

# Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll Returns August 23

The Rockridge district will be rockin’ on Saturday, August 23 with more than 20 street performances, 55 local artists, flea and artisan market, big sales and special offers, kids’ crafts, special menus and tastings, and a pup promenade.

Rockridge welcomes everyone to the Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll enjoy local wares, fine dining, savory sweets, and delicious drinks found only in this magical district. This is not a typical street festival. It’s a 1-mile leisurely stroll loaded with amazing sights, sounds, and experiences on every block. From Broadway to Alcatraz, College Avenue and its side streets will be full of creativity and family-friendly finds.

Rock-N-Stroll is a true showcase of one of Oakland’s most creative and vibrant neighborhoods. A vast majority of the musicians and artists participating in the event hail from Rockridge itself, either living or working in the district. These talented artists of all ages will be performing or tabling inside and outside of shops, each matched with a location that best compliments their style. On this one day, the entire district turns into a carefully-curated local arts gallery.

“As a proud Oakland resident 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 festival volunteer that who spearheads the outreach for artists.

Over 20 street performers will be spread out on nearly every other block of the district to entertain you during your stroll. Representing a range of musical styles from a solo cellist to a 5-piece Tom Petty tribute band, they provide the perfect ambiance for a day of exploring Rockridge. Because there are no stages or street closures, you will want to bring your own lawn chair if you want to park yourself near a band.

Stores, restaurants, salons, and other service providers will be offering special promotions for visitors. You can sample free tacos at Belly, grab a free book from the Rockridge Library, paint piggy banks at First Federal Savings & Loan, spin a prize wheel at Market Hall, get 50% off an item from Cole Hardware, along with other offers from over 40 businesses.

For more details and a schedule of activities, visit [Rockridge-District.com/rocknstroll](https://Rockridge-District.com/rocknstroll).

**Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll**  
Saturday, August 23 (11am-6pm)  
College Avenue  
Free & all ages



Danielle Helena is shown performing at the 2024 Rockridge Rock-N-Stroll.



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# Herricks release *Ripley’s Bird Buddies*, 4th book in children’s series

By Allyson Aleksey

Earlier this summer, longtime Piedmont residents Connie and Mark Herrick released *Ripley’s Bird Buddies*, the fourth installment of a self-published, illustrated children’s series based on the adventures of their late rescue cat Ripley.

The newly-published story became the Herricks’ “own little bird book,” Connie Herrick said, identifying 20 different species of birds that live in Piedmont.

It was a natural progression for Ripley’s story, she added, which began in 2021 with *Ripley’s World*, the Herricks’ first book of the series. Each book features titular character Ripley, a “tiny, feisty, funny, calico kitty with a big imagination,” and is bolstered by her many real-life friends in Piedmont including her German Shepherd “sisters” Kapo and Pele, raccoon twins, baby possums, and a squirrel that plays tag.

*Ripley’s Bird Buddies* celebrates the city’s diverse avian wildlife and was coincidentally released as Piedmont became a hotspot among avid birdwatchers and environmentalists.

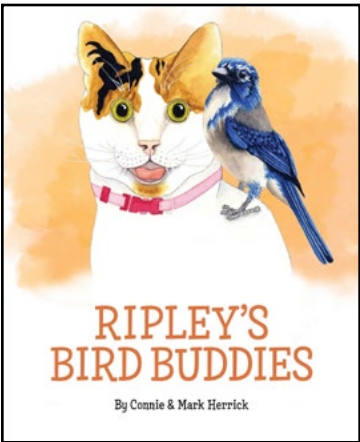
A pair of great horned owls took up residence in Dracena Park earlier this year, and more

recently, a family of bald eagles in a eucalyptus tree on the Piedmont-Oakland border has garnered a sizable, local following for marking the first time in recorded history that the species has successfully raised babies in the city, according to NBC Bay Area.

This renewed interest highlights the core message of *Ripley’s Bird Buddies*, which encourages young readers to “take a moment every day to enjoy and know the birds in your neighborhood.” It includes a lengthy list of bird species that are easily identifiable in Piedmont, the natural setting of all *Ripley’s* books, including the white-crowned sparrow, California scrub jay, and mourning dove.

The inspiration for *Ripley’s Bird Buddies* came organically, Connie explained, from observing birds that have gathered in the couple’s own backyard over the years. Mark Herrick, who illustrates the children’s books, was separately working on paintings of finches and jays that became regulars at their Greenbank house.

“I told Mark, these bird paintings that you’re doing are really nice. I think we ought to do a book,” Connie said. “I thought kids would really like to know about [the birds’] little personal-



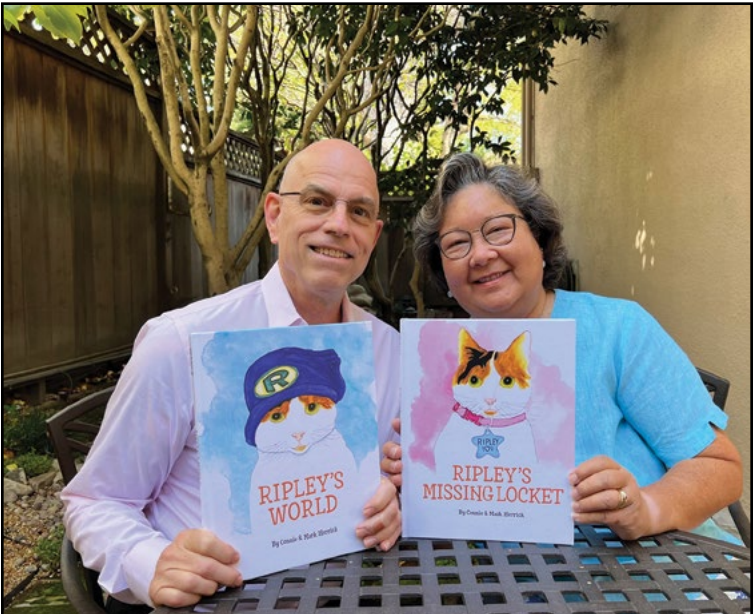
Cover of *Ripley’s Bird Buddies*

ities, because they’re very, very distinctive. The way they interact with each other, and their special little quirks, really identify them.”

Mark’s illustrations and Connie’s writing describe each species in kid-friendly detail, including their distinctive coloring, favorite garden snacks, and bird-song cadence.

“As we were going through these [illustrations] and creating personalities for the birds, we started to block out and storyboard,” Mark said. “It was very organic and unplanned, and we had a lot of fun with it.”

Connie said she started “gathering facts” about crows, juncos, hummingbirds and falcons for the story.



Connie and Mark Herrick



Mark Herrick at work illustrating *Ripley’s Missing Locket*, the couple’s second book, in watercolor.

“I started writing these little vignettes for each bird based on the facts but it was really boring. It was boring to me, and it was certainly going to be boring to the child, so I shifted my focus on their personalities and how they interact with each other,” she said.

“For example, the house finch is a bit of a bully,” she said with a laugh. “But the little lesser Goldfinch, the ones that are yellow, those poor things, they just get knocked off.”

New characters include Kan-gee, the American Crow, a “brave, bold, tricky trickster who loves to pull funny pranks,” and Kali, a Dark-eyed Junco, who is a “really good scratcher and digger and can find hidden treats like juicy, wild berries.” They are joined by a pair of “large and powerful” owls, an “aerobatic” Peregrine Falcon, a pair of “shy but friendly” mourning doves and more.

The Herricks said they hope *Ripley’s Bird Buddies* will inspire a new generation of birdwatchers, and admit that they weren’t invested in the hobby until receiving a gift from friend and former Piedmont mayor Patty White, who passed away in 2023.

Patty gave the Herricks a bird-feeder when they were mourning the passing of their dog.

“That was really the beginning of it all,” Mark said.

“We just got so super into it because we just lost Kapo, and were grieving and trying to figure out, do we get another dog or not? Then we set up the feeder, and the birds and squirrels really became like our outdoor pets,” he said.

“We just got so much pleasure, sitting there drinking our coffee and getting to know the personalities of these birds. It was a huge, huge positive force in our life.”

Copies of *Ripley’s Bird Buddies* and other books in the series are available online at [www.RipleyandFriendz.com](http://www.RipleyandFriendz.com). The Herrick’s fifth book, *Ripley’s Vet Visit*, will be published in 2026.