

# PANIL Notes

Volume 32 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620 September 2007

(ASKED AT NATIONAL NIGHT OUT BLOCK PARTIES)

## Most Fun You've Had This Summer?



### **André Jones, Montell St.**

My wife and I visited my father in Brian College Station, Texas, and pigged out at the Golden Corral restaurant. Just \$10 for all you can eat—even a one-inch steak!



### **Marilynne Schottenfeld, Montell St.**

Our younger son got married at Family Home Ranch in Calistoga. We spent the whole weekend there—it was rustic and wonderful.



### **Susan Simitz, Rio Vista Ave.**

I went to Big Sur with two girlfriends for a weekend in mid-July. We pitched a tent, went on the river, and enjoyed the best weather the coast has ever seen!



### **Carole R. Brown, Rio Vista Ave.**

Going to Brazil Camp in Cazadero. It's a music camp where I get together with other musicians who play *choro*, a Brazilian folk music. My instrument is mandolin.



### **Judy Metzger, Monte Cresta Ave.**

I traveled to New Zealand to visit my god-daughter, who had sailed there from Seattle. With a friend, I went all around the North Island and to the Milford Track on the South Island. We spent three weeks, and it wasn't nearly enough!



### **Jan Gobeille, Glen Ave.**

While visiting my brother in Pennsylvania, I went to a traditional barn dance hosted by a Mennonite family. Everyone got into the spirit—even four-year-old children came up and asked us to dance.



### **Carlo Rivas-Morales, Pleasant Valley Court**

I learned to play bass guitar at Bandworks, a band camp in Oakland. I'd never played before, and I learned three songs. Now my dad's going to buy me my own bass!

*All photos by Joyce Benna*

## PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR SEPT 6

### **Kaiser's Proposed New Signage Draws Fire from Neighbors**

By Valerie Winemiller

Plans for signage throughout Kaiser's Oakland Medical Center have been submitted to the city as one application for a Master Sign Plan. At least 58 signs are proposed, ranging from the directional signs from freeway exits on I580 and Highway 24 and on 27th Street to the building identification signs, large "monument" and "kiosk" two- and four-sided signs with arrows pointing to various departments and parking garages.

The plan has generated 60 letters of opposition—an astonishingly large number—to the Zoning Division. At PANIL's request, a public meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 6 at 7:00 p.m. at Kaiser's Fabiola Medical Office Building, 3801 Howe Street, Room 445. Neighbors are urged to attend, see the plans, and voice their opinions now. We will all be looking at these signs for decades to come. City zoning staff as well as representatives of Kaiser and the sign designers are expected to attend the meeting.

(continued on pg 2)

## **September PANIL Meeting**

**Wednesday, Sept. 12, 7:30 p.m.**

### **Local Love Literary Night Oakland Authors Talk about Oakland**

#### **Phil McArdle**

"History of the Oakland Police Department",  
"Fatal Fascination" where fact meets fiction in police work

#### **Hailey Lind**

"Brush with Death" set at Chapel of the Chimes  
and other familiar Oakland areas

#### **Dennis Evanosky**

"East Bay Then and Now," "History of the Laurel District"

#### **Annalee Allen**

"Oakland Postcards,"  
'Selections from the Oakland Tribune Archives"

#### **William Wong**

"History of Oakland's Chinatown"

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

**Piedmont Avenue  
Neighborhood  
Improvement League  
PO Box 20375  
Oakland CA 94620  
[www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org)**

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**Kaiser Signage** (continued from pg 1)

Kaiser proposes eight "skyline facade signs," four each at the tops of the new Medical Office Building under construction at MacArthur and Broadway, and on the hospital tower (more than 200 feet tall) to be built on the site of the MB Center. Internally lit, the tower signs would be 60 feet wide by nearly 7 feet tall. Many objected to their potential dominance of the skyline. A Robley Terrace resident described them as "giant billboards" and "illuminated ownership graffiti."

There was broad agreement that the monument and kiosk signs contained too much information to be read from a vehicle driving by in traffic, yet (at 10.5 feet high by 4.5 feet wide) were out of scale for pedestrians. Neighbor Christen Soares, an architect who has designed sign programs, wrote, "[They] will likely block important sight-lines for drivers and impede pedestrian traffic along the sidewalk." According to the plans, some of the signs are to be placed *on* the public sidewalks.

In spite of the mandate for Kaiser to encourage bicycle and transit use, no signs gave locations for secure bike parking or for BART shuttles.

Although the plan encompasses at least 58 signs, it is being processed under the "Small Project Design Review" regulations, which do not allow appeal of decisions. Kaiser originally did not want any public notice of the signs, but PANIL and KENIC (the Kaiser Expansion Neighbor Impact Coalition) pushed for public comment during last year's approval of the master construction plan. See PANIL's sign comments at [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org).

**PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR SEPT 11**

**Rockridge Shopping Center  
Redevelopment Meeting**

By Valerie Winemiller

A community meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 11 to discuss the future of Rockridge Shopping Center (Broadway and Pleasant Valley), from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Claremont House, 4500 Gilbert (at Pleasant Valley). Parking is available at Safeway. Neighbors are urged to look at the area with new eyes before coming to the meeting.

Safeway is the master planner but not owner of the property. Big changes are possible to the site plan, architecture and retailers, although Safeway representatives state that they have no specific plan. The Longs Drugs lease runs out in 2011; Safeway has not yet discussed plans with Longs.

A high-density advocacy group, ULTRA (Urbanists for a Livable Temescal and Rockridge), has begun advocating for the addition of housing at the site.

Wa Mu and the former Hickory Pit sites have separate owners.

The meeting is cosponsored by PANIL and the Rockridge Community Planning Council. Safeway representatives will be there along with AJE Partners of Berkeley, consultants hired to conduct the public outreach process. Safeway plans expansion of a number of stores, and similar meetings are being conducted regarding other Northern California locations, including the Claremont Ave store. For further information contact Valerie Winemiller. at 653-4552 or AJE at 849-4811.

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**Kaiser Construction Proceeds**

**Broadway at MacArthur**

The foundation for the medical office building on Broadway at MacArthur was poured in a marathon overnight session that began Friday Aug. 17. The pour involved coordination of continuous arrivals of 45 cement trucks carrying 2,740 cubic yards of concrete. Because of anticipated noise, Kaiser offered residents of nearby households a free night in a hotel, according to Judy DeVries, Kaiser's Assistant Director of Public Affairs for the East Bay.

The adjoining parking garage will have a separate pour, and neighbors will again be notified.

**4501 Broadway**

The former welfare offices at 4501 Broadway are to be the new home of administrative offices, which must be moved from the MB Center before demolition can begin. Construction will be interior only, according to DeVries, though some landscaping upgrades may also take place. She anticipates a community meeting in late September to update everyone on plans.

A design-build contractor has been selected and is working on the interior plans. Construction is scheduled from February through September 2008. Move-in is expected in November 2008.

**PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR SEPT 17**

**Replacement for Kaiser Hospital**

The first community meeting on the design of the structures that will replace the MB Center is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 17, 7:00 p.m. at Mosswood Park Recreation Center, MacArthur and Webster streets. Parking is in the lot off Webster St.

The new buildings will cover the entire block bounded by Piedmont Ave., Broadway, MacArthur Blvd. and the 580 freeway. This will be Phase 2 of Kaiser's construction; it will include the over 200-foot-tall hospital tower atop a large podium of emergency and diagnostic facilities, a multi-story parking garage, and a central utility plant.

At this important September 17th meeting, a number of issues about the site plan, traffic circulation, and the "friendliness" of the street level design could be resolved before the city's formal public hearings begin. Follow up meetings will be on Mondays, Oct. 1 and Oct. 22, both at Mosswood Recreation Center.

**Piedmont Gardens Expansion Drawings on PANIL Website**

Piedmont Gardens has made available the information from the July 26 neighborhood meeting. You can compare numbers for before and after parking and traffic, as well as view drawings of the proposed building on two PDFs at [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org).

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

**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

**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](mailto:contact@panil.org)

*You can 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.

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## National Night Out 2007

Piedmont Avenue neighbors participated enthusiastically and creatively in the 24<sup>th</sup> annual National Night Out, a nationwide event held in August to strengthen neighborhood spirit and prevent crime. This year 315 Oakland neighborhoods participated, compared with just 90 in 2006. If your neighborhood would like to participate next year, register at [www.nationalnightout.org](http://www.nationalnightout.org). Photos from this year's block parties are posted at [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org).

Above: The gathering in Glen Echo Park at Montell Street, organized by Elisabeth Soeurs. Photo by Joyce Benna

Right: Ramona Avenue and Pleasant Valley Court gathering, organized by Margitta Gardner. Photo by Ronile Lahti

Below: Rio Vista gathering organized by Anya Behn, Jennifer Brown, Cassie Davis, Sandra Linke, and Mark Lyons. Photo by Joyce Benna

All photos from National Night Out are on PANILwebsite: <http://panil.org/photos>





Above: The gathering from One Kelton Court and Monte Cresta, organized by Della Mundy.



Left: Rose Avenue, organized by Gail Jara.

Below: Monte Vista and Wilda, where 33 people participated before evening's end, organized by Pam Feack.

Bottom: The gathering on Entrada and Glen Avenue, organized by Mike Lydon.

Photos by Joyce Benna



**Other gatherings not pictured**

Kempton Avenue — Phil Laing

40th Street Way — Nancy Finkle

Gleneden — Todd Somers

Pleasant Valley, the Rockridge Manor Homeowners Assn. —Alana D'attilio



## They Are Magicians, Those Reading Partners at Piedmont Ave Elementary

By Anna Griffin

Can you remember the moment you learned to love reading? For me, it was the summer I was seven years old, and the book was *The Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss. I'd been plodding through my Dick and Jane primer for months, unimpressed by this reading business, when my mother introduced me to my first wildly imaginative Seuss book. This featured an oversized cat who spoke in rhyme, swirled through the house creating a delightfully chaotic mess and then conjured up sprite-like Things (1 & 2) to whiz about and tidy up. I was enchanted.

In today's Oakland public schools, students spend many hours learning the mechanics of reading, but who has time to teach enchantment? This is where Reading Partners come in. For eleven years, this group of dedicated volunteers has been reading to students at Oakland's Piedmont Elementary School, with the aim of instilling a love for books and reading.

Acting as mentors, not tutors, Reading Partners work one-on-one with the same child each week, building a relationship that is focused on the joy of books. We read with a student in the school library for half an hour at a stretch and then bring them back to their classroom. So simple - yet the consistent, caring attention of a book-loving adult is something many of these children have never experienced, and it can be transformational.

Reading Partners will have its next volunteer orientation in early October. There are currently about 20 volunteers, but many more children would like to be in the program. Call now to sign up and request an application. We read in the Piedmont School two or three mornings a week. A one hour a week minimum commitment for the school year is required, with breaks during school holidays. Contact Donna at 482-0862.

### The Rewards

Abdul (children's names are changed) was a first-grader who came to each session with his head down and his shoulders slumped forward; he could barely speak above a murmur. Not just afraid to misbehave, he was afraid to *behave* – any self-assertion seemed fraught with peril. It was several months into our reading together that he discovered the book *No, David!* by David Shannon. David played ball in the house, ate with his mouth full, drew on the walls and overflowed the bathtub with his naval flotilla – in short, he was all that Abdul was not. It was instant love. Abdul requested this same book each week, read it with great gusto, searched the shelves for others by the same author (*David Goes to School...*) and by April, seemed like a different kid. Shoulders straight, head up and maybe even a little cocky, he was ready to take on second grade.

Malika was in kindergarten, a serious, composed and watchful little girl. Her family did not celebrate Halloween, so she was a bit sulky by late October. When I read her *Amazing Grace*, by Mary Hoffman – about an African-American girl who tries out for the part of Peter Pan in the school play – Malika was a bit uncomfortable at first. Grace gets to wear lots of costumes.

Then we read the page where Grace raises her hand to audition for the lead role, and her friends try to discourage her. "You can't be Peter." one of the boys tells her. "You're a girl." "Peter Pan was white, and you're black" warns one of the girls. Yet Grace keeps her hand up. As we read on, and Grace gets to triumph in her leading role, Malika is impatient to go back. "Read that page again!" Over and over we read how her friends warn Grace that her sex and race disqualify her, yet Grace keeps her hand thrust high. Little Malika drinks up the images with her eyes - the frowning friends, Grace's hand above her head, the determined set of her mouth. Quiet resistance, the no that is a yes.

Where this little girl will go with that message I may never know. But after reading that page at least a dozen times over many weeks, she has a vivid model of courage to carry with her. And she's felt that magical jolt of finding your own experience in the pages of a book.

To learn more or to volunteer your time as a reading partner, contact Anna Griffin, Reading Partners Volunteer Coordinator, at 653-8573



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### Corrections

In the July/August issue, we credited a photo incorrectly. The two photos that accompanied the article on Oakland Technical High School's renovation were taken by Paul Brekke-Miesner.

And we misspelled our neighbor Evan Rotman's name.

Our apologies to both Mr. Rotman and Mr. Brekke-Miesner.

**Editor's note: ShopGirl is on vacation.**

### September Library Events

Thursday, Sept. 20, 3:30 p.m.

#### Hispanic Heritage Month

Celebrate at the library with a papel picado (cut paper) workshop. Ages 5-12, please.

Tuesday, Sept. 25, 4 to 5:30 p.m.

#### Teen Pizza Party

Come celebrate the end of the teen summer program and let the library know what kinds of materials you want in your library.

For information, contact Helen Bloch, children's librarian and acting branch manager, at 597-5011.

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**Huge Yard Sale**

Plymouth Church second annual neighborhood yard sale, Sept. 8 from 9 a.m. to 1 p. m. at the church, on the corner of Monte Vista and Oakland Ave.

**Do You Have a Story to Share  
with PANIL Notes?**

Tell us your  
neighborhood news!

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PLEASE REPORT GRAFFITI WHEN YOU SEE IT

### Should Your Neighborhood Look Like *This*?

By Mike Lydon

Since last September, the Piedmont Avenue commercial district has been under siege by a group of taggers, or graffiti vandals, who have been hitting the avenue nightly. The area most affected is between 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> streets and along Howe Street, with sporadic breakouts down Piedmont Avenue to MacArthur. The graffiti, or “tags,” range from small scribbles on bench seats and litter cans to six-foot letters like the ones recently scrawled on the Longs building.



Oakland’s policy is to hold the vandals—or their parents, if they are minors—accountable for the damage, according to Problem Solving Officer Melvin Bermudez.

Things would look a lot worse if it were not for the Oakland Public Works Department’s persistent removal of the graffiti or painting over it.

As clean sweep coordinator for the Piedmont Avenue Merchants Association, It is my goal to stop this nuisance. You can help. If you have any information, please contact our police neighborhood services coordinator, Paul Brekke-Miesner [pbrekke-miesner@oaklandnet.com](mailto:pbrekke-miesner@oaklandnet.com) or call him at 238-3102.

If you observe tagging in progress, call the police non-emergency number at 777-3333. If you have a camera-phone or digital camera, photograph the taggers and e-mail the photograph to Paul Brekke-Miesner.

If you see graffiti, report the location to the Oakland Call Center at 434-5101. You may also e-mail your concern to [pwacallcenter@oaklandnet.com](mailto:pwacallcenter@oaklandnet.com). The online service is especially convenient, because it is available 24/7. It is important to report graffiti as soon as you see it. Leaving it just encourages other taggers to make their marks.

This is a solvable problem if we all work together.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### Public Meetings on Neighborhood Development Projects

#### Thursday, Sept. 6

#### Kaiser Master Sign Plan [see page 1]

7:00 p.m.,

Kaiser’s Fabiola Medical Office Building, Room 445, 3801 Howe Street

#### Tuesday, Sept. 11

#### Safeway/Rockridge Shopping Center

[see page 2]

7:30 p.m., Claremont House, 4500 Gilbert St.

Sponsored by PANIL, Rockridge Community Planning Council, and Safeway

#### Mondays, Sept. 17, Oct. 1 and Oct. 22

#### Design Review for Kaiser Hospital Replacement

[see page 3]

7:00 p.m., Mosswood Park Recreation Center



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