

PANIL Notes

Volume 32 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland CA 94620

Jan 2007

ASKED AT THE CEMETERY

Why do you enjoy Mountain View Cemetery?



Tom Bachand Piedmont Ave.

I've been walking here daily for ten years. I've seen red-tailed hawks, fox, coyote, egrets, heron, vultures, a family of deer, and—several months back—several wild turkeys.



Molly Walker Howe St.

At Easter, there are the beds of tulips, and on Memorial Day, there are observances for fallen soldiers. It is always an interesting walk, with the names of lots of famous occupants to discover along the way.



Cliff Moser Pleasant Valley Ave.

We walk our three dogs here all the time. We like to walk around the lakes—there are three of them—and sometimes I visit my mom's grave and leave her a chocolate bar.



Nancy Snedden Montgomery St.

It's quiet and scenic, and with all its peaks and valleys it provides a very good workout.



Alan Morgenstern Montell Ave.

The trees here are beautiful. My wife and I consider this the neighborhood park.

January PANIL Meeting

**Wed, January 10, 2007
7:30 pm**

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

Heaven on Wheels

By Nancy Friedman

"There's a motorcycle club up the street." In most communities, that sentence would be spoken—and greeted—with a shudder. But not here, where the Los Carnales-La Familia motorcycle clubs have been making friends since their founding in April 2001.

These guys defy the stereotype of biker outlaws. Quite the contrary, in fact. Los Carnales members all work for law-enforcement agencies, including the Oakland Police Department, the San Francisco Police Department, the Alameda County Sheriff's Department, the FBI, and Homeland Security. The sister club, La Familia ("the relatives"), is open to civilian friends and relatives. Together, the two clubs have about 45 members. To join the club, a prospective member must be sponsored and undergo a background and security check.

Stroll by the brick-red clubhouse at 4425 Piedmont Ave. and you're likely to see a club member watering the potted plants in the front yard or doing some touch-up painting. The club rents the building from Chapel of the Chimes and gets reduced rent in exchange for doing maintenance chores.

"This building was dilapidated when we took it over," says Los Carnales Chapter co-founder and past president Randy Rivera, whose sister-in-law is an Oakland cop. "We've done roofing, fencing, painting, gardening—all together, about \$8,000 to \$10,000 worth of work." Rivera, a Howe Street resident who's worked as the Chapel's superintendent for 29 years, adds that Mountain View Cemetery donated machinery and labor to aid the renovation. In exchange, the club lets cemetery employees use the building at no charge for their meetings.

Each year in the fall, the clubs host a block party open to the public. (The permit for the party is endorsed by Avenue merchants.) Members roll out their Harleys (or other American-made bikes), dish out food (donated by the Oakland Police Officers' Association), and boogie down to a rock band (this year's was Route 66). Proceeds from a raffle go to a local charity such as Children's Hospital.



Los Carnales member Randy Rivera on a friend's Harley-Davidson at the club's annual block party.

Photo by Joyce Benna.

Many evenings, says Rivera, police officers come to the club to do paperwork. "Neighbors can feel good about having a law-enforcement presence here at night," he adds. So next time you pass by, take a minute to say hello—and thanks. Better yet, come to a club meeting, held the first Friday of every month at 6 p.m. and open to all. For details, visit the club's web site at www.loscarnales-oakland.com.

AGENDA ITEMS

Officer Wendy Rae's report

Plans for Oakland under the new Dellums administration

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

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New Member of the PANIL Steering Committee

By Martin Huff

Moira Nichols, a longtime resident of the neighborhood, has been appointed to finish my term on the PANIL Steering Committee as Senior Liaison. For forty years, she and her late husband, Leonard, lived in Piedmont near Highland Avenue and shopped on Piedmont Avenue. She remembers the nursery that was on the site of Piedmont Gardens, and she recalls the controversy stirred by the prospect of bringing a high rise building into the area.

Valerie Winemiller traces the establishment of PANIL to that controversy, saying that neighbors were surprised by the City's approval of a high rise, since they had known nothing about the project. That experience provided the motivation to band together and form PANIL so they could have a coordinated voice in the zoning approval process.

Moira is originally from Louisiana where she received her education, including a degree in French Literature from Louisiana State University. She has lived in Piedmont Gardens since 1994 where she has served as chair of the Library for many years and still handles acquisitions. She is also in charge of the PG "Picking Garden".

Moira's husband was in the U. S. Foreign Service and served in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Moira and her husband were among those instrumental in getting the Port of Oakland to install a pole in Jack London Square to fly the United Nations flag. It was the first in the Bay Area. The inscription on the monument was written by Lawrence. Last January, bronze wolf prints for both Moira and Lawrence were dedicated at the annual Jack London Square ceremony.

Moira will be a knowledgeable addition to the PANIL Steering Committee. Other members include Joan Dark, Valerie Winemiller, William Manley and Margitta Gardner.

Thanks, Martin

PANIL extends warm thanks to Martin Huff as he leaves his post on the Steering Committee after years of committed service to the neighborhood and the neighbors.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Piedmont Avenue Babysitting Coop

This wonderful baby-sitting co-op is all thanks to PANIL Notes because it grew from a small note in the newsletter and is now 11 families strong. It was spearheaded by Tamar Cohen on Ramona (mom of Alden). All the families live in the PANIL area, within walking distance of each other, and have children whose ages are within 10 months of each other. We exchange babysitting for credits, so it is a wonderful way for us to do adult things without breaking the bank on paid babysitters. We also get together occasionally to socialize -- like at a recent Halloween party at our house. Hope your readers enjoy seeing all the cute little PANIL-members.

— Libby Schaaf
Ramona Avenue



FOUNDING MEMBER OF PANSA

Piedmont Avenue Loses a Good Neighbor

By Lesley Mandros Bell

Gary Abrams was a familiar face in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood, and his death leaves us with one less good neighbor. When his daughter Sarah started kindergarten, Gary became one of the founding members of PANSA, the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood School Association. Volunteering at the school, Gary was especially active in the Conflict Management program, which taught students to avoid fights and help their peers find non-aggressive solutions to school yard disagreements.

He also helped in planning and fundraising, and spent many hours volunteering on the yard and around the school.

Always concerned with the neighborhood, Gary also worked with PANIL and was especially interested in the parking issues faced by the neighbors.



Gary grew up in Piedmont and was an Avenue resident since 1990, moving to Montgomery Street with his wife Christine shortly before Sarah's birth. Many neighbors knew Gary as someone who was always ready to lend tools or advice, as long as both were accepted graciously. A wry sense of humor was one of Gary's hallmarks, and his observations were often both amusing as well as accurate. Gary's expertise in gardening was evident from the vegetables he shared with many, and his battles to keep the squirrels from eating his beloved avocados were legendary.

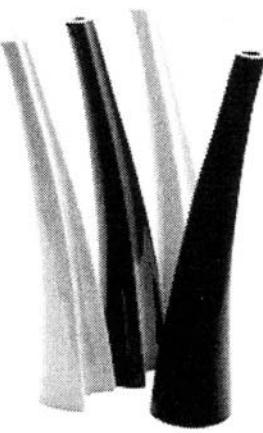
Gary was diagnosed in September with an advanced malignant brain tumor. He passed away at home in November. Friendly, irascible, always willing to help out in an emergency, and always concerned about his family and his neighborhood, Gary will be greatly missed.

Do You Have News to Share?

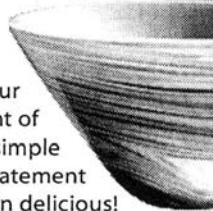
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Calendarwww.panil.org/calendar/**PANIL Meeting**

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

Steering Committee

1st Friday of the month, 7 pm
 5th Floor Lounge
 Piedmont Gardens
 110 41st Street

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

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

Chapel of the Chimes Tour

(Historical and Botanical)
 3rd Saturday of the month
 10 am to noon, FREE, 654.0123

Mt. View Cemetery Tour

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

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597.5011

Storytimes

Toddlers
 Every Wednesday, 10:30 am
 Preschool
 Every 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

North Oakland Growth Raises Concerns

By Valerie Winemiller

BROADWAY AND 42ND STREET

Condo Proposal Leads to Promise of Broader Planning

A 6-story, 19 unit condo development proposed for 4224 Broadway (see Nov/Dec issue of PANIL Notes) has generated enough controversy that Councilmember Jane Brunner has committed her office to organizing a public visioning process for future development on Broadway.

The controversy surrounding this project on Broadway is created because, like many areas of the city, there is a conflict between what is allowed under the long-standing zoning for the street and what is allowed by the city's land use policy document—the General Plan—adopted in 1998. In that document, designations were applied only with a broad brush, and more details were to be defined after studies of each neighborhood were done and a public process was carried out. No such process has yet taken place for Broadway, so there is no new zoning to guide the actions of the City now. There are interim zoning controls in place that allow significantly more density than the old zoning.

In response to complaints about the plans for 4224 Broadway, Councilmember Brunner held a public meeting at Oakland Tech on November 21. Over 75 neighbors from both sides of Broadway attended. The majority of comments raised concerns, saying the building was out of scale with the surrounding residential streets and its design did not respond to the styles or materials of area buildings. Terrace Street neighbors were distressed at the prospect of losing views.

A vocal minority supported the project. Most identified themselves as belonging to a new group called Urbanists for a Livable Temescal and Rockridge Area (ULTRA) that advocates high density to provide needed housing, improve public safety by increasing street activity, and take advantage of public transit on a major corridor.

As a result of the meeting input, staff has asked the developer to make some design changes, though these do not include reduction in height. A decision is likely by the end of December.



Joan Dark

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Development in North Oakland Expands

The controversy over 4224 Broadway is a microcosm of the explosive growth taking place throughout North Oakland. Councilmember Brunner devoted her December 2 Community Advisory Meeting to the issue. Over 135 people packed the Peralta School auditorium to hear presentations from developers with projects in the pipeline and to discuss the policy issues involved.

In opening remarks, Brunner announced that a stunning 1,385 condominium units are now under construction or in the application process in North Oakland alone! The BART Transit Village is slated to have 540 units; other projects are clustered along the corridors of Telegraph, Shattuck, Market, San Pablo and Broadway. Many of these streets have the same conflict between zoning and the General Plan designations described above. How these large buildings interface with abutting smaller homes is one of the most problematic aspects of the developments.

Temescal neighbors announced they had collected more than 1,000 signatures in support of the existing zoning plan, adopted in 1993, that permits growth on a more moderate scale in their area than what is allowed by the General Plan—adopted in 1999. Several neighbors told stories of rent increases, evictions and jacked up sales prices attributable to rising land values in expectation of higher density development. Residents expressed concern over the loss of historic businesses as well as buildings.

Brunner's office is already engaged in a planning process for Telegraph Avenue in the Temescal neighborhood like the one contemplated for Broadway. There have been presentations on development issues. Advocates for high density and neighbors seeking preservation of the character of the area have pleaded their views in a series of meetings. In response, Planning Director Claudia Cappio and staff are beginning to draft proposed zoning codes.



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Proposed Condo Conversion Rules Sent to Blue Ribbon Commission

A condo conversion proposal put forward to the Oakland City Council by Council members Desley Brooks, Ignacio De La Fuente, and Henry Chang is opposed by a long list of tenant and housing advocates. Under the proposal, 800 to 1,500 units per year throughout Oakland could be converted. Councilmember Jane Brunner advocated amendments that would provide better tenant protections and a city-wide distribution of conversions, saying that North Oakland, or any one area, should not be expected to absorb more than its fair share of the loss of rental housing.

The proposal includes financial assistance programs for current tenants to purchase the converted units, but City staff members have estimated that such programs would benefit only the top 10% of renters. The funds for affordable housing would not be enough to replace the housing lost, and they seem to some to be out of proportion to the landlords' profits per unit.

Housing in the PANIL area, like the rest of the city, is costing more and more. Many renters are struggling to afford housing, and many potential buyers, even with professional incomes, are unable to reach today's asking prices. About 60% of Oaklanders are renters.

The economic and racial diversity of the area is dependent on rentals, especially of older buildings, which tend to be less expensive. Now, the proposal under study by the Oakland City Council makes these same building targets of condo conversions.

Many PANIL neighbors received a colorful mailing urging them to contact Councilmember Brunner to support the "Affordable Homes for Oaklanders Plan" before the City Council. The mailing, which went to all council districts, was actually sponsored by the Better Housing Coalition, a group of developers, landlords and real estate agents.

Over 110 people had filled out speakers cards at the December 5 City Council meeting for what was to be the first public hearing before the full City Council on the issue. It was just before midnight when the item was called and Councilmember Brooks announced that she was withdrawing the proposal and recommending that it be sent to a special blue ribbon Commission for further consideration. This Commission was created in October to study Inclusionary Housing—a proposed requirement that an affordable housing component be included in developments over a certain number of units. The Commission has not yet been activated; appointments are to be made by the City Council and Oakland City Officials.

Many housing advocates expressed concerns about referring a second topic to the Commission because the expertise required for the two issues is quite different. A second topic would make a work load quite large for a volunteer commission and would likely delay the completion of their report. Inclusionary zoning has already been under consideration by City Council for over 18 months, and advocates had hoped that the issue would be resolved sooner than will be possible if the two issues are combined.



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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 by sending a minimum of \$15 with your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to

P. O. Box 20375
Oakland 94620

Note that contributions to PANIL are not tax deductible.

Fit for the New Year

By ShopGirl

In 2007, ShopGirl has resolved to be ShapeGirl. And she's going to make good on her New Year's resolution without leaving the neighborhood!

Since **Lisa Gartland** became the owner of **Inside Outside Fitness** last July, she's extended the gym's hours, installed a sprung wooden floor in the classroom, and added several Pilates and cardio salsa classes. Lisa says her focus is "being a community service and helping people feel good about themselves." Among the options: elliptical trainers, stair machines, a treadmill, free weights, circuit training, a rowing ergometer, and stationary bikes (power-cycling classes). Ask about the January "startup special," a six-week unlimited pass that includes one massage and one personal-training session. Childcare available.

The **Dailey Method** offers challenging one-hour classes that combine ballet barre work, core strengthening, yoga stretches, and light weights to give you "a very effective and time-efficient workout," says owner **Susan Willrich**. "You'll see results quickly!" With a maximum of 20 students per class, instructors are able to provide personal attention and make suggestions for adapting the exercises. For new clients, there's a \$100 unlimited one-month pass. Childcare available.

Too busy to exercise? Not at **FitLite**. A division of 24-Hour Fitness, FitLite provides a whole-body workout in just 35 minutes. Start with a seven-minute cardiovascular workout, then spend one minute at each circuit-training station. Amenities are basic: lockers, changing rooms, and toilets—but manager **Briana Stockton** notes that some members "work out in their street clothes and go right back to work!" Ask about special promotions.

Yoga devotees have plenty of choices. **Piedmont Yoga Studio**, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year, combines traditional and modern approaches in nearly 60 classes taught each week at four levels from "new beginners" to "continuing intermediates." Specialty classes include prenatal yoga, yoga for back care, restorative yoga, yoga for seniors, yoga "for well-rounded women," and yoga for people with disabilities.

New in the neighborhood is **Oakland Yoga Studio**, opened last fall by **Jin-Sung**, who used to be a senior teacher at Piedmont Yoga Studio. (Many residents will remember the space as the onetime home of Passion Flower and Hectic Eclectic.) The studio offers daily classes in the Iyengar and Anusara traditions. First-time students may take a free class 8 to 9:30 a.m. Fridays.

A few blocks down from Piedmont Avenue, **Ridgeway Yoga** offers yoga classes three days a week in a charming one-story home that once housed a ballet school. Owner and instructor (and neighborhood resident) **Ellen Webb** combines elements of dance, Pilates, and tai chi in her classes, which are organized in eight-week series. "A lot of my students live in the neighborhood," Ellen says. "A nice community has grown out of the classes!"

Inside Outside Fitness

4444 Piedmont Ave.
655-8308
www.insideoutsidefitness.com

The Dailey Method

4409 Piedmont Ave.
985-1955
www.thedaileymethod.com

Piedmont Yoga Studio

3966 Piedmont Ave.
652-3336
www.piedmontyoga.com

Ridgeway Yoga

250 Ridgeway Ave.
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www.ellenwebbstudio.com

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Emergencies — Let's Get Ready

Preparedness is key. Oakland provides free training — in your home — for neighborhood groups of 10 or more persons. On October 15, fourteen Gilbert Street and Ridgeway Avenue neighbors took the CORE I training offered the Oakland Fire Department. To host a training in your home or a location in your area, contact the Core Coordinator at 510-238-6351 or see www.Oaklandnet.com/fire/core/training.html. Use PANIL meetings or the PANIL website to find neighbors who want to join together to reach the minimum of 10 persons for a session.

As groups complete the training,
we'll mark the area on the map.

Helpful Website

www.ABAG.ca.gov/bayarea/eqmaps/eqmaps.html

ABAG, the Association of Bay Area Governments, is the regional planning and services agency for the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties.



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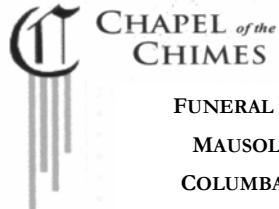
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Officer Wendy Rae Leaves Piedmont Avenue After 13 Years

Thank you for all the support you have given me throughout the years that I have been your Walking Officer. I have many fond memories that lie on the trail I walked day in and day out.

We know that the job of policing demands patience, tolerance, and courage, yet I believe that it takes even more. It takes people skills and openness. My phone rings day, night, weekends, holidays. Crime does not take a day off!!! I have always said that you are my eyes and ears and that I could never do the job alone!! This position has taught me the importance of building trust with the community by creating a bond between citizens and police. Working together, it does work!

Thank you to everyone I have met along my path. I will always remember you and will never be too far away. Special thanks to PANIL and PAMA for your support.

**Stay safe and God bless,
Officer Wendy Rae**



Oakland Police Beat Officer Wendy Rae will leave the Piedmont Avenue patrol in January and transferring to patrol car duty. Wendy has been the humanizing face of the Oakland Police Department for PANIL neighbors. Many who hesitated to call an anonymous dispatcher for a chronic problem have found that a conversation with Wendy resolved the issue. Her encyclopedic memory for faces meant that she could identify trouble makers from a mere description of a problem occurring when she was off duty. In her words, she knows "the good, the bad, and the ugly" on the Avenue.

When asked what she would want to say about her time in this neighborhood, she said it was the connections and relationships she built with the people and especially about the children she has seen grow from babies to teenagers and the respect they have given her. She believes the early impressions are important and lasting ones.

"All the connections with all different kinds of people mean that I have eyes and ears to help do a better overall job of serving the public," Rae says. That's what she will emphasize to the officer who will take her position here on the Avenue. "It's the people in the neighborhood with their hearts in it that make the policing work. Your community embraced the police department and because of the trust we were able to build up over time."

Compassionate but no-nonsense in manner, Officer Rae is a designated hostage negotiator. In December she taught a class at the police academy in using words rather than force to subdue suspects.

She has been a familiar face along the Avenue and an important resource for neighborhood residents since 1993, with the exception of a brief interruption in 1999. We all wish Officer Rae well in her new assignment.