

PANIL Notes

Volume 32 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620 July/August 2007

ASKED ON THE AVENUE

Your Favorite East Bay Walk?



Marc Winokur
Montgomery St.

I walk up John Street to Echo to Linda to Lake to Kingston and then back. There's a lot of up-and-down, which gives your heart a workout. This neighborhood is one of the best walking areas anywhere!



Irene Eberhard
Harrison St.

I'm 91, so I don't go far, but I do love to walk. Yesterday I walked from the Discovery Shop, where I volunteer, the Bank of America on Pleasant Valley and Broadway. I also walk up Monte Vista or Linda.



George Horton
Montell St.

In the EBMUD land adjacent to Las Trampas Regional Park, in Contra Costa County, you can hike for hours and not see any other people. You need a special permit, but it's worth it!



Valerie Winemiller
Monte Vista Ave.

The Oakland Estuary gives you a view of the past, the present, and the future. I like to walk along the water and experience the interface of history and nature.



Nancy Bylin
Montgomery St.

I have a bearded collie that loves to socialize, so we go to the dog park near Piedmont High School once or twice a week. I can take her off the leash and let her run.



Even Rotman
Howe St.

Mountain View Cemetery in the afternoon is my favorite place. It's peaceful, quiet, and pretty.

All photos by Joyce Benna

42 CONDOS, SIX OR SEVEN STORIES HIGH

Condos Planned For 412 Monte Vista

By Valerie Winemiller

A proposal to construct 42 market-rate condos at 412 Monte Vista was unveiled at a neighborhood meeting on June 27. Nearly fifty neighbors squeezed into the central hall of the historic mansion for the presentation, and many expressed serious concerns about the scale of the project and its impact on the grand Walter Mathers-designed house. To see architect's drawings, click on "412 Monte Vista Blueprints" at PANIL website (www.panil.org) See the building's history in the March 2007 issue of PANIL Notes at <http://panil.org/newsletter/>.

According to the plans presented, the historic house would be lifted with a new story below, moved to the front corner of the lot and divided into eight condos. The remainder of the lot would be filled with 34 condos of varying sizes in six and seven stories of new construction. A courtyard would separate the two structures and parking would be underground. The existing oak at the back of the lot by the church's driveway would be saved; other existing trees would be removed and replacement landscaping would be much smaller scale. Architects Kirk Peterson & Associates are known for designs that reference historic architecture.

Concerns raised included density, height, traffic and parking impacts, loss of light and air to nearby residences, loss of existing trees, and impacts on the historic and architectural value of the existing mansion.

Continued on page 7

August PANIL Meeting

Wednesday, August 8, 7:30 p.m.

7:30—8:00 p.m.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

8:00—9:00 p.m.

Development on Upper Broadway

Keira Williams

Retail Specialist with Oakland's Community and Economic Development Agency

Consultant's analysis of retail, city's development plans, and a survey for your opinions!

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

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

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East Bay Monthly Pays Respects to Mountain View Cemetery

East Bay Monthly "architecture" critic Lauri Puchall examines the past, present, and disputed future of Mountain View Cemetery in the magazine's July issue.

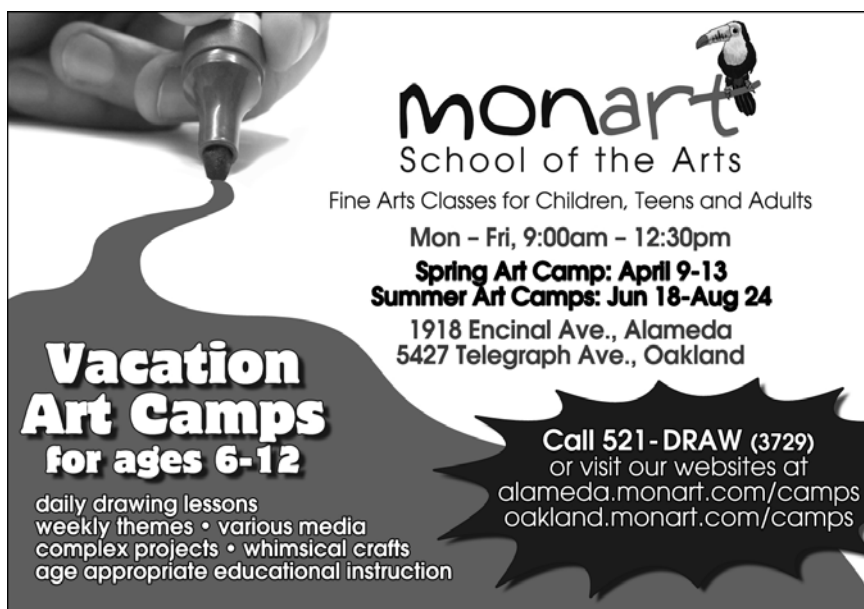
The cemetery was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead—best known for designing New York's Central Park—and dedicated in 1865. Its trustees are currently considering a master plan for the next century.

The article mentions, but does not explain, PANIL's 2003 successful lawsuit against Mountain View and the city over a proposal for a new mausoleum. It omits the co-plaintiff, the California Preservation Foundation. Read the article online at www.themonthly.com/architecture-07-07.

Mindfulness Classes Featured in NY Times

A pilot program in stress reduction for students at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School was the subject of a news article in the June 16 issue of *The New York Times*. During the five-week program, students learned to focus their breathing and concentrate on a single object. Several children quoted in the article said the techniques helped them feel calmer.

Principal Angela Haick said she was inspired to introduce the class after seeing the methods at work in a local middle school. The program was funded by Park Day School, also in the PANIL neighborhood. To read the article on the PANIL website, go to <http://panil.org/misc>.



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StoryCorps Collects Stories of African-Americans

On Wednesdays between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15, you might see an Airstream trailer parked in front of Chapel of the Chimes. Inside it will be the soundproof recording studio of StoryCorps, a national project to collect stories for the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress. The current tour is a year-long focus on stories of African-Americans, stopping in 11 cities around the country. In Oakland, Chapel of the Chimes is the host.

Each recording is a 40-minute conversation between two people. A trained facilitator will help them make the experience comfortable and meaningful. Participants receive a CD of the recording. With their permission, a copy will go to the Library of Congress and to the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution.

StoryCorps segments air on National Public Radio, so many listeners may be familiar with the concept and with the interesting and sometimes touching results.

To participate, you must make an appointment. Call 510/228-3207 or send e-mail to A. Rodman arodman@lifemarkgroup.com.

IL PIEMONTE

New Condominium Nearing Completion

Il Piemonte, at Piedmont Avenue and Pleasant Valley, has launched a website <http://www.ilpiemonte.com/> with information about the building and floor plans of different units, but no prices. Units range from 606 to 1,315 sq. feet.

What will fill the two street-level commercial spaces is not announced. Zoning for Piedmont Avenue encourages retail uses and requires a conditional use permit (with public notice and time for comment) for cafes or restaurants because those result in more parking needs, increased garbage (and storage for garbage,) and potential noise.



Drawing from architectural offices of Kirk Peterson



Piedmont Ave at Pleasant Valley, August 2007. Construction is due to be completed in September. Photo by Joyce Benna

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 contact@panil.orgfortime,
date & 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

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library
160 41st Street, 597.5011

Author Night
Monday, Aug. 27
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
with Hailey Lind
author of
Brush with Death
an art love's mystery set in the Chapel of the Chimes Columbarium
(Book 3 in the series)


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:
contact@panil.org

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COMPLETE END-OF-LIFE PLANNING, SERVICES, SUPPORT

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.

Oakland Technical High School Honored for Historical Preservation

By Paul Brekke-Miesner

Oakland Technical High School has stood sentinel on Broadway, between 42nd and 45th streets in north Oakland, since 1914. As the neighborhood around it has changed, in some ways dramatically, the look of the school has changed very little as four generations have passed through the school's hallways.



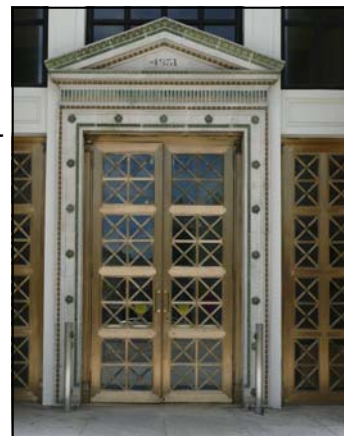
In February, the latest modernization was completed by the school district (modernization is a state government term meaning capital improvements). The modernization project started in 2005 with a new roof, and over the last two years has included \$22 million in repairs and improvements:

- a wheelchair ramp at the front of the school
- a new wheel chair accessible elevator in the front hallway
- new science labs
- new wiring for computers
- new alarm and sprinkler systems
- new lighting for classrooms, offices, library and girls' gym
- new ceiling and carpet for the library
- a wheelchair accessible bathroom in the auditorium
- new paint inside the school
- the brass sheen restored to the front doors
- a new configuration to the back doors and surrounding windows at the back of the main building to a design that approximates the school's original design
- a new historically accurate paint job to the exterior.

Original plans called for replacing the building's wooden windows with aluminum ones. Parent advocates, supported by the class of 1985, protested, saying that the windows were made of first-growth redwood and were mostly in good shape. Furthermore, they maintained that the change would be out of line with the building's status as a local historical landmark. Yielding to pressure, the district agreed to strip, sand, and paint the existing windows.

Parents and school staff became very involved in the Tech Modernization Committee over the two-plus years of the project to make sure that the historical integrity of the building was preserved. They had seen changes, described as "improvements" over the years, that had not been kind to the historical integrity of the building. In 1959, Tech's original two-story auditorium was rebuilt into a one-story, modern-

looking library. During the work, a 60-by-9-foot mural by famous artist Maynard Dixon disappeared and has never been found. Also, when Tech was last modernized in the late 1970s, a great deal of marble and tongue and groove wainscoting was removed from the building. This time, parents and staff worked hard to prevent similar erosion of history and to preserve the existing integrity of the building. For example, a great deal of research was done in an attempt to figure out what the original colors of the high school were when it was built in 1914. Photographs of that era were in black and white so the committee had to look for answers elsewhere. Old chips of paint from existing windows were analyzed, and a good deal of research went into looking at the color schemes of other buildings of that era, such as Oakland's City Hall. The only remaining issue to be addressed is the painting of the old boys' gym that was not included in the modernization project.



For his work as the lead Tech parent advocate on the Modernization Committee, Dan Brekke was recently honored with a Partners In Preservation Award by the Oakland Heritage Alliance. Another Tech parent who helped significantly at key times was Naomi Schiff, former president of the Oakland Heritage Alliance. Her knowledge of historic preservation was crucial during the project.

Now, Tech looks very much like it did in 1914. Historical buildings that endure the ages provide a sense of place for a community. The restoration of this beautiful building, and Studio One next door to the school, will provide North Oakland residents with not only a piece of history but places that continue to serve the people of Oakland.

For more information on Tech High, check the school's website at www.oaktech.com

Photos by Joyce Benna

Paul Brekke-Miesner is an Oakland Tech parent, a member of the Tech Modernization Committee, the brother-in-law of Dan Brekke, and an Oakland Police Department neighborhood services coordinator.

The school will continue to produce top-notch students, entertainers, and athletes. This year's crop of seniors includes students who have been accepted by M.I.T., U.C.L.A., U.C. Berkeley, New York University, Reed, Spellman, Michigan, Loyola-Marymount, Brown, Occidental, Middlebury, Bard, Rutgers, Chicago, Columbia, and Hampton.

AUG. 11 ANNUAL GARAGE SALE

John Street Jumble

Clean your attic; sort through your garage. The John Street Jumble is on its way!

As many in the neighborhood know, John Street area residents participate in a colorful yearly ritual that winds down streets and around corners, drawing curious outsiders as well as local participants. August 11 marks the 12th year when neighbors clean out their attics, then browse through a multi-family, multi-street garage sale extravaganza. Started by two John Street neighbors, the sale has become a ritual for many who live on John, Howe, Mather, Montgomery, Gilbert, View, and Terrace Streets. We usually have at least 20 families participating; our top year saw 65!

All are invited to join us, either to sell or to enjoy. There are always antiques, furniture, clothing, jewelry, and books. Rumor had it last year that one lucky buyer found a Rembrandt engraving from someone's grandmother's attic for \$65. Enterprising neighborhood bakers frequently offer delicious refreshments for reasonable rates to help keep shoppers' energy up.

The sale will be Saturday, Aug. 11, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you want to participate and you live outside the usual Jumble boundaries, we will happily find you a place to set up your wares, provided that you pack up and take home the unsold items at the end of the day. Each seller gives \$2 toward the costs of flyers and ads.

Questions? Contact Lesley Mandros Bell at (510) 654-1386 any day before 7 p.m.

East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse

The new East Bay Depot location (4695 Telegraph Ave.) opened on May 19. The new location is currently taking donations under very **restricted guidelines**. While the new store is being set-up and organized (throughout the summer), Depot staff can handle only limited items. They ask donors to **call ahead for pre-approval**. Call (510) 547-6470.

NEW DONATION TIMES: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thursday through Sunday (no donations Monday through Wednesday).

NEW DONATION LOCATION: Donations should be taken to the **loading dock entrance in the rear of the store**, on Shattuck Ave. between 47th and 46th streets. If the gate and doors are closed, inform the clerk at the register or call (510) 547-6470.

For other information, see the Depot website: www.east-bay-depot.org.

National Night Out Tuesday, Aug. 7

Several locations in the PANIL area celebrate National Night Out with community gatherings—usually in the street—to greet neighbors, foster community and build the foundation for safer streets. Coordinators have been Michael Lydon, Rita Kresha, Phil Laing, Margitta Gardner, Pam Feack, Elizabeth Soeurs, and Lesley Mandros Bell.



2006 National Night Out, Glen, Entrada and Arroyuelo

Let us know if you are planning a night out; PANIL photographers will come by to snap a picture. Call Gail Jara (510) 547-6989 and leave a message with time and place and the name of the coordinator.



2006 National Night Out, Kempton Avenue. Photo by Phil Laing

For other photos, see www.PANIL.org

SMALL STEPS FOR A GREENER PLANET

Recycle Household Batteries at Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

Recycling of household batteries is available at 75 Oakland city buildings—including all public libraries—during normal operating hours. Look for the **Battery Recycler**, a container that is shaped like a battery.

State law prohibits disposal of batteries as trash.





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What's New?

SHOPGIRL

This month we catch up with some new businesses on the avenue—including one that's intentionally temporary.

Last seen in our neighborhood in December, the **Oaklandish** bus is back among us, selling distinctive Oakland-themed tees and sweatshirts for a good cause: supporting Oakland artists. Stop by any Sunday afternoon through Labor Day and browse the racks for infant onesies and kids' tees (\$18 each), short-sleeve adult tees (men's S-XXXL and women's S-XL, \$24), men's baseball tees (\$28), embroidered long-sleeve tees (\$35), and hooded sweatshirts in men's and women's styles (\$45). With few exceptions, clothing is 100% cotton and made in the U.S. Also for sale at the bus: a one-hour DVD of "found footage" about our town, including silent films from the 1920s and 1930s and newsreels of the 1950s. On Saturdays, the bus sets up shop at the Grand Lake Farmers' Market.

Small Thyme Café and Catering, open since July 6, offers indoor and outdoor tables and bar seating and an eclectic menu that includes New Orleans-style crab cakes (\$8.50), Cobb and tuna salads (\$10 each for entrée size), sandwiches, panini, an Angus teriyaki burger, and classic entrées such as penne with salmon, chicken breast piccata, and roasted garlic and herb center-cut pork chop (\$13-\$17.95). There a selection of beers and California and Washington State wines, as well a full espresso bar. "We're still new, so we want to know what people want to eat," says manager **Daneen Allen**. "Chances are, if you want it, we can make it!" The restaurant also offers catering for groups as large as 500, and has a neighborhood special: free meal delivery within a two-block radius.

Sure, you can pick up a copy of *People* or *Business Week* at **Issues**, the two-month-old newsstand just off Piedmont Ave. But it's also the destination of choice if your must-read list includes *Jeune Afrique*, *American Cheerleader*, *Kyoto Journal*, or *Redneck World*. "We want to be comprehensive," say owners

Noella Teele and Joe Colley, and that means stocking what you won't find at the supermarket checkout: an Arabic-language fashion magazine, *Frankfurter Allegemeine*, and *Blade—The World's #1 Knife Publication*, among countless other titles. The shop also carries vintage LPs and a compact turntable on which to play them (\$115), as well as rare books from Joe's collection and Melamine plates in retro-hip designs (\$44/set of 4). Sign up for email notices of store events like the recent one-month anniversary party.

After two years on Lakeshore Avenue, where their shop was called Prime Jewelry, husband-and-wife jewelry designers **Steve Robinson and Yan Liu** opened **Lireille** in April as an elegant showcase for their own work and the designs of other regionally and nationally known jewelry makers. Steve specializes in chunky pieces that blend clear semiprecious gems and sterling silver (about \$200-\$400); Yan's dramatic jade-and-serpentine pendants, on silk cords, are about \$60 each. Also on display: designs by Barbara Brown of Alameda, Rita Chung of San Francisco, and Quique Diaz from Guatemala. The gallery also features the work of fine artists: through Sept. 25, view Guatemalan-born Dionisio Ceballos's mixed-media paintings on wood panels. Open till 9 p.m. the first Friday of each month as part of Oakland Art Murmur.

Owner **Gail Senoglu** sees **Paws on Piedmont** as more than a place to buy dog and cat supplies: "It's really a neighborhood store that creates community," she says. Open since Jan. 29, the store stocks "healthier, cleaner" pet food, with an emphasis on organic, hormone-free, and antibiotic-free brands such as Ennova, Wellness, Wysong, Prairie, Tiki Cat, Merrick, and Royal Canin. There's even a freezer stocked with raw venison, rabbit, and duck meat. Eighty percent of the merchandise—which includes toys, treats, beds, and pet clothing—was requested by customers, says Gail. Stop by with your animal on Thursdays between 5 and 7 p.m. for "happy hour"—treats for pets, drinks for humans. The store also offers dog-walking and vacation-visit services, and once a month plays host to Hopalong Animal Rescue's cat-adoption clinic.

Oaklandish

Pleasant Valley Road at Piedmont Ave., in front of Harmony Road Music School
Sundays, noon to 6 p.m.,
through Labor Day
oaklandish.org

Small Thyme Café and Catering

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smallthymecatering.com

Issues

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652-5700
issueshop.com

Lireille

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lireille.com

Paws on Piedmont

3974 Piedmont Ave.
601-PAWS
pawsonpiedmont.com

Correction

In our June review of the Food Mil Farm'acy, we incorrectly reported a partnership with Kaiser Permanente. Farm'acy is no longer in such a partnership. For information, call (510) 595-3636.

412 Monte Vista

Continued from page 1

Zoning surprises neighbors

As surrounding buildings are four stories or fewer, many neighbors were shocked at the seven-story height of the new construction. Zoning Case Planner Peterson Vollman explained that there is no height limit in the R-70 zone. Buildings can rise 40 feet, then continue two feet taller for every foot they are set back from the minimum yard dimensions. It could be possible to attain a 100-foot (10-story) height. The General Plan (the city's land use policy document) proposes even higher density for the block, he said. After debate from the audience, Vollman agreed to research the boundaries of where higher density is allowed. Normal buffering regulations for high density development next to low density will not be applied, Vollman stated, as the adjacent single family houses are in Piedmont, not Oakland.



View of proposed development from Monte Vista at Harrison. The historic mansion is lifted and moved to the lot's front corner.

The property has been owned by Plymouth Church since 1957. While neighbors raised concerns of the project's impacts, church minister Lois Mueller stated that the 65-member congregation no longer wanted to be landlords there, and needed the sale revenue to keep the church open. Other purchasers offered more but wanted to raze the mansion, she said; the church wanted to see the mansion saved. A neighbor suggested that the congregation sell the church lot as well, allowing a less crowded plan, and purchase a smaller building they could support. Rev. Mueller responded that the church is growing.

Naomi Schiff, representing the board of Oakland Heritage Alliance, summarized historic preservation concerns about the project. By altering the siting, removing the porte cochere, and adding a story (altering entrance and proportions), the proposal ignores a number of preservation standards from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

What next?

Developer Lester Schwartz has submitted the proposal to the Oakland Zoning Division. City staff will determine whether an Environmental Impact Study is required under state law.

Certainly impacts and trade-offs regarding the historic building will rate scrutiny. The city's Public Works Agency is reviewing traffic impacts, and a traffic study is expected. Neighbors also requested site cross sections and shadow studies to show context and impacts. Another neighborhood meeting is probable before the formal public comment period in the city's process.

To be added to the list for future neighborhood meetings, contact Valerie Winemiller at 653-4552 or vwinemiller@hotmail.com.



Proposed new condos at 412 Monte Vista, as seen from Plymouth Church's driveway. Drawing from architectural offices of Kirk Peterson

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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Disaster Drill for a Big Earthquake

By Ruby Long

Residents of One Kelton Court, the largest condominium complex in the Piedmont Avenue area, had an opportunity to test their readiness for a big earthquake in a preparedness drill on April 28. The event included damage assessment, hazard reduction, search and rescue, first aid, as well as radio communications.

The residents had taken part in the CORE training offered by Oakland Fire Department and worked together to make plans specific to their own homes. Last April, they conducted a drill to test themselves and invited the professionals to analyze their performance.

CORE—Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies (part of Oakland's Fire Department)—will provide you with plans, training, and practice for disasters that can be applied to multi-unit buildings as well as to single family dwellings.

The Kelton Court volunteer response team, led by **Della Mundy**, incident commander, included **Adele Bertaud**, radio communications and **Liz Nevins**, co-incident commander. The whole team participated in the search and rescue exercise. **Ysabel Bertolucci** simulated all clear in her section.

Captain **Tony Perez** of the Oakland Fire Department brought a fire station crew to Kelton Court to take roles and to observe. **Martin Mazyck** simulated an earthquake injury. **Solomon Sacay**, engineer, **Richard Aguilar**, paramedic, **Kathryn Booth** and **Kevin Williams** evaluated our responses and critiqued our emergency exit plan. OFD **Wale Forrester** kept an eye on the whole event.

To learn how your neighborhood, condo or apartment complex can take advantage of this potentially life-saving training and participate in the next earthquake drill, call the CORE office at (510) 238-6351 or email them at core@oaklandnet.com.

Local Author to Speak at Piedmont Ave. Library Aug 27

Hailey Lind has set her novel in the Chapel of the Chimes Columbarium—which should make her series of mysteries of special interest to our readers. She will provide more detail when she speaks at Author Night at the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library on Monday, Aug 27, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. We will learn about Annie Kincaid, the San Francisco artist, working nights in the famous old building to restore murals, and her grandfather, Georges LeFleur, known as a master forger.

For other information about the author and the mystery series, see www.haileyind.com. For other information about Author Night at the library, call 597-5011.

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P.O. Box 20375, Oakland 94611.

How Does This Newsletter Get to Your Doorstep?



Have you met the good neighbor who delivers this newsletter to you? **Lesley Mandros Bell** delivers PANIL NOTES to her neighbors on the 100 block of **John Street**.