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RCPC Responds to Proposed Towers at Trader Joe's Site

Statement by RCPC Board



Image of Align Real Estate's proposal for two large residential towers at the Trader Joe's site (5727 College Avenue).| SCB Architects

Having recently learned the details of the proposal to replace Trader Joe's with two residential towers, RCPC was shocked at the magnitude of its potential impact and disappointed that the developer chose not to engage with the community before submitting its application to the city.

RCPC supports the creation of new housing in our neighborhood, and recognizes that higher density can be appropriate at sites located directly adjacent to transit. However, with one of the two high-rises at 31 stories, the proposed project exceeds current zoning by more than 20 stories and eliminates Trader Joe's, a vital part of the community in the process. Trader Joe's is the only affordable grocery option in the neighborhood, and the first unionized Trader Joe's in the country.

Align Real Estate, the project sponsor, has stated its commitment to preserving the "vitality of the corridor," and RCPC shares that vision. The quality and character of College Avenue as a contiguous, interactive public environment is essential, and improvements to all adjacent streetscapes, including the placement and height of the development's taller components, are crucial to helping this project become a respectful neighbor. We urge Align Real Estate to pursue a project that better respects Rockridge's scale, provides affordable housing, and retains Trader Joe's as the ground-floor retail.

RCPC will actively engage in the public review of this project to the fullest extent allowed by the Oakland zoning code and state law. We welcome the opportunity to meet with Align Real Estate to discuss their proposal before the entitlement process begins in earnest.

Please share your feedback on Align Real Estate's proposal for the Trader Joe's site via landuse@rockridge.org. ●

Community Vision Plan Shared with Residents

by Kristen Belt and Casey Farmer, CVP Co-Chairs

On Thursday, April 23, RCPC hosted a Town Hall to release the Rockridge Community Vision Plan.

Over 120 residents squeezed into the library's community room to learn about the plan and ask questions. The Community Vision Plan is the culmination of months of community meetings and robust resident feedback. It is a framework for initiatives led by the RCPC board, in collaboration with the broader Rockridge community. The CVP has five focus areas: Mobility, Open Space/Green Infrastructure, Housing Opportunities, Commercial/Cultural Activities, and Resilience/Sustainability.

CVP, continued page 5



RCPC's Community Vision Plan meeting was standing-room only. | Robbie Tasker

INSIDE: ● Tech's Champion Wrestler, page 4 ● Inside the Breema Center, page 8 ● Local Guitar Builder, page 10

The Rockridge News Welcomes New Editor and Says Goodbye to Interim Torchbearer

by RCPC Board

RCPC welcomes Ryan Phillips as the new editor of The Rockridge News. Ryan is a seasoned journalist with vast communications and editing expertise in the nonprofit and education sectors.

He is an Oakland native, longtime Oakland resident and homeowner, and a graduate of the UC Berkeley School of Journalism. We are excited to work with him.

That said, we will also miss outgoing editor Liam Pierce. Last fall, Liam took on the role in an interim capacity. For personal reasons, he could only commit to the role for six months. We sincerely appreciate his time, the new writers he has recruited, and the unique stories he has uplifted.

"I hadn't lived in Oakland in 20 years and discovering the love everyone has behind this publication taught me ancient truths about one of the City's oldest neighborhoods (via researching Ohlone peoples), trends that are defining this current moment (mentoring Oakland Tech students) and the shape of its horizon (while learning perhaps *too* much about land use)," Pierce shared.

"It was always the plan to be editor for only six months—I knew I wanted my career to be more education-oriented. But that hasn't stopped this departure from being a tearful goodbye; I'll truly miss working on The Rockridge News."

Huge thanks to Liam for his service and to Ryan for stepping into this role! ●

A Word from the Rockridge News' New Editor

by Ryan Phillips

I'm thrilled to step into the role of editor at The Rockridge News. A little bit about me: I'm an Oakland native (born in Merritt Hospital), an Oakland homeowner, and an active OUSD parent.

I swim with Temescal Masters, cheer on the Ballers and Roots, and I'll argue with anyone that Cactus Taqueria has some of The Town's tastiest crunchy tacos.

I have over 20 years of experience as a published writer, editor, and communications strategist, and my reporting has appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and NBC News. Local news has long been my passion.

I was the sports editor for the Santa Cruz Sentinel and one of the first batch of reporters for the hyperlocal news site, Oakland North, where, among other things, I covered City Council and School Board meetings and wrote a weekly column spotlighting local businesses.

My heart is here, in Oakland's local stories. I'm eager to work alongside you, the neighbors, small business owners, parents, and longtime residents who make Rockridge the special place that it is. Please send your story ideas my way. ●

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The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by Don Kinkead and is published monthly (except August). It is 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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Your Remodel Could Be Featured in the Rockridge Kitchen Tour

by Star Lightner, RCPC Vice Chair



The Kitchen Tour features Rockridge kitchens remodeled in the past two years. Show us what you've got!

Do you like all things KITCHEN? The layouts, the colors, the fixtures, the appliances? Are you interested in getting a behind-the-scenes look at some of the coolest remodels in Rockridge? If so, the 2026 Rockridge Kitchen Tour would love to have you as a volunteer.

For those who are not familiar, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour is a biennial event where Rockridge neighbors open their homes for a tour of their newly remodeled kitchens or new accessory dwelling units (ADUs), with architects, contractors, and designers on hand to answer attendees' questions.

The Kitchen Tour is RCPC's only fundraiser, and it supports a variety of events and projects such as Rock & Stroll and the annual Halloween Parade on College Avenue, and neighborhood beautification projects such as the pocket gardens at the corners of Forest/Locksley, and Hudson and Miles, and the mosaics soon to be gracing trash cans in the Rockridge BART plaza. The Kitchen Tour funds RCPC grants that have also enabled such projects as the restoration of murals under the freeway overpass on Claremont Avenue and at Frog Park.

We need kitchens for the tour! If you have a kitchen that has been remodeled in the past two years (or a new ADU) that will be ready for prime time by August, please get in touch. So far, we have two kitchens and potentially one ADU, so we definitely need more candidates to make the tour happen. There is no specific blueprint for the type of kitchen or ADU we are looking for — large, small, expensive, budget — and we would love to present a variety of styles.

Also, opening your kitchen for the Tour is a wonderful public service. If you recall your experience contemplating remodeling your own kitchen, you probably remember having a lot of questions and concerns; wouldn't it have been great to have a group of architects, contractors, and designers to talk to? If you went on the Kitchen Tour first, you understand! We consistently get positive feedback from Kitchen Tour attendees about how helpful it was to speak to a variety of professionals, as well as how many excellent ideas they got from the Tour. Show us what you've got!

The Kitchen Tour has a lot of moving parts, and we need volunteers for a variety of task. First, we need a webmaster. The website exists but needs to be updated with information pertaining to 2026 and photos from the 2024 tour, and it will then need to be linked to the ticketing website. We also need someone to help with advertising and sponsorships. In addition, we are looking for a small army of tour docents who will be stationed at each of the generally eight properties on the tour. Finally, we need people interested in helping out with last minute tasks in the week leading up to the tour. We have a small but mighty team in the works so far, but we need more great folks to help pull it all together.



Please email kitchentour@rockridge.org with kitchen or ADU candidates, or to volunteer. Thanks! ●

Oakland Tech Wrestler Wins Oakland's First Girls State Title

by Madeleine Turner
Senior at Oakland Tech



Shayna Ward (above and below), who wrestles for the Oakland Tech club wrestling team, won Oakland's first girls' state wresting title at the end of February. | Shayna Ward

When Oakland Tech wrestler Shayna Ward began wrestling at age 13, there weren't many girls she could compete against.

"When I was in middle school, I was usually practicing with boys," Ward said. "I wrestled boys at tournaments; I'd be lucky to wrestle a girl."

She continued to rise in the ranks, and at the end of February, Ward secured Oakland's first girls' wrestling state championship.

Ward, a two-time runner-up for the state championship, attends Oakland Unified School District's Sojourner Truth Independent Study and wrestles for Tech's club team.

In the final against Zahra Stewart of Orange Vista High, Ward was nearly pinned on her back.

"I was thinking, 'this cannot happen again,'" Ward said. "I lost to her last year. So this year, I got up and put her on her back, and the crowd went insane."

Ward said she is receiving offers to wrestle at Division I colleges, with the goal of wrestling professionally after earning a degree in Communications so she can someday work in sports media.

During her free time, one of her hobbies is photography. She sees similarities with wrestling — both allow her to express herself creatively.

"Everybody has their own style and wrestles differently, and I like watching other people on the mat," Ward said. "I can see that 'they hit a move like this,' or 'I like the way they do this.' So I think I'm out there being creative."

Ward's road to the state championship has been a series of near-misses. As a senior, this was her final chance to bring a state title home after finishing as a runner-up the past two years.

"I don't think wrestling is for everyone," Ward said. "It's a really intense, grueling sport, and sometimes you put so much into it, and it feels like you're not getting a lot back."

Her family's support from the stands helps keep her focused and motivated, and holds her accountable.

"My little sisters are always watching," she said. "When I go out there and lose, they're so sad, and I don't want to see them sad. Definitely, all the supporters and the family and friends I have keep me going."

For Ward, the state title was the end of her high school chapter, but she believes it's just the beginning of her story.

"This won't be the last time you hear my name," she said. ●





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CVP, continued from cover

Each focus area identifies goals in the following four types:

- Advocacy: How should RCPC push for changes from local government?
- Partnerships: Which organizations can we collaborate with?
- Education: What do residents want information about in Rockridge News articles or Town Halls?
- Physical Improvements: What changes to the infrastructure around us help to reach our goals of enhanced connection, safety, and quality of life?

After a brief presentation of the plan, a robust Q&A session revealed strong enthusiasm for many of the initiatives—particularly those focused on sustainability and resilience. The discussion also highlighted the wide breadth of opinions and concerns surrounding neighborhood development, echoing feedback gathered throughout the engagement process. RCPC is optimistic that the CVP, which outlines protocols for reviewing development proposals, will strengthen our ability to organize and advocate as a community for projects that enhance the walkability, vitality, and connectivity of our neighborhood.

"While there are a range of perspectives on housing, the discussion at the meeting—and within CVP more broadly—highlighted a shared commitment to thoughtfully guiding growth in Rockridge in a way that preserves the exceptional quality of life we all value. Change is inevitable, and RCPC can play an important role in advocating for and engaging the community to help achieve the best possible outcomes," RCPC Secretary Jana Good said.

Partnerships:
- Identify a local partner to create an Emergency Hub
- Partner with the Blood Bank to support neighborhood first-aid
- Partner with Block Captains for an audit of emergency resources
- Create a neighborhood resilience hub w/ 72-hr back-up power capability
- Partner with businesses and agencies to enhance recycling and reduce single-use containers

Physical Improvements:
- Tree Planting initiative
- Support planting of pollinator gardens, bee condos and owl/ bat boxes to enhance habitat for non-humans

Education:
- Storm Drain maintenance protocols
- Home Hardening seminars to support wildfire prevention
- Create a Welcome Kit for new neighbors
- Sustainability Series in Rockridge News
- Participate in East Bay Green@Home Tour as part of Kitchen Tour event

Advocacy:
- Establish Block Captains to enhance communication networks for emergency preparedness and prevention; follow EcoBlocks model
- Support Block Captains in PEP classes or CERT training through the City of Oakland

CVP: Section on Sustainability and Resilience

Implementation of the Community Vision Plan: You're invited! Residents are encouraged to sign up for one of the following Committees.

- Land Use Committee focused on Housing, Open Space, and Commercial Activity on College Avenue - Next Meeting will be May 20 at 7 p.m. on Zoom.
- Transportation / Mobility (next meeting in June)
- Sustainability / Resilience (next meeting in June)

Sign up and read the full plan at rockridge.org/cvp. ●

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Proposed 6230 Claremont Senior Residency Facility Update

by Mark Aaronson, RCPC Board

On March 30, the Oakland Planning Department accepted the initial application of Ellis Partners and Spirit Living Group for the development of a 203-unit Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE). The facility would contain independent, assisted living, and memory care units, and is located on Claremont Avenue across from Safeway.

The application will now be reviewed by the Planning staff for zoning and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, a process likely to take at least four months from the acceptance date.

This project is subject to a regular design review, which in this instance results in a decision by the Planning Director, subject to appeal to the Planning Commission. The Planning Director must post public notice of the proposed decision at least 17 days before it becomes final.

For comments to be effective and timely, they should be submitted in writing for the record earlier in the staff review process. Only issues raised in writing can be appealed to the Planning Commission. There is no appeal to the City Council, and any further remedy would involve litigation.

The project site is within Oakland's CN-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone. The developers have not requested a major variance or major conditional use. While there will be some CEQA review, it will not involve the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

Overriding State law applies to the review of this project. Most significantly, RCFEs are eligible for a State bonus residential density allowance of 20 percent without any requirement to provide affordable housing. This calculation affects the permissible height and bulk of a project determined by the number of proposed residential units using a complicated combination of local and State legal provisions.

What is legally most at issue is not how high or how bulky a building is but whether the project falls within the permissible number of units under the State bonus density law, not local land use limitations. As part of the application process, developers first must show that the proposed number of residential units falls within the permissible limits and then apply for waivers from local requirements, such as for height, step-backs, and setbacks.

If the project meets the units test, the only reason in most cases the Planning Director, and then the Planning Commission were there an appeal, can deny a waiver is if it has a specific, adverse impact upon health or safety that is "quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable…, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions." This State standard significantly limits the discretion of local officials in denying project approvals, far more than was the case under only local law in the past.

At a meeting attended by 50-60 Rockridge residents on March 31, representatives from Rockridge Neighbors for Sensible Housing (RNSH) presented for discussion objections to the number of units and situational appropriateness of the proposed RCFE, not an RCFE of a lesser scale. The objections focused on the height, bulk, and safety of the project, which has a 21 ½-feet ground floor with a partial mezzanine and six mainly residential floors above, and is a little under 85 feet in height.

The RCPC Board has appointed a seven-person Consultation Committee, which has met with the developers to discuss potential changes in the proposed project. The Committee's members include RNSH participants, at-large neighborhood residents, and RCPC Board members. The next meeting with the developers will be in mid-May. ●

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Volunteers Cleanup Frog Park on Earth Day



FROG Committee Members Nate Beckett, Will Sheldon, Theresa Nelson and Leonora Sea (from left) were among the volunteers at Frog Park on Earth Day.

| Ryan Phillips

by Ryan Phillips

More than 50 volunteers gathered at Frog Park on Saturday morning for an Earth Day cleanup organized by Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt (FROG). The family-friendly event brought out kids, parents, and longtime residents who spent the morning weeding, trimming trees, raking leaves, and tidying up the park's play structures. Local merchants provided snacks and coffee.

Saturday marked the 14th consecutive year the Freemasons of Oakland Lodge No. 61 has helped with the park's Earth Day cleanup.

"Everybody looks forward to it," said David Forsyth, the lodge's secretary. "Because we know that if you support your local community, you're enhancing the local community."

Nearby, Girl Scout Troop #32445 picked up trash in shifts. Beth Robertson, a troop mom, said the girls were working toward an Earth Day badge.

"Trash goes into the ocean, and creatures who live in the ocean eat it," shared one of the Girl Scouts.

Maki Kominami brought her young son, Atlas, for their second cleanup. "We wanted to get him involved in some type of volunteer work," she said.

Theresa Nelson, co-founder of FROG, noted that children who played at the park when it was new are now in their 20s and 30s, and some have returned with their own kids.

"People want to help," she said. ●







What Goes on Inside the Breema Center?

by Franchesca Garagorri

On our way back from a Saturday morning bakery run, my husband and I passed the Breema Annex just east of College and Claremont avenues. We've walked by countless times, and I'd always wondered what happened behind those doors—it usually seemed so quiet and mysterious.

But this time, the door was wide open. Two practitioners were sitting on the cushioned floor, and I couldn't help myself—I took the opportunity to step inside and finally satisfy my curiosity.

As luck would have it, they were holding an open house with free introductory sessions. I never say no to bodywork, and the practitioners had such a gentle, calm demeanor that I felt an immediate sense of trust. One practitioner, Susan Mankowski, asked if we'd like to try a treatment. We gave a fervent "yes."

The process was simple: no waiting, a quick consent form and you can remain fully clothed. I just kicked off my shoes and lay down on the cushioned floor.

I should disclose that I love bodywork. I've tried almost every modality under the sun, so I was particularly curious about Breema. What followed was an almost entrancing experience—a series of holding patterns and movements that were fluid, rhythmic, and deeply relaxing. As a regular meditator, I'm used to quieting my mind, but receiving these stretches felt like a perfectly natural extension of that practice. We left feeling thrilled and wanting to know more.



Body work practice at the Breema Annex. |The Breema Center

History and Origins

The Breema Center has been a staple in Rockridge since 1980 (that's 46 years!). This modality of bodywork originated centuries ago in the Kurdish village of Breemava, passed down through generations of masters as a spiritual healing practice. Jon Schreiber, DC, a chiropractor originally from New York, co-founded the center in Rockridge after learning this modality in the late 1970s; he studied under the founder, Malouchek Mooshan, who first brought it to the U.S.

Schreiber told me that learning this tradition was a gift; it was a world away from his formal chiropractic training. He noted that Breema carries a certain "simplicity and honesty" that differentiates it from other Western modalities. In this practice, the practitioner and client are equals, and the body is treated as a single, whole unit. Breema was always passed down via oral tradition until Schreiber became the first to put it into writing, eventually authoring many books on the subject.

Today, the practice is guided by nine principles of harmony, including "No Extra Effort" and "Body Comfortable." While many people originally sought out Breema for physical issues like back pain, it has evolved into a holistic system for living more fully and naturally.

Breema, continued next page

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Exploring the Practice

To dive deeper, my husband and I signed up for a three-hour workshop on February 14, which was suggested by Mankowski. The timing was perfect—a Valentine's Day gift to us.

When we arrived at the Claremont location, the room was already buzzing. The space was filled with beautiful Kurdish rugs (a nod to Mooshan's influence), and three teachers—Schreiber, Roxanne Caswell, and Alexandria Johnson—sat at the front dressed in white. We formed a circle and shared our "wishes" for the day, which ranged from simple relaxation to a desire to be more present in our bodies.

Then came the hands-on part. The teachers demonstrated three different sequences or routines on volunteers, and then we—a group of about 50—paired up to try them ourselves. I'll admit, I was nervous! I'm a very visual, kinesthetic learner; if I don't do the movement at the same time as the teacher, I tend to forget it. Thankfully, the teachers were incredibly supportive and the atmosphere was so friendly that my beginner's nerves quickly settled.

The Practitioner's Secret

During the intro of the workshop, Schreiber mentioned something that caught me off guard: the practitioner's comfort is the priority. In most bodywork, the focus is entirely on the client. In Breema, while you certainly ensure the client is comfortable, the practitioner is the key. If the person giving the treatment isn't grounded and comfortable, the work won't flow. This reminds us that we can't take care of others unless we take care of ourselves.

I learned this the hard way while practicing. My head was full of noise: Am I doing this right? Am I going to hurt them? I forgot the next move! It was a humbling beginner's mind



Jon Schreiber, Director of the Breema Center and Breema Clinic | The Breema Center

moment. I eventually realized that while I am a world-class receiver of Breema, I am very much a novice at giving it.

Schreiber echoed this in our interview, noting that Breema is a path for self-awareness. It's a never-ending loop: as he teaches, he continues to learn about himself in relation to others.

Being Present

Some of you might wonder: What does it mean to be 'present' in your body? I'm right here, aren't I? Well, yes and no. Without getting too deep into the philosophy of Descartes and the Western mind-body split, Schreiber explains it like this: in Breema, being present means there is total harmony between your mind, your feelings, and your body. They work together.

"It's an experience, not an explanation," Schreiber said.

I found this to be true during my treatment—my mind finally went quiet and I was simply aware of the sensations of relaxation and the occasional spot of tightness.

Give it a Try

Breema is one of the most accessible bodywork styles I've encountered. You stay fully clothed, the practitioners are experts and there is a profound sense of peace that comes from simply being held in a supportive way. I think we could all use a bit of that right now.

If you aren't ready for a full session, they even offer self-Breema exercises you can do on your own. They have two locations nearby: the Breema Clinic on College Avenue and the Breema Center on Claremont Avenue.

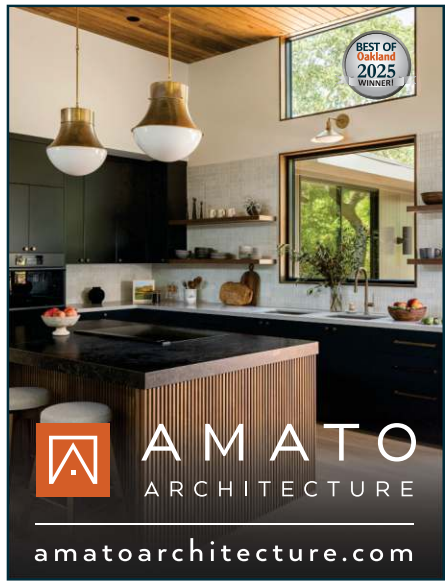
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For a Rockridge Luthier, the Process Is the Purpose

by Chris Ayan



Rockridge resident Paul Morgan uses everything from scrap wood pulled from truck beds to fabric from a baby store business to build guitars. | Chris Ayan

On a quiet Rockridge block, in a garage that can be converted back into a parking space in under ten minutes, 64-year-old luthier (a skilled craftsperson who builds, repairs, and restores stringed instruments) Paul Morgan builds guitars the long way.

Everything is from scratch.

Not in the romantic, marketing-copy sense of the phrase, but literally. Scrap wood pulled from truck beds. Construction-grade lumber most people would overlook. Fabric from a defunct baby store business, now glued, sanded, and lacquered into something resembling a late '60s fever dream. Each instrument carries the subtle imperfections of a human hand. "It looks like it's made by a person," he says approvingly.

That's the point.

He didn't set out to become a guitar maker, at least not in the way you would expect. He grew up in the U.K., picked up a guitar as a kid in the early '70s, like everyone else, chasing rock 'n' roll. There was an unfinished attempt to build one with his stepfather, a memory he admits might not even be real anymore. Then life happened. A move to San Francisco in 1980. Years as a bike messenger. A marriage. A baby store. Decades passing, as he puts it, "in the blink of an eye."

The guitars came later. Much later.

About 15 years ago, his son upgraded from a beat-up bass. Instead of tossing the old one, Morgan tore it apart. Stripped it down. Rebuilt it. Made it fretless. "That was so much fun," he recalls. "And it wasn't that hard."

So he made another. Then another.

Then the pandemic hit. The startup he worked for collapsed almost overnight. Faced with returning to work he hated, Morgan made a decision that feels increasingly rare. He opted out.

"I'm almost old enough for Social Security," he says. "I'm just going to do what I want to do for the rest of my life."

What he wants to do is this. Spend hours shaping wood, solving small problems, letting each guitar take on a life of its own. There is no strict blueprint. No fixed endpoint. Just a sequence of decisions. Cut, sand, adjust, rethink. "Think, think, think, try, try, try," he says.

Guitar, continued next page



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He could sell more of them. Probably should. People ask constantly. But that would mean marketing, websites, scaling. Instead, he sells a few here and there. Fifteen hundred dollars, maybe $2,000 if he is lucky. Prices that do not come close to covering the hundreds of hours in each build.

It does not matter.

"For me, it's mostly about filling my days and having a good time," he says.

There is something quietly radical in that. In a culture that insists every hobby become a side hustle, every passion monetized, his workshop resists the logic. The reward is not the sale. It is the making.

He does not even play much anymore. His hands will not allow it. But that does not seem to bother him. The connection to the instrument runs deeper than performance. "For some guys, it's cars. For some guys, it's whiskey," he says. "For me, it's guitars."



Paul Morgan at work in his garage studio. | Chris Ayan

On weekends, people stop by. Neighbors. Kids. Dog walkers. They ask questions, linger, watch. The garage door stays open.

Inside, another guitar is taking shape. No clear plan. No guaranteed outcome. Just wood, time, and attention.

The process, as it turns out, is enough. ●

Rockridge News Volunteer Opportunities

One of our most active volunteers must soon step down from her three jobs delivering The Rockridge News. Candy Vernetti has served her own block and blocks nearby for several years and regrets having to give up her routes. She says these volunteer jobs have been an important part of her fitness regime and she loves meeting her neighbors along the way. Thank you, Candy, and we wish you well.

Linda Zunas has delivered The Rockridge News to her block for over a decade, and she, too, must take a break. Lastly, we thank Wendy Cohen for her volunteer service to 62nd Street. Wendy must reluctantly give up her route. If you live on any of the blocks covered by the routes (or nearby) and would like to volunteer, Candy, Linda and Wendy will be very glad you can cover their routes.

- **Route 22B:** Delivers newsletters to odd numbers along Claremont between Forest and the freeway ramp to Highway 24
- **Route 12A:** On Broadway from Manila, odd numbers 5539-5437, to Ada, evens on Ada to Bryant, even numbers along Bryant (5408-5442) to Manila
- **Route 18C:** Odd and even sides of 5300 Boyd between Hudson and Clifton
- **Route 17D:** Delivers newsletters to both sides of 5200 Boyd between Clifton and Cavour.
- **Route 21J:** Both sides of 62nd Street between College and Hillegass.

To volunteer, call or email Susan at 510/547-3855 or smontauk@gmail.com. Let us know which route you are interested in or if you need more information. ●

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Mother's Day Celebrations and More this May in Rockridge

by Jody Colley,
Rockridge District Association

Rockridge is set to come alive this May with a diverse lineup of events, workshops, and community gatherings, offering residents and visitors alike a chance to celebrate creativity, cuisine, and connection, including a festive Mother's Day weekend.

Kicking off the month's offerings, a wellness workshop on Saturday, May 9, invites participants to **Breema** (6076 Claremont Ave.) to explore a holistic practice focused on presence through touch and movement. Held on Claremont Avenue, the session introduces attendees to the Nine Principles of Harmony, blending bodywork and self-care exercises designed to foster a sense of balance and well-being. Participants can choose between attending for a full or partial day.

That same weekend, Rockridge businesses are rolling out special promotions and events in anticipation of Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10. **elizabeth H/the art of hair design** (5431 College Ave.) will offer a 20% discount on services and retail products on May 9, while a nearby shoe boutique, **Sole Terra Shoes** (5933 College Ave.), will host trunk shows during the final two weekends of the month.

Book lovers can gather at the **Rockridge Library** (5366 College Ave.) on May 9 for a book club discussion of "Before We Were Yours" by Lisa Wingate.

Dining is also central to the celebrations. Popular plant-based restaurant,



The 2025 Indie Food Fest. | Market Hall

Millennium (5912 College Ave.), is preparing a special prix fixe Mother's Day brunch, and encouraging early reservations for what is expected to be a busy holiday.

Food enthusiasts will find plenty to savor at the third annual Indie Food Fest, hosted by **Market Hall** (5366 College Ave.) on May 9 from noon–3 p.m. The free event will showcase around 30 artisan producers offering samples of cheese, charcuterie, olive oil, chocolate, wine, and more. Attendees can also meet cookbook authors David Lebovitz and Asha Loupy, who will be signing copies of their latest works.

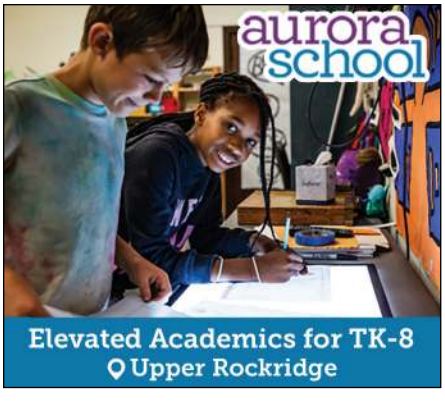
Beyond the holiday weekend, Rockridge continues to buzz with recurring social events. Mahjong nights have become a growing trend, with weekly gatherings on Fridays and Tuesdays at **United Dumplings** (6247 College Ave.) and **Belly** (5634 College Ave.). For those seeking lively entertainment, **The RIC Bar and Arcade** (5515 College Ave.) offers karaoke every weekend night, alongside Wednesday trivia nights that draw competitive teams from across the neighborhood.

Elevate your understanding of current affairs, arts, and culture at **Local Economy** (6028 College Ave.) with engaging talks and workshops throughout the month. On Saturday, May 9, Local Economy is hosting a Creative Show & Tell Happy Hour where you can share your creative passion projects or listen as others talk about theirs.

For home cooks looking to expand their skills, **Preserved** (5540 College Ave.) is offering hands-on culinary classes throughout May. Topics range from sourdough bread and kombucha to pasta-making, kimchi, and chocolate crafting, reflecting a growing interest in traditional food techniques and DIY kitchen projects.

Rounding out the month, the local gastropub **The Monk's Kettle** (5484 College Ave.) will host a four-course beer dinner on May 28 in partnership with Ghost Town Brewing, a celebrated Oakland brewery known for its award-winning craft beers. The ticketed event includes tax and gratuity.

You can find more details for each of these events, as well as dozens of others, at www.RockridgeDistrict.com/calendar. ●





Dogs (& Cats) of Rockridge

illustration by Laura Serra



Bucatini is a mischievous and courageous 3-year-old tuxedo tabby who was rescued from living in a dumpster in Hawaii. She has many nicknames (Tini, Tuca, Tuca Bonino, Bip-bip, Tinky) but she doesn't answer to any of them. She is an indoor cat but she's been known to escape onto the roof if given the opportunity. She loves running laps around her house and watching the neighborhood comings and goings from her basket perch.



Mishu (8), is a German Shepherd Mix who watches intently over the Shafter/Clifton intersection from his perch on his front porch. He was adopted from the Berkeley City Shelter. He has been a cuddler from the start. He's a real goofball and lover boy when you get to know him, but he comes on strong when on the leash. ●

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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The intersection of College Avenue, Claremont Avenue, 62nd Street, and Florio is challenging. There is often a substantial backup of traffic heading south on College, trying to turn right onto Claremont. Also, several people have written letters noting that the pedestrian crossing times are skimpy.

Adding a pedestrian scramble is an intriguing idea but would have to be examined closely to be sure it did not create a substantial delay to everyone using the intersection. What concerns me is the long distance between the Fremont Bank corner and the empty lot corner. The City of Oakland must account for the time pedestrians need to cover various distances, and that should be considered.

Bear in mind that scramble time would be in addition to the time needed for bus and car traffic, while the current method takes little to no additional time (pedestrians cross in parallel with street traffic). Pedestrians, cars, and buses would all experience the delay, whether or not anyone is actually traversing the long distance.

I'm particularly concerned about the 51 bus being delayed to BART. Every effort needs to be taken to keep public transport moving smoothly and the buses are already slowed because they are on the very section of College Avenue that backs up with cars making the right turn onto Claremont.

No easy answers to this one, that's for sure!

Roberta Heintz
Alcatraz Avenue

Ride 4A Reason Raises Over $211k for local schools

By Kirsten Dwyer

More than 400 cyclists took part in the 18th annual Ride 4A Reason on Saturday, April 25, raising over $211,000 to support public schools in Oakland and Alameda.

The ride began before sunrise at Oakland Tech, with staggered departures for riders on courses ranging from 45 to approximately 110 miles. Shorter-distance participants were transported by bus to their start points after check-in.

The ride concluded at the State Capitol in Sacramento, where cyclists were welcomed by cheering crowds, lunch, and a closing program recognizing the collective effort behind the event.

The event was supported by more than 30 local businesses and community partners. This year's ride will benefit 11 schools serving communities with significant unmet needs. Funds support programs including arts and enrichment activities, family engagement events, and college readiness efforts. ●







For Children (Red = May-only events)

Kamishibai Paper Theater: Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 p.m. Celebrate Bicycle Month, Older Americans Month, and Asian & Pacific Islanders Heritage Month combined, with Japanese folktales featuring elders, from the bicycle-based street performances of the 1930s-1950s.
Making Stories Club: Thursday, May 7, 3:30 p.m. Last of our monthly workshops to write, illustrate, and tell stories. Make books, zines, stories, comics, kamishibai, or plays alongside other youth writers and illustrators. For ages 8-12.
Storytime: Thursdays and Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.
Chess Club: Wednesdays, 4 p.m.
All ages & skill-levels welcome.
Read to a Dog: Thursdays, 4 p.m.
Practice reading aloud with Gladys the dog.

For Teens, ages 12 – 18

Ice Cream Party! Tuesday, May 12, 6:30 p.m. Celebrate Bicycle Month, Older Americans Month, & Asian & Pacific Islanders Heritage Month combined, with Japanese folktales featuring elders, from the bicycle-based street performances of the 1930s-1950s!
Engrave Your Own Keychains: Wednesday, May 27, 2–3 p.m. Try out our new handheld engravers and engrave a keychain to take home.
We are looking for teen volunteers: Orientations will take place in May and June. May 16, May 19, June 2, and June 6. Please see our website or contact us for more info.

For Adults

Adult Crafting Series: Tuesday, May 12, 6-7:30 p.m. Paint Your Pet! Please bring a close-up photo of your pet. Drop-ins welcome.
Meet the Author — Erica Pool, "The Judgment Trap: Why We Judge, How it Hurts Us, and How to Break Free:" Wednesday, May 20, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Erica Pool, who has a doctorate in psychology, is an adjunct professor at the Wright Institute in Berkeley and is a clinician and director of training at Peninsula Behavioral Health in Palo Alto. She specializes in anxiety disorders, trauma-related disorders, and eating disorders in adults and adolescents.
Ask Your Area Home Experts: Every 2nd Friday, noon–2 p.m. 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, 3:30–4:30 p.m. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. May's book is "Before We Were Yours," by Lisa Wingate.
California Writers' Club 5-Page Critique: Every 4th Saturday, 1–5 p.m. Bring 6–8 copies of your work, five pages long, double-spaced, Times New Roman font for review & critique in half-hour sessions.
Needlework Circle: every Thursday, 1–3 p.m. Bring yarn and fiber arts projects to Rockridge Library. Build community, share your passion, learn & have fun!
1-on-1 Technology Help: Every Saturday, 10 a.m.–noon and 1-3 p.m., Tuesdays 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Come with your devices & technology questions & our volunteer tech guru will help you get sorted. Signup recommended. ●

Rockridge Library Hours:

Holiday Closure: Memorial Day, Monday, May 25
Mon., Thurs., & Sat.: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Tues. & Weds.: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Fri.: 12 noon to 5:30 p.m.
See calendar for events: oaklandlibrary.org/events

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Deadline for MAY News: April 16, 2026 (available May 2)

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