the 1970s and '80s, notably to high-end stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman, MacLachlan said. She went on to manage professionals from developing countries for 10 years at UC Berkeley's International Environmental Leadership Program for Sustainable Development.

"She invested so much in social justice issues," MacLachlan said. "She was very careful with her money so that all the organizations that she believed in locally, nationally, and internationally would get a maximum amount."

Her activism always included making her Rockridge neighborhood a better place. Despite her illness, Leslie was a force on the steering committee for Upper Broadway Advocates (UBA), formed in 2019 to advocate for building affordable housing at the former California College of Arts campus.

"She designed the website, the logo, and the structure of it," said **Janis Brewer**, a friend, neighbor, and sister UBA board member. "I think it was her baby." She firmly believed that "If we aren't building affordable housing, we're not doing the right thing.

"She was so proud of being a career woman, wanting to do something for the world," Brewer said. The two also worked together when various projects threatened the neighborhood's quality and safety. "I'll just miss her community spirit, selflessly trying to make things better for other people. I am overwhelmed with Leslie's bravery. Even when she was sick, she was a joyful person."

Across the street, her neighbors **Steve and Denise Kazan** remembered that, some years back, Leslie happily cared for their cat, Samantha, when they were away. That was even though "Samantha liked no one but Denise," Steve said. "Even the vet was afraid of the cat." When the cat died at age 21, Denise invited friends for a memorial dinner and asked them to say something about Samantha. She received utter silence. "Leslie came to the rescue," Steve said. "Not only did she say something good about Samantha, but she wrote a little poem in her honor. Leslie made the day."

In recent years, she was often confined to her home, unable to do the gardening she loved so much. But surrounded by her collections — family photographs, drawers filled with her artful jewelry, and shelves and furniture displaying fiber art, often gathered on her travels – she stayed busy and involved. "Leslie was always abreast of things," block captain Turner said. "She was interested in the bits and pieces of the world."

A tribute to Leslie Correll can be found on Upper Broadway Advocates' website. And, if you have a Rockridge story, email judyberne@att.net. ■

Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

Next NCPC Meeting Date:
Thursday, October 9, 7pm

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

Zac Unger will be speaking at the October 9 meeting. Come and meet your City Councilmember.

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

Rockridge Chorale Sings at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Ireland

by Jacquelyn McCormick

This past June, the Rockridge Chorale joined forces with 120 singers from across the country to deliver an awe-inspiring performance at the prestigious Dublin Choral Festival, held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The highlight was the premiere of **Jake Runestad's** *Secrets of the Sea*, under the direction of the acclaimed composer himself. This composition, an homage to Runestad's best friend, resonated deeply with the audience, earning three memorable standing ovations.

Singers Wanted!

The Rockridge Chorale is inviting SATB (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) singers to join them in Oakland at 3pm on November 1. They are also seeking singers for their concert at Carnegie Hall in NYC. The repertoire will include both classical and pop music

Details at www.rockridgechorale.org; or by calling 510/435-0820. ■

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-2BD 2BA, 1 level, +ADU, Glen Highlands, 1700+SF, gorgeous garden $1.395m

September is awareness month for: Blood Cancers, Alzheimer's, Sourdough, Honey, Hispanic Heritage, Self Care, Square Dance, Little League, Italian Cheese, Mushrooms, Mortgage Professionals, Preparedness.

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Rockridge Little League Standout To Play at Cal

by Skip Fogarty

He loved baseball from the time he could walk. His father was a college pitcher and a baseball operations executive with the San Francisco Giants. "I would watch a three-hour baseball game on TV when I was two years old," says Rockridge neighbor **Ezra Goldfarb**. "My dad and I were always playing catch and doing drills. I just loved the game."

Ezra went on to play for the North Oakland Little League, a series of elite summer travel teams, and has been captain of the Head Royce squad for the past two seasons. Earlier this summer, ahead of his senior year, he committed to play for Cal, marking the end of his illustrious high school career. "Committing to Cal basically means I have a roster spot and that the coaches want me there," Ezra explains. His father, **Yeshayah**, says he's "delighted that Ezra will be playing college ball near home at an academically challenging university."

His high school statistics bear out his skills and hard work over the years. Playing in the outfield and at first base over the span of three seasons with the Jayhawks program, he has compiled a .353 batting average, with a .467 on-base percentage and 56 runs batted in across 68 games.

But pitching is at the heart of Ezra's excellence. The left-hander was named Pitcher of the Year by the Bay Counties League (BCL-East) last season after being recognized as the division's Most Valuable Player as a 10th grader. Remarkably, over the past three years, he has amassed 228 strikeouts in 133 innings. Opponents bat a measly .152 against him. Ezra's earned run average is a minuscule 1.21. He once racked up 17 strikeouts in a seven-inning game versus College Prep.

"He's the easiest kid I've ever worked with," says Head Royce pitching coach Dave Rapson. "He's cool on the mound, a hard worker, and he simply has great stuff. I think he could be an outstanding college player."

Yeshayah pitched at UC San Diego and says he never pushed Ezra into playing baseball. "He's a very purposeful athlete and student," he says. "We look at a lot of video together, of Ezra's play and also some pro players too. He asks a lot of questions, and he understands how his body moves. We have give-and-take around any adjustments I might suggest about his swing or throwing motion."

Among some unusual training aids the Goldfarbs have employed since he was little: Standing on a raised beam to improve his balance while batting corn kernels with a bat and wiffle golf balls with a broomstick.



Photo courtesy of the Goldfarb family

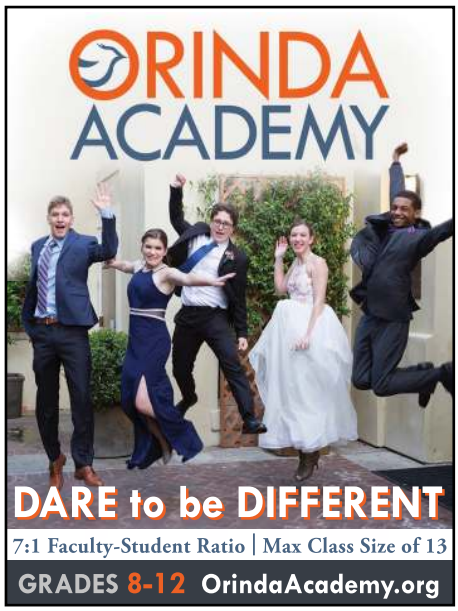
The left-handed pitcher also excels as a hitter at Head Royce and is heading to play at Cal.

How do Ezra's coaches respond to his father's inputs? "I think they recognize Ezra is open to their suggestions as well as mine. There's never been any friction there." He adds, "Ezra is a student of the game, with a drive to improve."

As far as possible areas of study at Cal, Ezra says: "Maybe psychology… but I'm not 100 percent sure. I'm interested in how people make decisions and understanding their motives. I'd like to study that through an athletic lens."

Ezra is also the captain of the Head Royce basketball team, and come spring, he's looking forward to continued success on the baseball diamond. "We finished second in our league last year with a 10-2 record, and we played in the North Coast Sectional championships against much bigger schools. A lot of our best guys will be back."

When the season is over, Ezra says he'll begin playing in Cal's fall development program. He expects to concentrate on pitching, "but they'll give me a chance to hit in the fall and we'll see how that goes." Don't bet against this kid continuing as a two-way star. ■





Rockridge Moms Turn Warehouse into Vibrant Creative Space

by Ella Smith



Inside the warehouse on Claremont Avenue, cement floors stretch nearly 10,000 square feet beneath exposed wooden beams. A floral mural decorates the exterior. For years, Oakland residents **Morgan Cecil** and **Laura Burnett** have worked to turn the raw space into a welcoming community brimming with creativity, naturally allowing the building's "internal flexibility to have lots of different identities," said Burnett.

Less than a month ago, they successfully launched Summer Market. The premiere event featured approximately 25 vendors that lined the central area of the warehouse with vendor booths and tables offering everything from acupuncture to herbal supplements. "Everyone was warm, happy, friendly, interactive, and supportive," said Burnett.

The two women first met when their children attended kindergarten together at Chabot Elementary School where they collaborated to create a visiting author program. Burnett later expanded the initiative to other local schools before transitioning to a career as a piano teacher, while Cecil pursued a profession in architectural design.

Then came the Covid pandemic. "Both of us have had previous careers and felt like we were on the cusp of shifting gears," explained Burnett. With Burnett's background in finance and Cecil's in design, their compatibility as business partners spured them to imagine how to collaborate on something bigger: "Why don't we build our own dream rather than someone else's dream?" asserted Burnett.

One day over coffee, they noticed an empty building across the street for rent. "We spent the next hour just fantasizing about what we would each do," said Burnett. That building was no longer available, but they soon found a tenant-occupied warehouse on Claremont Avenue. Although they purchased it about four years ago, the majority of the tenants remained until just over a year ago.

By July, they gained access to the entire space, but had lost a significant portion of the incoming rent, so Burnett and Cecil decided to generate income another way: renting out the space for private events. While other owners might focus first on renovating the building, Cecil explained, "We're kind of the opposite; we have this raw space and we want to find the right people and then build out."

The two women are constantly looking for "people who are creative-minded and critical thinkers," said Cecil. To foster creativity, the warehouse currently houses four private studios rented by a variety of freelancers, including an abstract painter and a carpenter. However, most of the warehouse is available to rent for private events — from gender reveal parties to large-scale dinners.

While they plan to continue to add private studio spaces, Burnett explained, in the spirit of community, "part of our core vision includes events that we want to host ourselves." ■





National Night Out Becomes a Neighborhood Tradition

By H. L. Onstad

When I moved from chilly SF to sunny Lower Rockridge 25 years ago, I met many neighbors, and was informed there was an annual National Night Out block party. For more than 30 years, during the late summer, 59th Street between Canning and Howell is closed to through-traffic for one evening. Neighbors bring food, fire up the grill, and put a name to a face. Everyone is invited, and everyone has a chance to meet one another in a casual setting. Our humble little block party has had a range of activities: egg-on-spoon races, water balloons, a jump house for kids, impromptu magic tricks, a professional DJ, a visit from an Oakland fire truck, a council member, and our local beat cop.

Rory Darrah and the late **Jo-Ellen Spencer**, both of whom worked at BANANAS on Claremont, maintained our block party tradition for decades. Later, they initiated me (and neighbors **Rachel** and **Boris**) into the ranks of organizers, passing along their wisdom and the ceremonial bin filled with paper napkins, paper plates, cups, caution tape, name tags, and Sharpies, and our community directory. My son, who is now 24, was lucky enough to grow up with this tradition, and this year, he took on the role of grill master.



Top photo: 59th Street / Bottom photos: Presley between Miles and Chabot

5 Steps to Start a Block Party Tradition:

1. Solicit a few neighbors to help pick a date at least two months in advance. Try to hold it on National Night Out, or request a short-term encroachment permit with the city of Oakland for any date. Brainstorm fun activities, or arrange a casual potluck.

2. One month before the event: Send an email to your neighbors and let them know when it's happening and include a sign-up sheet for things you'll need (tables, chairs, a grill, soft drinks, appetizers, salads, buns, grill items, napkins, plates, cutlery, condiments, clean-up crew, etc).

3. One to two weeks before the event: Make flyers for the event; put them in mailboxes, and post them around your block. Remind people about the sign-up sheet.

4. Three or four days before the event: Send a reminder message alerting people to move their cars one hour before the start of the event, and what time you will block off the street.

5. Day of the event: Use string caution tape, balloons or crepe paper to rope off recycling and garbage bins placed strategically to block off the street entrance. Set up tables and food. **Pro tip:** Having name tags on hand makes introductions easier.

Enjoy the party, and plan to repeat steps 1 through 5 next year! ■





Rockridge Library SEPTEMBER 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. Practice fluency with Scout or Gladys.

Craft Programs: MoChA at the Library! Third Thursdays, September to April, 3:30pm. Monthly art workshops for children and families led by teachers from the Museum of Children's Art. For ages 5-15, and caregivers. Build creativity, social-emotional & academic skills through art.

Making Stories Club: First Thursdays, September to May, 3:30pm. Monthly workshops to write, illustrate, and tell stories. Make books, zines, stories, comics, kamishibai, or scripts! Join this club of youth writers and illustrators. For ages 8 to 12.

For Teens, Ages 12 to 18

Lotería Flowerpots: Thursday 9/18 3-4pm: Join us to paint and decorate a flowerpot with cards from the traditional Mexican card game, Lotería. Take home succulent cuttings or seeds from our seed library to plant in your new flowerpot! All supplies (except soil) provided.

For Adults

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

Rockridge Book Club: Every 2nd Saturday, 3:30-4:30pm. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. September's book is *James*, by Percival Everett

Needlework Circle: Every Thursday, (**time change! starting Sept. 18th**), 1-3pm. Bring your yarn and fiber arts projects.

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

1-on-1 Technology Help: every Saturday, 10am-12pm and 1-3pm and Tuesdays 5:30-7:30. Come with your devices and technology questions and our volunteer tech guru will help you get sorted. First come first served.

Adult Crafting Series: Tuesday Sept. 2nd, 6-7:30pm. Play with ink, explore techniques and tools.

Meet the Authors: Wednesday, 6:30pm, Sept 19, Dr. Vanessa Grubbs will discuss her book, *Negligent by Design: Anti-Blackness in American Medicine and How to Address It.* Books will be sold onsite by A Great Good Place for Books. This program is sponsored by the FORL.

Rockridge Gardening Series: Saturday Sept. 20, 2-3pm. Native Plants: explore the beauty and benefits of California Native Plants for our area. The U.C. Master Gardeners of Alameda County share their expertise. ■

Holiday Closures:
Admission Day: Tuesday, September 9

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 OCTOBER News is: September 18, 2025 (available Oct. 4).

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Saturday, October 18, 7am

(Onsite registration: 6am)

Snow Park at Lake Merritt, Oakland, CA

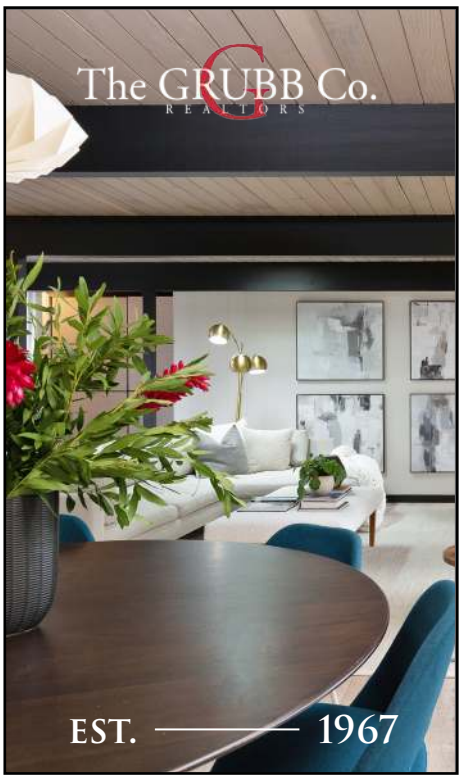
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