

# PANIL Notes

Volume 34 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620

Oct/Nov 2009

CURRENT PROPOSAL FALLS SHORT

## Important City-wide Rezoning Meeting — Nov. 7

Many PANIL neighbors are likely to be unhappy with the draft zoning proposals for their blocks coming out of the City Planning Department's city-wide effort to rewrite the zoning codes. The proposals will be presented at an important community meeting on November 7. PANIL has been represented by steering committee member Valerie Winemiller during the early stages of this process. But from now on, it will be important that neighbors attend future meetings and give their input in order to demonstrate broad community concern for the future of our neighborhood.

Height limits are proposed to rise over current limits, and open space requirements to be reduced.

**Zoning Update Community Meeting**  
**Saturday, Nov. 7, 2008—10 am to 12 noon**  
**Peralta School, 460-63rd Street**

Continued on page 3

**PIEDMONT AVENUE MERCHANT ASSOCIATION'S**  
**23RD ANNUAL HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION**

**Halloween on Piedmont Ave.**  
**Saturday, October 31**

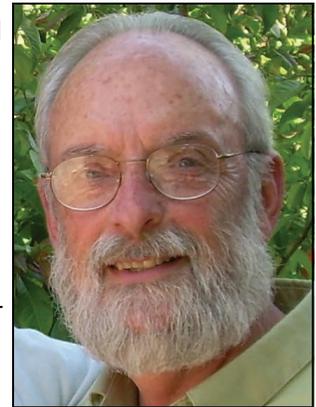
*For events, see page 3.*

## Paul Brekke-Miesner Retiring

By Ronile Lahti

Paul Brekke-Miesner, the Neighborhood Services Coordinator in the Oakland Police Department assigned to the PANIL neighborhood, and the ultimate "go-to" guy, is retiring.

Paul has been with the Neighborhood Services Division of the OPD for the last four years and during all that time has been our Neighborhood Services Coordinator. In August of 2007, he was promoted to Neighborhood Services Supervisor for Police Services Area 1 but continued as our NSC. Prior to working with the City of Oakland he was manager of the Office of Health and Safety Programs for the Oakland Unified School District and spent four years as Coordinator of After-School Programs for the Urban Strategies Council of Oakland.



What are his retirement plans? For the past three years Paul has been working on a book that documents the history of sports in Oakland. Now he has to finish it! He is one of the founding fathers of the Rickey Henderson Field -- the baseball field he and a group of dedicated baseball folks built at the old Carter Middle School site. Now plans are underway to build an adjoining girl's softball field, and Paul is helping spearhead that endeavor. And he will continue to volunteer at Oakland Tech High School where both of his sons attended.

When asked about how he felt about Beat 9X Paul said, "I have truly enjoyed working with the Piedmont Avenue NCPC and PANIL. It's an inspiration to work with so many people involved in and dedicated to improving their community."

We will miss Paul. He's a shining example of what a public servant can be. If only we could find more like him.

**PANIL Monthly Meeting: Wed., Nov 11 — 7:30 p.m.**

**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm**  
Trent Thompson, our Neighborhood Services Coordinator

**General Meeting — 8:00 pm**

Jody London, District 1 Board of Education

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

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## More on Water

By William Manley

We all know that folks on the other side of the hills use way more gasoline per capita than we do in Berkeley/Oakland. But water usage patterns aren't much different. In a follow-up to the July issue PANIL Notes, EBMUD has provided us with more usage patterns.

The results show that consumption varies widely between different markets. We obtained consumption data by zip codes. Of course the 94611 zip code covering the Piedmont Avenue area also includes virtually all of Piedmont, so 80' x 30' lots in our area are averaged with 1/4 acre lots in upper Piedmont. A better measure of Piedmont Avenue area water use might be the 94618 (Rockridge).

**How do your usage levels compare?**

Water consumption by zip code June 2008. Multi-family buildings

zip code	units	total monthly avg. per unit (in gallons)	gallons/day per unit
94618 (Rockridge)	476	17904	570
94611 (Piedmont)	727	27019	901
94563 (Orinda)	73	41027	1368
94549 (Lafayette)	312	39596	1320

This table can be deceptive, because of the variety in size. A multi-family building can be anything from a duplex to a hundred-unit apartment complex.

As can be seen, there are dramatic differences as one moves eastward. Already, Piedmont consumption is 58% higher than Rockridge. But Orinda and Lafayette multi-family dwellings consume well over twice as much.

The single family dwelling numbers are more consistent.

Single-family dwellings (June 2008)

zip code	units	total monthly avg. per unit (in gallons)	gallons/day per unit
94618 (Rockridge)	4664	7973	266
94611 (Piedmont)	10076	9096	303
94563 (Orinda)	6159	20631	688
94549 (Lafayette)	8278	22389	746
94595 (Walnut Creek)	2557	17353	578

This clearly shows that consumption levels for single family homes are 2-3 times greater per household east of the hills. Per household consumption seems to have diminished very slightly in 2009, but the ratios between suburban and urban usage are about the same.

## New to the Ave

**Arjan Flowers and Herbs**, 4220 Piedmont Avenue, 652-2887, [www.arjanflowers.com](http://www.arjanflowers.com)  
 Tuesday—Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Originally from Shiraz, Iran – known as the city of poets, gardens, wine, nightingales, and flowers – Mina Boulouri, the owner of Arjan Flowers & Herbs, held her grand opening on August 15th. Mina has been a resident of this country for 16 years and has spent 15 of those years assisting her sister in managing Emilia's Flowers in Berkeley. Finding a location for her own shop has been her top priority and Piedmont Avenue has always been at the top of her list. She was delighted when the property at Glen and Piedmont Avenue became available.



Arjan Flowers & Herbs specializes in seasonal flowers and the creation of floral arrangements for special events including weddings, banquets, and holidays. They also offer a selection of pots and potted plants (including herbs), orchids, and rare varieties of dried mint, chamomile, borage, and Persian saffron. Delivery is available throughout the East Bay and Contra Costa as far as Walnut Creek.

Note: "Arjan" means fig tree in Farsi, the name by Mina because of the beautiful and rare varieties that grow in a meadow near her former home in Shiraz.

## Important City-wide Rezoning Meeting — Nov. 7 (continued)

Most of the PANIL residential area is designated "Mixed Housing Type." Labeled "RM" on the draft maps, this a broad category that is to be subdivided into areas allowing different sizes of buildings and different numbers of units based on a lot size formula. Height limits are proposed to rise over current limits for all the RM areas, and open space requirements to be reduced.

These draft designations can still be changed, but neighbors will have to come to meetings or give written feedback to Planning Department staff to secure the future they envision for their block (see the contact information above). Many

**CaffeTrieste**, 4045 Piedmont Avenue, 985-1202, [www.caffetriestepiedmontave.com](http://www.caffetriestepiedmontave.com), Monday through Thursday, 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Sunday, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

CafféTrieste held their long awaited opening on September 10th. Entertainment was furnished by Papa Gianni (Giovanni Giotta, 89 year old founder of the CaffeTrieste chain) and the North Beach Band with the Giotta Family Singers. The café's menu includes: espresso, tea, cold drinks, beer and wine along with breakfast sandwiches, artichokes (roasted or stuffed), antipasti, soup, pizza, pasta, panini, salads, lasagna, quiche, and desserts including Strauss Family Creamery ice cream – vanilla, chocolate or swirl.

**Commis**, 3859 Piedmont Avenue, 653-3902, [www.commisrestaurant.com](http://www.commisrestaurant.com), Wednesday—Sunday, 5:30—9:30 pm

James Syhabout, of Manresa and PlumpJack Café, has opened Commis in the space formerly known as JoJo's. The "open kitchen" styled restaurant has only 30 seats and features a three course, prix-fixe dinner menu that can include wine pairings. Reservations are required.

neighbors are happy with a mix of smaller compatible buildings, including multiple units, but do not expect 40- to 60-foot boxes next door.

Further information: HYPERLINK "<http://www.oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate>" or call the Zoning Update message line at 238-7299 or e-mail [zoningupdate@oaklandnet.com](mailto:zoningupdate@oaklandnet.com).

For those attending the Nov. 7 meeting: Peralta School is served by Telegraph Ave buses 1 and 1-R. There is some parking on the school grounds, entrance from Alcatraz Avenue.

## 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 of the month  
 10 a.m., FREE

### Oakland Heritage Alliance

Tours of Oakland areas continue through the end of September. House tours take place in October.

For information contact:  
[www.oaklandheritage.org](http://www.oaklandheritage.org),  
 763-9218

### 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)



**Arjan**  
flowers & herbs

Mina Bolouri  
Phone: [510] 652.2887  
Wedding Event Delivery: Tue Through Sunday 8:30 - 7:30  
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**Adopt-A-Spot Program**

**Piedmont Avenue Merchant Association  
has adopted  
the Piedmont & Key Route Plazas  
and  
the area around our branch library  
as part of the city's  
Adopt-A-Spot Program**

For information, send email to  
[contact@piedmontavenuemERCHANTS.org](mailto:contact@piedmontavenuemERCHANTS.org)

**My neighborhood gym!**

"After working out here for years, I bought the place!  
Come check out our innovative new equipment & classes.  
Say 'Lisa sent me' and get a  
★FREE WORKOUT★"

-Lisa Gartland, gym owner

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\* New members only \* (510) 655-8308  
[www.INSIDEOUTSIDEFitness.com](http://www.INSIDEOUTSIDEFitness.com)  
4444 Piedmont Ave, Oakland, CA 94611



**BECOME A READING PARTNER AT PIEDMONT AVENUE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

VOLUNTEER ONE HALF-HOUR A WEEK WITH A STUDENT  
NOT TUTORING, BUT READING TOGETHER

**Halloween on Piedmont Avenue**

continued

**9:45am — FREE** Cartoons-Piedmont Theatre

**10:15am — Special Storytime** at Piedmont Avenue Branch Library for the really young members of the neighborhood

**11am — Halloween Parade  
(meet at Montell and Piedmont Avenue)**

**Cartwheelers** from Kids-In-Motion

**Stiltwalkers** from Prescott Circus and Kinetic Arts Center

the **GREAT Jim the Bagpiper**

Following the parade: **Trick-or-Treating** on the Avenue at **Candy Station Merchants**

**Music on the Avenue 11:30am to 2:30pm**

**Theo's Jazzitope** — Key Route Plaza (41st and Piedmont Avenue)

**Utah Girl and Amy McClain** — Piedmont Plaza (Piedmont Avenue and Linda)

**Boy in the Bubble and Satish Pillai** (at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School)

**Other events:**

- **Everyone Wins at Archway School** — games at Key Route Plaza — Noon to 3:30 pm
- Face Painting by **BuildOn** at Key Route Plaza — Noon to 3:30 pm
- **Piedmont Avenue Elementary School's Annual Fair** — Great food and their fabulous **Haunted Hallway!** — Noon to 3:30pm — all proceeds benefit programs at the school
- **3rd Annual Pet Costume Contest** — 1pm — Paws on Piedmont Avenue
- **Carved Pumpkin Contest** — 11am to 5pm — sponsored by Oaklandish — Piedmont and Pleasant Valley Road
- **Pumpkin Patch and Pretty Scary Haunted House** at J Miller's Flowers and Gifts — 8am to 8pm. Proceeds from the **Pretty Scary Haunted House** benefit **Kids Take the Stage**, a non-profit children's theater group
- **Mountain View Cemetery's annual FREE Pumpkin Patch Meadow** — it's the greatest! — Noon to 3:30pm

Special assistance comes from the Oakland Police Department and Los Carnales/LaFamilia Motorcycle Club of Piedmont Ave

PIEDMONT AVE PHOTO GALLERY

**A View of the Avenue**



Our neighborhood is filled with interesting sights. Here, Poppy the cat eyes the turkey that has made the Pleasant Valley Courts its home.

This photo from Margitta Gardner.

*We invite photographers to send photos taken on the Avenue or in the neighborhood to [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org).*

**An Alternate Proposal for Airport Connector (continued from page 6)**

had their consultant do a fair and honest evaluation of that proposal, but in fact BART explicitly asked for a biased report. What BART staff e-mailed to the consultant was, “Any information you can provide to put holes in [the BRT alternative] would be appreciated—we have some worried Board members and I need to easily discredit this ‘paper.’”

The Oakland City Council’s Public Works Committee held a hearing on the OAC on September 15. BART has repeatedly told numerous outside funding agencies that “Oakland endorses this project,” and they would be influenced by learning that wasn’t true. There are a wide variety of ways that Oakland can still influence the outcome of this project. And, it will require a vote of the City Council—so please don’t give up. Take action and call your Councilmember.

I have much more discussion of the OAC on the web at <http://www.abetteroakland.com/rebecca-kaplan-building-a-better-airport-connector-to-build-a-better-economy/2009-09-14>.

Councilmember Kaplan is also a former member of the AC Transit Board of Directors.

Ed. Note: The City Council ultimately voted to support the Oakland airport connector--with conditions regarding hiring Oaklanders and building in the capacity for future stops serving employment centers along the Hegenberger corridor. It is not clear how those “conditions” can be enforced. Only Councilmembers Kaplan and Nancy Nadel voted to oppose the connector.

**Reminders from the Oakland Police Department:**

Use 911 for emergencies — when an IMMEDIATE police, fire, or medical response is necessary to protect lives or property. From a cell phone in an emergency, call 777-3211

For all non-emergency situations—for example, to report a crime after it has occurred—call 777-3333

To make a non-emergency report on line, go to <https://reporting.oaklandnet.com/start-report.html>

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League

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## An Alternate Proposal for Airport Connector

by Rebecca Kaplan, Councilmember At-Large

I have read the PANIL Notes article on BART director Franklin's talk at the August PANIL meeting, including his discussion of the Oakland Airport Connector (OAC). I wanted to share what I think is a more sound choice. My goal is a project that is better for economic growth and job creation, better for Oakland, for BART, the airport, the region's transit and the public.

The OAC project approved by voters in 2001 was a \$130 million light rail project that was to have delivered passengers seamlessly from the Coliseum BART station to the Oakland airport in 6 to 7 minutes for \$2.00. It was to have two intermediate stops. Those stops were important because they would allow Oakland residents to get to the jobs in the hotels and other businesses along Hegenberger Road.

What is now proposed is a \$400–500 million project. (The engineering estimate is \$522–550 million, but in today's bidding climate it will probably come in at \$400–450 million.) The rubber-tired vehicles with no operators will take passengers near to the airport in 12 to 18 minutes for \$6.00.

In order to use the OAC, the revised plans will require that a passenger take his or her suitcases one flight up (using the stairs, escalator or elevator), go across a long walkway, pay at another fare gate and get on the vehicle. At the airport end, the OAC will stop at the end of the parking lot, between the two terminals. The passenger will then have to take his or her suitcases down from the elevated stop, across the bus lane, the parking shuttle lane, the taxi lane, the arrival-departure drop-off lane, then into the airport.

The proposed OAC would be inflexible. It would have no intermediate stops—or capacity to add them, either to serve the economic growth on the Hegenberger

Corridor or a proposed new international terminal. As a result of these changes, BART's ridership estimates have plummeted from 13,540 per day to 4,000 per day.

In order to pay for what BART director Tom Radulavich has aptly called "blingrastructure," the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has allocated \$70 million in federal stimulus funds to the project. Those funds are flexible and could be used to prevent service cuts at BART, AC Transit or other Bay Area transit agencies. BART is going to use \$198 million in other locally controlled funds which could go to more productive uses, and take funds away from its safety critical seismic retrofit project.

Worse yet, BART is going deeply into debt for this project. They are going to borrow \$261 million to build this blingrastructure. If people decide to ride AC Transit at \$2.00 rather than \$6.00 on the OAC, then the rest of the BART system is "on the hook."

It is embarrassing to be told that Oakland's best option is to spend the money on a single project that would be the least effective and most-expensive to ride airport connector in the world, while providing the fewest jobs and no support for economic growth. I know we can do so much better.

There is a better option—less expensive and more flexible. Bus systems can offer anything from the current minimal system, at no additional cost, to a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, running in its own lanes with hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, for a quarter to a third of the price of the proposed OAC.

The transit advocacy group TransForm has proposed a mid-priced BRT system. BART staff claims they

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