

# PANIL Notes

Volume 35

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

Apr 2010

CURBSIDE RECYCLING AND ZERO WASTE

## Trash Talk

By Bill Manley

As I was growing up in the idyllic Santa Clara Valley in the 50s, one of my favorite chores was to take the household trash to the large backyard behind our garage, throw it into an old 55 gallon drum, light it on fire and watch it burn. Times have changed. Gone are the backyard incinerators and the galvanized steel cans. Now we have three plastic carts, not to mention special containers for florescent bulbs, batteries, and "sharps". Not as much fun, but a lot better for the world around us. The local "garbage men," have been replaced by "waste management" corporations with sophisticated PR campaigns and high tech operations that go beyond dumping truckloads of trash into ditches. Trash collection is good business. In 2005 Waste Management International (WMI), Oakland's contracted trash collector and recycler, first topped 1 billion in net income and hasn't looked back since. As one might expect, the business is relatively recession-proof.

To get an update on what's new in trash collection, PANIL invited Robert Angell and Tom Ridder of Waste Management of Alameda County to be the featured speakers at the March 10 meeting. Admittedly, recycling is arguably a bigger part of WM operations than disposal. Mr. Angell explained that Waste Management handles

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A NORC FOR THE PANIL AREA

## North Oakland Village

By Judith Coates

Most of us want to stay in our own homes and neighborhoods as we age. Across the country, communities are developing creative ways of providing the supportive services that can enable us to remain active, engaged and independent for as long as possible. Whether called Senior Villages, Aging in Place, or Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC's), these organizations are part of a movement whose time has come, enabling seniors to live well and access the services they need in their own homes. North Oakland Village is bringing this vital service to the PANIL area and invites all interested persons to learn about the plans.

North Oakland Village will hold an event to explain the Village movement, to highlight the group's commitment to providing choices for aging in place, the plans for launching a supportive community in 2011 in the PANIL area, and how neighbors you can be involved.

The meeting will be on Thursday, May 13, 2010 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Fireside Room of Plymouth Church, 424 Monte Vista Ave. at Oakland Ave. Light refreshments will be served. For additional information, leave a message at 510-450-4805.

**PANIL Monthly Meeting: Wed., Apr 14 — 7:30 p.m.**

**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm**

**Sandra Sanders-West, our Neighborhood Services Coordinator**

**General Meeting — 8:00 pm**

**Zarina Ahmad, Principal of Piedmont Avenue Elementary School**

**Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street — 11th Floor Sky Room**

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**Trash Talk** (continued)

most of Alameda County, including all of Albany, Hayward and Oakland and some of Berkeley. The ultimate target of the company is "zero waste." This is a lofty goal, but Oaklanders have made great progress toward it. As awareness grows and recycling technologies improve, and as the cost of "virgin" resources increase, people and industries are making great strides. In 1990, the diversion from landfill (recycling) was estimated at only 11%. Curbside recycling began in 1993 and has increased each year since. The goal for 2010 is 75%.

Mr. Ridder gave the example of used cardboard, for which there was no market a year ago. Today it commands \$200 a ton. Until recently, only a few plastics could be recycled, but now even plastic bags are accepted. It is recommended that when you recycle the bags you should stuff them into a single plastic bag; individual loose bags tend to fly in the wind and get caught in the machinery.

Many in the audience were concerned about the "unofficial recyclers," people that come by late at night with a shopping carts and rummage through the gray bins. Police have warned that these individuals often use scavenging as a means of "casing" residences for burglary opportunities. Mr. Angell noted that WM works very closely with the police to identify suspicious behavior. To reduce visits by these unauthorized recyclers, he recommended putting the carts out early on the morning of the pickup, rather than on the preceding night. He also pointed out that switching to the carts from the open tubs we had a few years back has reduced the problem, as it is much more difficult to reach to the bottom of the large gray carts.

Several people complained about the haphazard way in which the carts were put back on the sidewalks after emptying. Valerie Winemiller recounted seeing an older sight-impaired neighbor coming down Monte Vista and nearly falling into oncoming traffic after colliding with a container carelessly placed

onto the sidewalk by the WM crew. Sanjiv Handa cited a problem with service of the dumpsters at the CVS on the 41<sup>st</sup>. They are not always put back inside their holding area, and are left to block the sidewalk. He also noted the trucks were picking up outside of the time service window for residential neighborhoods – subjecting residents to loud noises in the wee hours.

Mr. Angell said that drivers are given very clear instructions: carts are not to block the sidewalk and are to be turned to face away from the street after emptying. The audience members were instructed to call WM (613-8710) if they observed any objectionable practices by crews. WM holds daily "tailgaters" with crews before they are sent out, and these issues can be raised at those meetings. Drivers can be disciplined if complaints are received.

One woman from a larger apartment complex was concerned that there was no way for her to recycle, since the 30-unit building in which she lived had a single dumpster for everything. WM stated they were in negotiations currently with the city of Oakland for recycling at commercial residential buildings (greater than four units). But that probably won't be a reality until 2012.

A resident questioned how the costs could be reduced. Mr. Angell suggested a way to save money was to move to a smaller container; switching to a 20-gallon from the 35-gallon container can save about \$7 per month. But the questioner asked then asked, as people recycle more and more and put food wastes into the composting and green bins, was it not possible to have an option for bi-weekly pickup? Mr. Angell stated that he believed both California state and Oakland city laws mandate at least weekly pickup. The questioner suggested the law should be changed.

Coincidentally, at the March 16 City Council meeting, a woman from the

## Trash Talk (continued)

community protested the garbage rates, stating that since she only put her cans out once a month (because of her recycling practices) her assessment was unfair. She asked that the Council consider changing the contract to allow for once-a-month or semi-monthly pick-ups. After she spoke, councilwoman Nancy Nadel chimed in and said she was in favor of such a change because she, too, only had enough garbage for a once-a-month pick up! Jane Brunner asked staff to investigate. Readers who feel similarly should let the Councilmembers know.

To learn more :

- [www.stopwaste.org](http://www.stopwaste.org) – Alameda County Waste Management Authority
- [www.oaklandrecycles.com](http://www.oaklandrecycles.com) – City of Oakland Site
- And if you want to learn more about Waste Management from their official site, go to [www.wm.com](http://www.wm.com).

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## Tulip Festival Merchant Fair

Sunday, April 25, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
MUSIC, DANCE, FOOD, ARTISAN & MERCHANT WARES

### MERCHANT TULIP RAFFLE

to benefit the Piedmont Avenue Beautification Project  
and  
Piedmont Avenue Elementary School's Student Garden  
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## Calendar

For more neighborhood events go to [www.panil.org/calendar](http://www.panil.org/calendar).

### PANIL Meeting

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

### PANIL Steering Committee meets monthly

For the time, date and place of the meeting,  
email [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org)

### Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month  
Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 a.m.  
654-1930

### Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour  
2nd and 4th Saturdays  
10 a.m., FREE

### Oakland Heritage Alliance

Thursday, April 8, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Joint OHA/AIA lecture  
**Application of the State Historical Building Code: Case Studies**

Alan R. Dreyfuss & Una Gilmartin,  
Wiss, Janney, Elstner Assoc., Inc

#### Special time and place:

AIA East Bay Chapter Office  
1405 Clay Street

#### PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Call 510-464-3600 or go to [www.aiaeb.org/calendar.htm](http://www.aiaeb.org/calendar.htm)  
\$10.50 prepaid or \$20 at the door  
You may join at the event.

### Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597-5011

#### Storytimes

Toddlers  
Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.

Pre school  
Wednesday, 11 a.m.

**Saturday Knitting Club**  
Every Saturday 3 to 4 p.m.

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, send e-mail to:  
[contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org)

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League

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## Library Receives Lois Foster Award

In 1973, Lois Foster founded Archway School located at 250 41st Street. Last year, the Board of Trustees of Archway created the Lois Foster Award to honor those individuals or organizations that have exhibited dedicated service and support to the Archway School Community. For the second award, Archway has chosen the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library as the recipient.

When asked why our library was chosen, Melissa Castello Zippin, Lower School Head replied, "One neighborhood resource beloved by all of our students is the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library. The staff members not only assist the children in learning how to use the library, they support our teachers by offering book suggestions on a variety of topics, recommending new books and finding just the right book to introduce new topics or reinforce classroom efforts. This is, of course, what libraries do. But, they don't always do it with an emphasis on developing personal relationships with their customers. As one Archway Mom said, 'I was blown away when I took my son to the library on a Saturday and the librarian not only welcomed him by name but had some book suggestions that she knew he would enjoy.' For all of these reasons, Archway is very pleased to present the Lois Foster Award to the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library."

## Piedmont Avenue Branch Library Survey

Your opportunity to voice your opinion regarding the future of the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library following the sale of the property and the increase in rent that will begin Nov. 1.

Go to **PANIL.org** or **PiedmontAvenueMerchants.org** and click on SURVEY.

Paper copies of the survey will be available at the library and at other places on the Avenue. Check the kiosk at 41st and Piedmont Avenue for a list.

A community meeting to review the survey results and assess future plans for our branch will be held in late April or early May.

## COUNT ME IN for \$15.00/year

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