PANIL Notes

Circulation

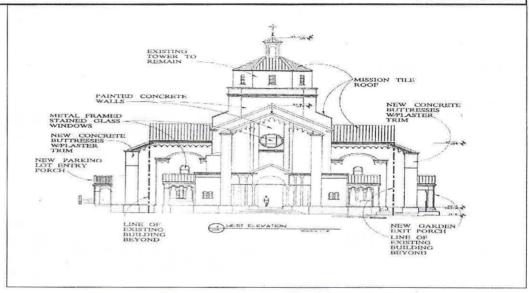
1,900 residences and businesses

Volume 26, Issue 4

February 2001

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More Rehab For St. Leo's...by Valerie Winemiller

St. Leo's parish is ready to begin earthquake upgrading of the church building and other related renovation work. The Spanish Colonial-style church was constructed of reinforced concrete in 1924. After the 1989 earthquake, examination of the building revealed that while there

was no damage from the Loma Prieta earthquake, the bell tower structure would be very vulnerable in an earthquake with an epicenter closer to Oakland.

For several years, the parish has been engaged in a fundraising campaign for the needed seismic re-enforcement and other structural improvements. Planned are new buttresses with plaster trim and clay roof tiles to match existing details and for support of the bell tower. Access ramps to the church sanctuary and its side garden will be improved with new exit (Continued on page 2)

Neighborhood School Proposes Bold Changes

by Matt Bjork

elementary School recently received favorable indications for its proposal to dramatically change our neighborhood school's operations. Put together with help from Principal

Iris Siegal, School Board Vice-President Kerry Hamill, PANSA, and Superintendent Dennis Chaconas, the proposal is focused on starting fullday kindergarten programs in the fall, and decreasing 4th and 5th

grade class size to 25 students per teacher—thus filling in the blanks left by Pete Wilson's 1st-3rd grade class size reduction act.

As reported earlier in

(Continued on page 3)

*

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League

P.O. Box 20375 Oakland CA 94620

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(Continued from page 1)

porches into the parking lot and garden, as well as a ramp from the public sidewalk on Ridgeway to the garden. The entire exterior will get a fresh coat of paint. The church has expressed a wish to replace the trees edging the parking lot along the north side of the sanctuary with shrubs that will not grow tall enough to foul the roof drainage and gutters as the current trees do. The existing trees provide beautiful fall color, but have outgrown their location and could damage foundation and sidewalks. Permit applications have been filed for tree removals related to the work.

Fr. Tim Johnson and the congregation are to be commended for their commitment to preserving this beautiful building and its garden, which are assets to the Avenue and the neighborhood

Should the Bells Toll?

n our November issue, St. Leo's Catholic Church asked for neighborhood feedback on a proposal to install electronic "bells" in the church tower after renovations. If you were counting on someone else expressing your opinion, it did not happen. Fr. Tim Johnson reports that they have received only two letters of objection and no positive letters. We are uncertain that this is what my high school science teacher would have called a "statistically significant sample." However, the bells will represent a \$20,000 expense for the church, so the congregation wants to be sure of neighborhood reaction before the bells are purchased and installed. The bells can be programmed to ring for just certain hours and/or events, such as regular services, weddings, funerals, or noontime chimes. Volume and direction of the speakers can be controlled. St. Leo's hopes to begin work on this project soon. Feedback from Piedmont Avenue neighbors before construction begins is encouraged. To comment on the proposed work, complete the questionnaire on the back page and return to PANIL or St. Leo's.

OH, BABY!

米

Montell Street may have just created its own instant playgroup with three babies born on the block within ten days. 米 Joan 💥 George Horton and McCloskey are losing sleep with * * lively Natalie Louise, born Nov- * * ember 27 (6 lbs. 10 oz.). Natalie * * is already a participating PANIL * * member; her happy father re- * ※ ports she accompanied him de- ※ ※ livering the January issue of ※ ※ PANIL Notes to their block. ※ ※ Ann-Sofie Bylin and Eric Pon- ※ * tius are the happy parents of ** ※ Isabella, who arrived December ※ * 3 weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. Eric re- ** ports that she has already ** grown to 11 lbs, and is starting * to sleep longer stretches (his * voice betrayed delight at this * development). Jack Michael (8 * lbs. 2 oz.) was born to Lisa and * 米 Dana Simon on December 7. "He's a great kid," reports Lisa. But, of course he is! PANIL's heartiest congratulations to all three families 米



HELP!!! The library's magazine subscriptions are up for renewal and underwriters are needed. If you can help, please contact Jamie McGrath at 510.597.6011.

(Continued from page 1)

PANIL Notes, Piedmont Avenue School showed Oakland's highest test score gains in all three areas of the state SAT-9 standardized tests. The current proposal is designed to address shortcomings so that the school's effectiveness can continue to rise. The school's population of 322 students is unusually diverseeven by Oakland standards. While our neighborhood housing prices start over \$300K, half of the student body is receiving free lunch-and many of our students are new immigrants. The school's diversity and commitment to educational activism-as exemplified by current test score gains and historical community support of the school--are being leveraged to access funding for the proposal.

When East Bay SAT-9 test scores are compared, one sees a cluster of "high income hill schools" at the top end and a cluster of flat land schools at the low end. As with our geography, we are right in the middle. With further study, it becomes apparent that Piedmont Avenue's students are moving up into the high achievement cluster while enjoying diversity unknown by any of the hill schools. These standardized tests were originally proposed to help identify strong schools in need of assistance-and Piedmont Avenue is grabbing the bull by both horns.

Proposed Improvements

1) The proposed kindergarten program will run from 8:45 am until 1:45 pm in the afternoon-and will be the only full day public kindergarten offered in the area. (Most kindergartens teach only in the mornings or afternoons.) The additional instruction time will help teachers make sure non-English speaking students-as well as all students-are well prepared for academics of the first grade. Piedmont Avenue already receives a substantial number of inter-district transfer students, and expects to have even more parents "opting-in"

to take advantage of these unique opportunities.

- 2) By shifting funding priorities, the school will help lower the 4th and 5th grades' class size to 25 students per teacher. Class size reduction for grades 1-3 has pointed out the benefits of lower student to teacher ratios in all tests—especially when compared to the performance of larger 4th and 5th grade classes. Piedmont Avenue will be one of the first schools in California to bring these benefits to our upper grade students and teachers.
- 3) Principal Siegal is actively lobbying to bring private after-school care onto the school site for the fall. "Adventure Time" currently provides affordable before and after school care to many Oakland schools, including Chabot and Montclair—and hopefully soon to us! This will help assist parents who simultaneously care for their children and provide an income.
- 4) OUSD is being asked to remove the "portables" that litter the children's playground and replace them with a modern two story modular structure. The added instruction space will allow for more 4th and 5th grade classrooms, decrease the need for two kindergarten classes to share the same room, and provide space for after school care. The cost to bring the old structures up to current safety codes and educational standards is one of the fiscal motivators for this overdue action. The aesthetics of removing the decaying portable eyesores from a crowded playground is also a rallying cry for improved teacher, parent, and student morale.

You Can Make A Difference

Strong neighborhood participation is one of the funding variables. You can voice your support for our local school by writing or calling Superintendent Chaconas 510.879.8200, Mayor Jerry Brown 510.238.3141, Councilmember Jane Brunner

510.238.7001 or School Board President Jason Hodge 510.879.8000. PANSA is also considering what types of "add-ons" the community should be involved in fundraising for or helping to build for our students. PANSA and the school PTA are always looking for volunteers to help with after school enrichment programs (Music, Sports, etc), study halls, and 1-on-1 reading volunteers. So please, show your support for our local kids and get involved in the future of our neighborhood!

Community Feedback Needed for Creek Project

by Arleen Feng

The Alameda County Flood Control District has provided PANIL with a tentative timeline for its project on Glen Echo Creek. They will ask for community and city comments on preliminary schemes in March and April 2001, with plan development and environmental permitting expected to go on through the rest of the year (yes, it takes that long). Construction would start in Spring 2002. In addition to preserving and restoring the stream corridor, PANIL would like the Flood Control District to consider improvements that enhance the site's function as a neighborhood park. Park improvements were part of the District's original agreement with the city and community, but were left out when that agreement was recently renewed, apparently mainly due to bureaucratic snafus. It's important for community members to weigh in now to make sure the project's scope reflects the wishes of neighbors and park users. Please take a minute to complete the enclosed survey and return it by February 16. Additional copies are available at the park or from Arleen Feng at 510.654.1930 or ayfeng@alum.mit.edu.

A BIG PANIL Thank You! To all the volunteers who helped maintain the park in 2000:

Janet Barber, Larry deGrassi, Eric Ettinger, Arleen Feng, Jennifer Gowell, Peg Janosch, Maggie Johnson, Julian and Andre Jones, Matt Linzner, Susan Martin, Sally McCaffrey, Deanne Ogawa, Robert, Helen and Ike Sofaer, Bob Stewart, Valerie Winemiller and Iris Winogrond. Apologies to any whose names were lost. We still need a new coordinator for the monthly workdays. See the enclosed survey form or watch for signs at the park regarding a public meeting with city and county representatives in early March.

Neighborhood Crime Report by Jim Ploss

Self Defense Classes Offered

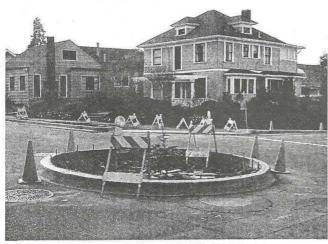
Davis-Lincoln. ngela Neighborhood Services Coordinator informs PANIL that self-defense for women classes are being offered through the police department. Each class consists of four 4-hour sessions, held from 8 am to 12 pm at the Oakland Police Administration Building, 455 7th Street. Topics covered will include: protection, sexual assault awareness and prevention, handgun safety and self defense techniques. Classes are open to women over the age of 18 years who live or work in Oakland. Participants must be in good physical condition and have no physical restrictions that would prevent full participation, and must attend each session or they will not be allowed to continue in the course. For more information contact Paula White or Officer Angelica Mendoza at the OPD Community Services Section, 455 7th Street, Room 313, phone 510.238.3066 or fax 510.238.7193.

Local Burglaries

t the January PANIL meeting, Sergeant Bukala described some recent burglaries in the area for which a suspect is now in custody; all were opportunistic burglaries with entry made during the day through open doors or windows. An active robbery suppression effort by the police in our neighborhood resulted in much lower rates of crime over the holidays. Crime rates were actually down here while robberies and burglaries increased in most parts of Oakland. Because auto break-ins are one of the more popular crimes in our neighborhood, police have used a bait-car to identify the culprits. It was broken into twice while police were watching, both times by recycling scavengers.

Vicious Dog Complaint on Montgomery

omplaints about a vicious dog running loose on the 4200 block of Montgomery Street generated an active discussion by attendees of the last PANIL meeting. The canine in question has reportedly been picked up by animal control officers on at least three occasions and the owner fined. A neighbor of the dog has been chased into her home and is worried about potential for injury to herself and others. The issue was discussed with Sgt. Bukala who said he would contact the owner of the property.



The Mather/Gilbert Street Traffic Islands!



Joanna Smith took PANIL Notes to China. Where have you taken Notes? Joanna is participating in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society 100 mile bike ride. If you'd like to sponsor her call 510.653.4052

Avenue Biz by Sandy Strehlou

Spectator Books Has What You Want

im Hildebrand is a man of words. His parents were journalists, he has a BA in philosophy and an MFA in creative writing. He is a published poet and novelist and he is the owner of our very own Spectator Books, located at 4163 Piedmont Avenue.

Since buying the business from former owner Fred Schmolz almost

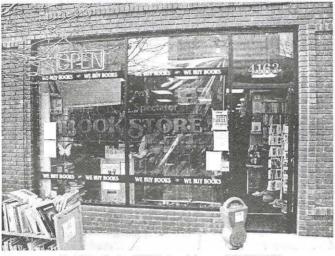
years ago, (Fred and his wife bought and are now living happily on a farm in Vermont), Tim says he wants his business to be a vital part of the community, and that he is open to input from his customers on the types of books they would like to see offered at Spectator. Offering a wide variety of used books, the store also carries

a good selection of new best selling titles,

gleaned from mainstay book reviewers like Publishers Weekly, the New York Times Book Review, as well as local lists from the SF Chronicle and the East Bay Express. If you are looking for a new title, he can probably get it for you in two or three days, and special searches for hard-to-find or out-of-print books are possible for a \$3 fee.

Besides having an excellent selection of used mystery novels, art and photography books, among other genres, Spectator also carries a strong selection of children's titles. In fact, Spectator offers a 10% discount to teachers and makes a priority of seeking out and buying high quality children's literature. According to Tim, while he

does stock new favorites like the Harry Potter series, he also finds classics like Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in demand. When asked about new directions for the store, Tim mentioned that he is beginning to buy, stock and sell used videos, and that "they are flying off the shelves faster than he can buy them." This seemed to come as a surprise, since Spectator's experiment with music CD's last year was far less successful.



Spectator Books, 4163 Piedmont Avenue, 510.653.7300

Other specialties include interesting and artistic cards and postcards, a small but intriguing selection of magazines and a mutually beneficial relationship with the Piedmont Theatre. Saturday night raffles at the Piedmont frequently include Spectator Books as audience prizes when the movie's screenplay was inspired by a book. This kind of B2B cooperation, along with Spectator's quality goods and small, but precious off-street parking area, is helping to breathe life into the midwest end of Piedmont Avenue, especially at night, when most other businesses nearby are closed. Our neighborhood found that it could live without generic bookstores like Crown Books, but it wouldn't be the same without our good friends at Spectator.

Community Classifieds

Residents of Piedmont Avenue are invited to submit classified ads for publication in PANIL Notes. Type or write your copy clearly and mail it with a check to PANIL, 4351 Montgomery Street. The deadline for submission is the second Friday of each month. The PANIL member are is \$.25 per word. Non-members pay \$.50 per word. Checks should be made out to PANIL.

Street Trees Do you want a free street tree? Are you willing to: cut open the sidewalk and remove concrete (if needed), backfill well after cutting, water the tree for . three years, keep the tree well = free of weeds and litter, keep " wood chips or mulch on the soil ' around the tree, provide adequate fertilization? If you agree then the City of Oakland will inspect your property for a qualified location, help you select an appropriate tree species, install a free 15 gal-Ion tree, classify the tree as "official" and provide ongoing maintenance. Contact: City of Oakland, Office of Parks and Recreation, 7101 Edgewater Drive. 510.615.5850 or fax 510.615.5845

Problem Solving Workshop The OPD is sponsoring a one-day tuition-free class on problem solving open to city employees and . NCPC members (including all PA- = NIL members). Students will be . taught to conduct indepth problem . solving for chronic community problems and operate in collaboration with other stakeholders to resolve problems and gain confidence in their expertise. Classes . are scheduled on Wednesdays or Thursdays from 8 am to 5 pm at Jack London Square, 70 Washington Street, Room 210. To register, contact Officer Scott Coppess at 510.238.6525. Dates available . are February 7, 8, 14, 15, 28 and = March 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, and 29. The department is also willing to schedule classes evenings or one day of the weekend.

Schedule of Events

- 02/01 PANIL Meeting, 7:30 pm
- 02/03 Jane Brunner's Monthly Meeting, 10 am—12 pm, Peralta School, 510.238.7001
- 02/05 Piedmont Avenue School Band Concert, 7 pm, School Auditorium
- 02/06, 13, 27 Family Storytime, 7 pm, Piedmont Avenue Branch Library, 160 41st St, 510.597.6011
- 02/07, 14, 21, 28 Preschool Storytime, 10:30—11 am, Piedmont Avenue Branch Library, 160 41st St, 510.597.6011
- 02/07, 08, 14, 15, 28, 03/01 OPD Work Shop, 8 am—5 pm, 70 Washington St., Room 210, 510.238.6525
- 02/10 Glen Echo Creek Workday, 9:30 am—12 pm, Monte Vista Avenue, 510.654.1930
- 02/20 PANSA Meeting, 7 pm, Piedmont Avenue School Library, 510.654.6591
- 02/20 Poetry Extravaganza, 7 pm, Piedmont Avenue Branch Library, 160 41st Street—bring a favorite poem to share at this open reading

February 2001

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 PANIL Meeting	2	3 District 1 Monthly Meet- ing
4	5 Band Concert	6 Family Story- time	7 Preschool Storytime OPD Work- shop	8 OPD Work- shop	9	10 Glen Echo Creek Workday
11	12	13 Family Story-time	14 Preschool Storytime OPD Work- shop	15 OPD Work-shop	16	17
18	19	20 PANSA Meeting Poetry at the Library	21 Preschool Storytime	22	23	24
25	26	27 Family Story-time	28 Preschool Storytime OPD Work- shop	March 1 OPD Work- shop	2	3

the Piedmont	PANIL. For 25 years PANIL neighbors have been coming together to address the issues facing Avenue Neighborhood. PANIL meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. Meetings are Sky Room, 11th Floor, Piedmont Gardens (enter at 110 41st Street). All meetings are open to the
COUNT ME I	N! I love this neighborhood and want to help keep it the wonderful community it is.
	I will distribute PANIL Notes to my neighbors
_	Here's my check for \$(minimum \$12.00) to join PANIL
NAME	
I ADDRESS	
PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
	ayable to PANIL. Mail to PANIL, P.O. Box 20375, Oakland, CA 94620-0375. If you are a member beiving monthly issues of PANIL <i>Notes</i> , please call 510.655.1723 or send email to rklahti@aol.com.

Welcome and thank you to new and renewing members:

The Stokes family, Dorothy Black, Kathryn Hughes, Richard Burke, Michael and Adrianne Cabanatuan, Pamela and Steve Prescott

Street Light Proposal Hits the Neighborhood

by Sandy Strehlou

ometime during the morning of January 4th, a Ray's Elec-

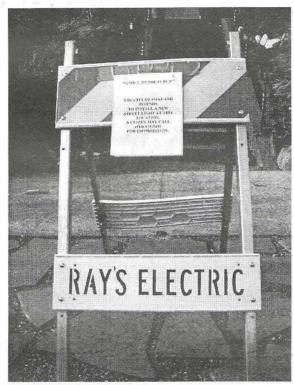
truck passed through Howe, Montgomery and John streets leaving behind public notices announcing the City's intention to install additional streetlights. It didn't take long for the affected residents to notice the signs and begin calling the contact telephone number listed on the notice. Ironically, no one answered at this number, nor was there a way to leave a message. Not surprisingly, many local residents are peeved.

So What's the Beef?

First, there is the process, or lack thereof. The City says this proposal is part of a larger citywide program to improve street lighting—a five-year project, in fact. But until the

notices went up on Montgomery and Howe, few if any Piedmont Avenue residents knew anything about it. Second, there is the problem of providing an information number that doesn't produce a human being to talk to, let alone an explanation of the specifics of the project itself. Next is the obvious issue of whether or not we even

need or want increased lighting on these streets. Already there are pe-



titions circulating against the project. Finally, one might ask how the lighting fits in with a comprehensive strategy for the urban design and improvement of the neighborhood. What about traffic and parking, what about sidewalks, what about street trees and façade improvements for Piedmont Avenue?

OK, What Do We Want?

PANIL is sponsoring a forum for the discussion of these important issues at the next regular PANIL meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2001, 7:30 pm at Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street, 11th floor. (Piedmont Gardens is behind what was formerly Roundtable Pizza. with entrances on both Linda Street and 41st.) Representatives from the City's Public Works department and Councilmember Jane Brunner's office will be there to answer questions and hear comments. Together we can, and will, decide what is in the best interest of our neighborhood. All PANIL meetings are open to the public.

> Our condolences to Valerie Winemiller, PANIL Chair on the death of her father and Chuck Eckerman, PANIL Treasurer on the death of his sister.

UNDERWRITERS



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510.339.6460 Fax 510.339.6519



PANSA

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood School Association 510.654.6591 We Support PANIL

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PIEDMONT AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE

P.O. Box 20375 Oakland, CA 94620-0375

510.653.4552

AGENDA —February 1

- Steering Committee Elections
- Street Lighting
- If you have an item you wish included on the agenda, please call 510.653.4552

Please check your expiration date

Complimentary Copy

If you are not a member of PANIL, please consider joining today



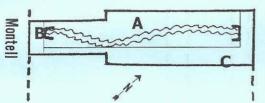
St.	Leo	'S	Be	lls	Ques	tic	nna	aire
			-		~ ~ ~ ~			,,,,,

1. Name (optional)	
2. I live on theblock of	(i.e. 100 block of Echo Avenue)
3. I do likedo not like	feel neutral aboutthe idea of chimes at St. Leo's
4. I would not want the chimes to	ring befoream or later thanpm
5. I want to hear the chimes ring h	nourly: YesNo
6. I want to hear the chimes ring f	or services: Yes Daily Sunday only
OR: No, I don't want to hear th	e chimes for regular services
7. I want to hear the chimes ring f	or special events (eg. weddings and funerals):

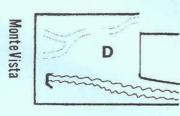
Glen Echo Creek Park -- User Survey

Community involvement now can have a significant effect on the future of Glen Echo Creek Park.

Background: This park, 1/2 block east of Piedmont Avenue's shopping district, is centered on a section of Glen Echo Creek that was saved from being paved over in the mid 1970's. The Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL), the city of Oakland and the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (ACFCWCD, owner of the two lots involved) created an agreement to use this site as a public park. New paths and native plant landscaping were installed in the portion north of Monte Vista Avenue (Area "D") in 1997-98.



3. How many people are in your household?



Pledmont Ave.

(Go on to other side)

ACFCWCD plans to do construction work in the lower section of the creek (Area "A") during early 2002, because of concerns about bank stability. They have agreed to work with PANIL and the City to try to preserve the natural character of this section. PANIL has suggested that improvements relating to park uses should be included in the project since the entire block from Montell to Monte Vista (street frontages and existing walkway, "B" and "C") will also be affected by the construction.

PANIL will present survey results at public meetings with the project planners in March 2001. Please help us prepare by taking a few minutes to complete this survey, and return it to PANIL by February 17, 2001 in one of the following ways:

- Mail to PANIL, PO Box 20375, Oakland CA 94620
- Drop the completed survey in the box on the front porch at 121 Monte Vista
- Bring to the PANIL meeting on Feb.1 or the workday on Feb. 10 (see calendar in Notes)
- To get more survey forms, look for signs along Monte Vista at the park, or call 654-1930

1.	Where are you located?					
	Within 3 blocks of the park		[] live	[] wor	k [] shop	or visit
	Within PANIL area*		[] live	[] wor	k [] shop	or visit
	Not in PANIL area * []	* Broadway	to Oakland Av	ve., MacArthui	Blvd. to cemetery/	Pleasant Valle
0	YY 1 at 1	1 11	a 1	1 11	6 0	
2.	How do you or others in your hou	sehold use	the park, ar	nd about how	w often?	
		daily	weekly	monthly	occasionally	never
	Walking, passing by	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Sitting, reading or resting	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Playing	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Birdwatching, enjoying nature	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Other	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
		[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

4. Score each of these possible improvements to the park from 1 to 5, according to how much you think it would <u>increase</u> your use and enjoyment of the park (1 = greatly increase, 3 = some increase, 5 = no change or don't know). If you think it will have a <u>negative</u> effect, put an X and write your reasons in the space under Question 5. Score each item for each of the areas on the map, though not all improvements are possible for all portions of the park.

	Area: A	В	C	D
a. Seating		[]	[]	
b. Handicap accessibility		[]	[]	
c. Play area/structure		[]	[]	
d. Seating		[]	[]	
e. Improved trash bins		[]	[]	[]
f. Dog waste containers		[]		[]
g. Lighting		[]	[]	
h. Informational/educational signs		[]	[]	
i. Tree maintenance and replacements	[]	[]	[]	
j. Other landscaping or planting	[]	[]	[]	
k. Other	[]	[]	[]	[]

5. Describe comments or concerns you have about items in Question 4. Please attach more sheets if you need to.

6a.	lave you participated in any of the following volunteer activities in the past 1-2 years?
	Glen Echo Creek workday [] PANIL activites, events or newsletter []
	Creek-related activities elsewhere (e.g. Creek to Bay Day) []
6b.	are you interested in volunteering to help with any of the following:
	gardening/planting [] creek clean-up days [] phone calling or mailing []
	landscape/tree plans [] Website [] fundraising [] PANIL newsletter [] monitor creek for pollution/dumping [] other
7.	ersonal information (optional unless you want us to contact you about volunteering):
	Name Phone/email:
	Address PANIL member? Yes [] No []

8. Additional comments or questions? Please add more pages if you need to.