

PANIL Notes

Volume 32

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland CA 94620

April 2007

ASKED ON THE AVENUE

What new business would you like to see on Piedmont Ave.?



Jason Montano, owner, Montano Velo bicycle shop, 4566 Piedmont

An art gallery—especially something progressive. With CCA [California College of the Arts] so close to us, there are a lot of art students in the neighborhood. We should have a place for them to show their work.



Shamita Dhar, Richmond Blvd.

I'd love to see a café serving fusion-style cuisine where all the furnishings were imported and interesting—and for sale. So if you liked the plates your meal was served on, you could buy them.



Ivy Reyes, owner, Piedmont Cobbler, 4200 Piedmont

A hardware store! People come in all the time and ask whether there's one nearby. I always have to send them to Ace Hardware on Grand Ave.



Domic Vescio, 41st St.

A nice, small mom-and-pop record store that sells all kinds of music, from jazz to rock 'n' roll.



Patricia Dennis, Glen Ave.

A Bank of America branch here on the avenue would be very convenient!

All photos by Joyce Benna

Safety Last at 40th and Broadway?

By Joanne Parker

It's a typical weekday morning at the corner of 40th and Broadway. Dozens of Oakland Tech students are in mid-intersection, many of them having just been dropped off by a 51 or 57 AC Transit bus. Other bus passengers are crossing the street to catch a transfer bus. A stream of pedestrians and bicyclists is heading toward the MacArthur BART station, competing with busy auto and bus traffic. A few unhappy wheelchair riders are struggling to negotiate the corner's undersized curb cuts.

It's an accident scene waiting to happen. And it's going to get worse: Kaiser is expanding its medical facilities and building a new parking garage on Broadway, and new residential construction is bringing more people into the neighborhood. Right now, AC Transit estimates that 1,100 passengers board or exit a 51 or 57 bus each day. That number is almost certain to increase soon—and with it the likelihood of dangerous accidents.

What can be done? Here are some ideas that could greatly improve safety at this important intersection:

- Construct a "bulb-out"—an extension of the sidewalk into the street—on the northwest corner of 40th Street, where currently there are too many obstacles in the narrow sidewalk to allow for improvements. A bulb-out would provide space for an ADA-compliant curb cut. It would also prevent cars from making fast, tight turns around the corner.
- Re-pave Broadway between MacArthur and 51st Street to eliminate potholes and collapsed pavement and re-stripe the street to create two through lanes of auto travel (as it's configured from downtown through MacArthur).
- Construct a second bulb-out at 40th Street Way to compel drivers to adhere to the right-turn-only traffic law.

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April PANIL Meeting
Wednesday, April 11, 7:30 pm
Piedmont Gardens 11th Floor Sky Room
110 41st Street

Update on ACTransit,
Oakland Bike Plan, City CarShare
Your nominations for Jane Brunner's
Capital Improvement Projects

**Piedmont Avenue
Neighborhood
Improvement League
PO Box 20375
Oakland CA 94620
www.panil.org**

PANIL Notes is the monthly publication of the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL). Writing, editing and layout are all done by volunteers. Articles may be reprinted only with the permission of the editors. Circulation: 2,000 copies

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40th and Broadway

Continued from page 1

- Create left-turn-only lanes from Broadway onto 40th Street in both directions.
- Install a new traffic light with left-turn-only signals and pedestrian count-down indicators.
- Build bus shelters on 40th Street so riders of AC Transit's 57 line don't have to shelter beneath the gas station canopies when it rains.

Of course, improvements like these cost money, usually in the form of grant funds. To receive the funds, the city would have to single out this intersection from among its other projects and make it "the applicant."

In a small way, that process has already started. Oakland's Redevelopment Agency has programmed a small grant to provide new bus benches and transit information displays for the four bus stops.

But completing the other improvements will require funds from many sources, including state, regional, and federal agencies. Safe Routes to Schools, Safe Routes to Transit, Transportation for Livable Communities, and Lifeline Grants are some of the grant programs that fund pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and student-oriented projects. The funds are programmed at regular intervals; the next round is scheduled to be announced in late April.

Do you have opinions on this issue? Let the city's Public Works Department know. Send a brief email to the Transportation Services Division Manager Wladimir Wlassowsky at wwlasowsky@oaklandnet.com.

PANIL member Joanne Black lives near the 40th and Broadway intersection and works in the business of transportation funding.

OAKLAND DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

Brunner Seeks Input for Neighborhood Projects

By Valerie Winemiller

With the new budget cycle approaching, Councilmember Jane Brunner is asking neighbors to contribute suggestions and priorities for neighborhood projects to be funded either by the General Fund or with District 1 "PayGo" funds.

Jane Brunner's chief of staff, Justin Horner, will be at the April 11 PANIL meeting to collect your suggestions

A large majority of General Fund expenditures are restricted to police, fire, debt service and costs such as minimum support for libraries and youth programs mandated by state and local legislation. However, under a city law passed in recent years, each City Council District office is allocated funds to be spent at the discretion of the councilmember; these funds are referred to as "PayGo".

PayGo monies allow a councilmember to pay for a project that would otherwise have to wait a long time to reach the top of the priority list for the General Fund budget.

Past PayGo projects in the PANIL area have included a contribution towards the cost of painting Piedmont Avenue Elementary School, banners for Piedmont Avenue and a traffic barrier on Entrada Avenue.

Projects in other districts include tot lots, grants for land use planning studies, for park improvements, bathroom upgrades at a recreation center, new street benches on College Avenue, speed bumps, stop signs, traffic circles and barriers, as well as street trees.

Brunner's chief of staff, Justin Horner, will be at the April 11 PANIL meeting to ask for our ideas. If you are unable to attend, send your suggestions to info@panil.org, but be sure to send them before noon on April 11.

BRING TOOLS AND JOIN THE EVENT

PTA to Build Planter Boxes for Playground

By Pamela O'Tea

On Earth Day, April 22, Piedmont Ave. Elementary School will take the first steps in the creation of a new biology, nutrition and nature awareness curriculum with the construction of 10-12 large planter boxes as a permanent addition to the play yard.

Students' first-hand experiences growing vegetables and herbs will educate them about the path of food from seed to table, and the home-grown vegetables will eventually be incorporated into the school lunch program. The after-school program will continue the students' involvement after school hours by involving them in the watering, weeding and other garden maintenance.

Come and celebrate Earth Day us. Bring your tools, construction knowledge and community spirit for a day of camaraderie and good work for the school – from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday, April 22. A BBQ lunch will be provided. For more information, please contact Pam or Ed O'Tey at 510-436-2861 or piedmontavepta@yahoo.com.

Piedmont Avenue Merchants Support Local PTA Fundraiser

When the PTA at Piedmont Avenue Elementary decided to print custom discount cards for one of the spring fundraisers, members wanted to highlight as many local businesses as possible. The Piedmont Avenue merchants certainly did not disappoint. Local merchants featured on the card include **A Step Forwards Shoes and Accessories, BabyAlula, Crackerjacks, Dr. Comic & Mr. Games, J. Miller Florist, L'Amx Tea Bar, Little Shin Shin, Piedmont Copy, Piedmont Spa, Spectator Books, Sunny Piedmont Cleaners, and Surprise.**

"One of our goals this year is to build stronger relationships with the merchants on Piedmont Avenue. It is our hope that these cards will support us as well as the merchants. Participation is a great way to increase visibility to our staff and parents," said PTA President Pamela O'Tey.

DONATE AN ITEM TO BE AUCTIONED

Oakland Technical High School's Mini-Grant Program

By Rhita Williams

On April 27, Oakland Tech High School will host its annual silent auction, raising funds for the school's Mini-Grant Program – an innovative approach that provides financial assistance to educational experiences that build a sense of community and support the mission of the school.

Parents, staff, students and all of our neighbors are invited to contribute an item for the auction -- anything from lessons on the saxophone, gift baskets, certificates, backyard barbecues, a ride to the airport, computer help, beer tasting, tickets to an A's game, dance party, hand-knitted sweater, gardening, cabin for a weekend, or a tour of Oakland haunts.

Donations go to Zeva Williams 536-0792 or Renee Bundy 5629465.

This fun, and very worthwhile, event is Friday evening, April 27, from 6 to 9 pm in the Tech library, xxxx Broadway Avenue. Come one, come all.

The discount cards can be purchased for \$10 and are good through March 2008. They offer 10-20% savings for the above merchants as well as a few national chains. The profit from the cards is to be used for teachers' discretionary spending and to fund additional field trips for students throughout the school year.

The PTA is also hoping to sell cards to families in the neighborhood not directly connecting with the school. If you would like to purchase a card, please drop by the school office during the day, or contact Tiffany Cothran at 510-595-1893.

Experience Corps Comes to Piedmont Avenue Elementary
See full story on page 8.

Calendar

(for more neighborhood events go to www.panil.org/calendar)

PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month
7:30 to 9 pm
11th Floor Sky Room
Piedmont Gardens
110 41st Street

PANIL Steering Committee
email info@panil.org for time, date and place of monthly meeting

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month
Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 am
654.1930

Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour
2nd Saturday of the month
10 am, FREE

Events at the Chapel of the Chimes

4499 Piedmont Avenue
654.0123

Historical and Botanical Tour

3rd Saturday of the month
10 am to noon, FREE

Jazz at the Chimes

3rd Sunday of the month
\$20/children under 12 FREE
2 to 4 pm

Oakland Heritage Alliance Lecture Series

2nd Thursday of the monthly
7:30 pm
\$8 OHA members/\$10 non-members/\$5 low income
Further information:
www.oaklandheritage.org or
763.9218

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library
160 41st Street, 597.5011**Storytimes**

Toddlers
Wednesday, 10:15 am
Pre school
Wednesday, 11 am

Saturday Knitting Club
Every Saturday 3 to 4 pm

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, send e-mail to: info@panil.org

Piedmont Avenue Real Estate Corner

By Jeffrey Neidleman

Here we are in 2007 and many of you may be curious just how our Piedmont Avenue neighborhood home sales fared in 2006 versus 2005. Has all the media coverage about a change in real estate market—fueled by fluctuations in interest rates, gas and oil prices, concerns about conflicts overseas and our own domestic political landscape—changed anything? Do sales statistics from the multiple listing service (the MLS) indicate a change in buyer and seller behavior in our neighborhood in 2006? The table below illustrates sales data comparing 2006 versus 2005 for single family residences in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood:

These figures indicate that in 2006, the number of sales, average home size and list price was similar to that in 2005, but buyers on average paid 10.5% less over the asking price. What does this mean? Were buyers the lucky ones paying less in 2006? Did sellers lose equity in 2006 versus 2005? The answer may be yes to both questions. What these statistics also show is that sellers in 2006 were asking a price that was closer to what the realistic sales price would be given buyer average inter-

est.

Apparently, all the news and events of 2006, although disturbing, had minimal impact on Piedmont Avenue real estate sales. Sales volume was the same versus 2005, indicating buyers were still buying and sellers were still selling - and getting their asking price or a little more. Draw your own conclusions, but you can't ignore the fact that our neighborhood draws strong buyer interest, which helps maintain real estate values.

So far this year, open houses have been very busy, sales seem to be increasing, and multiple offers in the 3+ range are occurring more often than we saw in 2006 for some properties – although inventory is still low. Will this year be the same as 2006 or more of a seller's market? What do you think?

Single Family Residence Piedmont Avenue Sales Statistics	2006	2005
Number of Sales	38	36
Average Home Size	1371 sq ft	1487 sq ft
Average Days On Market (DOM)	24	18
Average Asking Price	\$671,114	\$673,608
Average Sales Price	\$681,443	\$753,859
Average % Over/Below Asking Price	~1.5% over	~12% over



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MULTI SPACE PARKING MACHINES

New Parking Meters

By Ronile Lahti

Parking meters that take credit cards are coming to Piedmont Avenue and to the parking lot at Key Route Plaza. The new meters, or machines, will be placed every five to six spaces. Spaces will be numbered, and users will enter the number into the machine and punch in the amount of time they want to pay for.

The machines will accept credit/debit cards, coins and the SMART card, once that card gets off the ground.

The machine will give every user a receipt – one copy goes in your window and the other goes with you so you know when your time is up

These machines have been tested on 11th and 12th Street in Oakland with very good results. They are used in Berkeley where they've improved parking revenue.

Look for the new machines near the end of June.

**Kaiser Construction Begins;
Truck Haul Routes Announced**

By Valerie Winemiller

Kaiser's Phase 1 demolition is complete and grading permits have been issued, marking the beginning of the intense construction activity. Excavation and shoring will occur from late March to June.

A total of 650 large dirt-hauling trucks will be plying local streets during excavation of the medical office site and parking garage on Broadway between MacArthur and 38th Street. The peak truck activity is expected in mid-April, with a maximum of 150 trucks in a day. While numbers look large, traffic surveys indicate that they are a small percentage of general traffic volume. They do, however, have the potential to bottleneck traffic if several trucks queue up waiting to enter the job site.

It could be up to 150 trucks a day — but that's a small percentage of the general traffic

Approved haul routes have trucks coming off the freeway at 52nd St. and Telegraph, proceeding south on Telegraph, left on 40th Street, and right on Broadway to 38th. Full trucks will exit the site onto westbound MacArthur, right on Telegraph, then left on 52nd onto the freeway.

Construction hours are from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday-Friday; Saturday work can occur only with advance written approval of the city and notification to immediate neighbors.

Complaints about pre-hours noise or construction parking in the neighborhood can be made to McCarthy Construction Site Supt. Russell Wissink at 594-1461 (office) or (cell) 415-716-6999. All other questions can be directed to Judy DeVries, the project's Public Affairs contact at Kaiser, 752-2004.

Correction: Crime Stats Revised

In the last issue of PANIL Notes, we stated that "Temescal crime dropped 14.4% and Rockridge crime was up 29%." Those statements were based on police statistics published in The Montclarion, January 26, 2007. Just as our newsletter was finished printing, Susan Montauk, of the Rockridge NCPC, discovered that there had been a police data entry error of 2 ½ years' duration. A number of incidents occurring in Temescal's beat 12X had been erroneously attributed to Rockridge's beat 12Y, skewing the statistics for both neighborhoods. Our graphs, therefore, are all based on suspect data. Rockridge's crime rate was up a more modest 6%, as nearly as could be calculated, says Montauk.

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If you want to support PANIL's efforts to keep the neighborhood informed and make our voices heard, become a member. Send \$15, with your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number, to PANIL, Box 20375, Oakland 94620.

JOIN THE EFFORT ON APRIL 21

Glen Echo Park – Earth Day, Every Day

By Arleen Feng

Instead of the usual second Saturday workday in April, the park group will participate in Oakland's annual Earth Day event on the third Saturday of April, April 21, with sign-in between 9 a.m. and noon in the main park on the north side of Monte Vista Avenue. Volunteers will get a T-shirt and join others in the usual ivy-busting and park clean-up, as well as planting in the growing coastal prairie restoration garden along Montell Street. Recruiting volunteers for on-going park support will step up now that Alameda County has ended its maintenance contract for the replanted area between Monte Vista and Montell Street. The larger trees and shrubs are well established and have grown phenomenally well in the three years since the bank restoration project was completed.



Same view 1 year later.

In addition to the monthly workdays, park and creek lovers can "adopt" specific tasks or sections of the park, with weeding being most important during the winter and spring while summer and fall requires only occasional raking or trash patrol. Other ways to participate include joining the park's moderated Yahoo e-group or making donations for growing or buying plants or for other projects. Checks over \$10 are tax-deductible if made out to Friends of Oakland Parks and Rec with the notation "Friends of Glen Echo/PANIL."

Several neighbors and friends gathered on January 21 for a potluck and discussion of park concerns. Paul Brekke-Miesner, our area Neighborhood Services coordinator from the Police Department, shared phone numbers and strategies for reporting undesirable activities by homeless individuals in an around the park. Removal of slats in neighboring fences and pruning of lower branches of willows has increased visibility and reduced the problems.

Other suggestions were made for additional safety signs at the Monte Vista Avenue pedestrian crosswalk and improved sidewalk lighting along Monte Vista where it passes by the park. The latter would require some committee work to develop one or more design concepts and discuss them with Public Works and the nearby blocks. The group will try to meet a few times a year to follow up on these ideas or others that spark people's interest.

Send e-mail to Arleen Feng, ayfeng@alum.mit.edu, or call 654-1930. For more information with some history and background, see the creek

pages at www.panil.com or join the egroup at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/glenechowalk>.



Park Group volunteer workers Bibi Chapman and Philip Pease & Elisabeth Soeurs

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Spring Fashion Forecast

By ShopGirl

The sun is shining, the tulips are blooming—time for a spring wardrobe makeover!

Stylish women from all over the East Bay head to **Abigail** for chic sportswear and prestige labels. Popular Cambio stretch twill jeans, known for their great fit, come in a new “Norah” silhouette (1 inch below the belly button), in taupe and dusty lilac (\$175), with matching dyed-to-match long-sleeve tees. Owner **Gail King** is carrying lots of skirts—“everything from long and floaty to short and tailored”—and can outfit you for a spring wedding or special event in a printed silk organza portrait-collar blouse (\$480) or a beautifully cut sleeveless navy dress with a back bow and keyhole (\$335). In the lingerie salon in back, you’ll find intimate apparel by Simone Perele, Fantasie, Wacoal, and Hanky Panky. Be sure to check the 50%-off rack, ask about the store’s frequent trunk shows, and visit Abigail’s new web site (see sidebar).

UGG sheepskin boots were a celebrity fave a couple of seasons ago. Now discover UGG for summer at **A Step Forward**. The store has crocheted UGG boots in four colors (\$104) as well as UGG espadrilles in jute/linen with an absorbent sheepskin forefoot. Other footwear best sellers include Reef flip-flops in twelve styles (\$21-\$40); Sanita clogs in pink, aqua, zebra, and leopard; comfy Söfft pumps (about \$89); and a huge selection of Danskø clogs and shoes. Finish off your look with an ergonomically designed microfiber Ameribag in sizes from mini (about \$16) to tote, and be sure to pick up a packable cotton sun hat in a bright or basic color (about \$27).

Nothing says spring like white eyelet. **Ecclesiastique** has some of the freshest eyelet looks around, including a fetching knee-length dress by Collective Clothing (\$95); wear it on its own or over jeans. Speaking of jeans, Ecclesiastique has an extensive selection, including styles for curvy bodies and the newest straight-leg silhouettes (“not

skinny,” emphasizes manager **Ree Reliford**) in dark washes. The store carries a big selection of fabulous belts (\$68 and up); the “Audrey Hepburn” (\$135) is a best seller.

“Casual chic to glam wear” is how owner **Dorothy Griffin** describes the selection at **Britches**. On the casual side, you’ll find rayon skirts and dresses by Sandy Starkman in primal prints (about \$149), as well as lots of separates in bright red. The glam side is well represented by rhinestone-embellished bikinis, mesh boy shorts, and fabulous corsets (about \$100) that can be worn as underwear or as sexy tops. Britches always carries an excellent selection of distinctive handbags, too, in leather, straw, and fabric.

The Bee’s Knees is just about the only place in the East Bay where you can find Re-Mix shoes, beautifully crafted replicas of authentic styles from the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s. The wedges, pumps, and lace-up shoes—some with comfortable crepe soles—come in splashy colors like green, aqua, red, and silver as well as basic brown and black. Prices hover around \$140. In the back of the store you’ll find cotton sundresses from Star of India, lightweight knits from Kersh—a lovely coral tunic is \$72—and tights and socks from Biella and E.G. Smith.

Abigail

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YOU CAN VOLUNTEER

Experience Corps Comes to Piedmont Avenue Elementary School

By Jessica Bullen

Doreen speaks daily of “her class,” radiating with love and pride, but Doreen is not a teacher, faculty member, or schoolyard coach. She is part of a team of *Experience Corps* volunteers, all of whom spend between 2 and 15 hours a week working with students individually or in small groups, leading an extra-curricular activity after school.

In just a year and a half, *Experience Corps* has filled three Oakland schools with caring older adult tutors and mentors and has now expanded to Piedmont Avenue Elementary. In the schools, *Experience Corps* provides on-site support and training. There are stipends to those willing to spend 15 hours a week in the class.

Experience Corps, a national service program for Americans over 55, is a project of Civic Ventures, which was founded in the late 1990s by social entrepreneurs John

Gardner and Marc Freedman to bring together older adults with a passion for service. Funding comes from a number of foundations and agencies with such familiar names as AARP, The Atlantic Philanthropies, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, AmeriCorps, HRC Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, U.S. Administration on Aging.

Now in 20 cities, *Experience Corps* focuses on serious social problems, beginning with literacy. Today more than 1,800 Corps members serve as tutors and mentors to children in urban public schools and after-school programs where they help teach children to read and develop the confidence and skills to succeed in school and in life.

Give it a try and you may find, like Ron in North Oakland, that “if these kids touch you, you can’t let ‘em go. I wouldn’t miss a day here.” Call Jessica Bullen for more information at **510-495-4966**, or email jbullen_ec@yahoo.com. Visit us online at www.experiencecorps.org.

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http://www.panil.org/special_events/tulip_fest_07.htm

