

PANIL Notes

Volume 29 Issue 8—Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League—PO Box 20375—Oakland CA 94620—July 2004

PANIL Election

2004 PANIL Steering Committee candidates

Steering Committee elections are conducted by mail in July. Ballots are sent to all PANIL members the last week of June, and results are announced in the September issue of PANIL Notes.

The bylaws of PANIL provide for a Steering Committee of between 5 and 10 members.

Here are your candidates:

Joan Dark

Joan is active in our neighborhood in many ways. As a realtor, she specializes in the Piedmont Avenue area and contributes her knowledge of the local housing market as a regular writer and editor for PANIL Notes. She donates a percentage of her realtor's fee to the Piedmont Avenue Elementary School.

Bess Ellinger

Bess has served as PANIL treasurer since 2001. She maintains the membership database, conducts the annual Steering Committee election, and works to keep PANIL solvent. She is active in PANIL because "I want to give back to the wonderful community that is the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood."

Margitta Gardner

Margitta is one of three "queens of the court" and has been active in the neighborhood for years. She coordinates the Whistlestop Program, participates in the neighborhood watch program and is active in many animal rescue groups, including one that

provides humane control of the feral cat population in Mt. View Cemetery through spay/neuter and adoption efforts.

Martin Huff

Martin is a retired CPA, former Executive Officer at the California State Franchise Tax Board and former Auditor-Controller for the city of Oakland. He has served on the board of directors for Paratransit, Inc. and the Sacramento Regional Transit District. Martin wants to join the PANIL Steering Committee because "as a retiree and resident of Piedmont Gardens, I am interested in the well-being of our local area and wish to do what I can to preserve the sense of community and help improve it where necessary and possible."

Ronile Lahti

"I have lived in this area most of my life, in a home that my grandfather built in 1912. I think this is one of the best places to live in Oakland — dare I say the entire Bay Area! I have coordinated PANIL Notes since we began monthly distribution four plus years ago and would like to see this project continue. PANIL has been a wonderful advocate for the community for the past 30 years, and I want to be a part of the process that continues this advocacy for the next 30."

Bill Manley

Bill has lived in the neighborhood since 1990. He is active in the Citizens Planning Council for the MacArthur BART transit village and works with the East Bay Bicycle Coalition. Bill chaired the PANIL traffic commit-

tee in the mid-90's and has worked with the city to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

Jim Ploss

Jim believes that PANIL works best when coordinating the activities and interests of many different people from our neighborhood. Jim created the PANIL web site and is our most talented meeting facilitator.

Valerie Winemiller

Valerie saw flyers on the phone poles and attended the first public PANIL meeting in October 1974 while a student at CCAC. She has served on the Steering Committee and, when PANIL's structure was different, has been Vice Chair and Chair. She edited PANIL's newsletter for over 15 years. Her special interest has been land use and zoning, often speaking for PANIL before the Planning Commission and City Council. She worked on the creation and maintenance of the Glen Echo Creek Walkway. She wants to see development in the area meet the city's policy goal to "preserve and enhance" the best in the neighborhood.

Treasures, trinkets and more can be found at the 9th annual

JOHN STREET JUMBLE SALE

Saturday, July 10
9 am to 1 pm

100 block of John Street
and well beyond

PANIL Meeting

Wednesday, July 14, 7:30 pm, Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street, 11th Floor, Sky Room

Topic: Liquor stores and wine shops — the good, the bad, and the ugly

To place an item on the agenda, please call Jim Ploss at 420.0570 or email jopl@mindspring.com

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

PANIL Notes is the monthly publication of the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL). Writing, editing, and layout are all done by volunteers. Articles may be reprinted only with the permission of the editors. To submit story ideas or articles call Ronile Lahti at 655.1723 or email rklahti@aol.com
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and Working Groups**

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**Finance/Membership/
Underwriting**

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Library/School/Parks/Gardens

Joan Dark

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Public Safety/9X NCPD Chair

Bill Manley

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Zoning/Building

Valerie Winemiller
653.4552

PANSA

John Woodbury

654.6591, drjohnw@ix.netcom.com

PAMA

Ann Kraynak

428.2698

City Government

District 1 Councilmember

Jane Brunner

238.7001, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com

**District 1 School Board
Representative**

Kerry Hamill

879.8653

kerry.hamill@secmail.ousd.k12.ca.us

**Oakland Police
Department**

Sandi Mauricio

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Lt. Lawrence Green

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PANIL Notes

Editing—Gail Jara and Joan Dark

Coordinator—Ronile Lahti



**School closings in the Oakland
School District**

By Kerry Hamill, District 1 Boardmember

The Longfellow Elementary School at 39th and Market Streets closed its doors as an elementary school last week. State Administrator Dr. Randy Ward had announced its closing, along with three other schools, last January.

In the past, the district couldn't build schools fast enough to accommodate the demand, but since 1999, enrollment at Longfellow Elementary School dropped from 420 to 180 students, and the decline is expected to continue. Across the district, enrollment is down 7,000 students and expected to drop another 1,500 next year.

Each of the closed schools will open with another function in the fall. Longfellow will become an expanded independent study program, which will co-exist with The Village Academy, an alternative middle school currently housed in West Oakland. Other sites will be transformed into a new small high school in East Oakland, an autism center, a residential 6-12 campus, and a site dedicated to training staff and "incubating" future new schools.

Dr. Ward's heavy-handed and unilateral approach to closing schools made it difficult to have a thoughtful conversation about how to adapt and continue to thrive educationally while enrollment declines. Skyrocketing housing prices, charter schools, and a long anticipated declining birth rate guarantee that the drop will continue—at least for now. How we plan for the use of our school sites over the next five years and how we treat the families affected by change are among the most important decisions we face as a city.

Our public school system is funded according to the number of students we serve: 7,000 fewer students reduces our funds by approximately \$35M annually from a \$248M general fund budget. Dr. Ward's view is that paying large administrative overhead costs to maintain half-empty schoolhouses is wasteful and ultimately hurts all students.

It is hard to argue the financial logic. But the school district is a human service organization serving some of the poorest families in the state. In this era of per-pupil funding to each site, can we guarantee an adequate program to students at an under-enrolled school? Most importantly, how will all of this instability affect our upward trend in student performance?

The issues are especially urgent in North Oakland because schools here have traditionally been small (average 350 students). Most campuses below Broadway are struggling with declining enrollment because huge numbers of North Oakland families either transfer into higher performing district schools, choose private and charter schools, or are leaving the city for more affordable areas like Sacramento and Fresno. At a community meeting I hosted June 5, Ward said he does not want to close any more schools in North Oakland. But, he said, four schools (Emerson, Golden Gate, and Washington elementary schools and Carter Middle School) continue to be on a "watch list" and may have to be

consolidated in future years (not next year) if enrollment trends continue.

Ward's staff and North Oakland principals are working with me to find creative solutions to keep schools open and stabilize enrollment. Our early childhood education director is involved because hundreds of preschool students attend the effected sites. A series of community meetings is scheduled in June at Golden Gate, Washington, and Emerson schools, and North Oakland parent leaders are personally calling to invite families to brainstorming sessions. We are surveying parents to measure interest in creating new Kindergarten thru 8th grade schools at Golden Gate and/or Washington to fill now-empty classrooms with middle school aged students who might make other choices. Creating new middle schools options in North Oakland modeled on the successes of the small schools movement is an option I fully support.

We are discussing ways to bring additional money to a campus by sharing space. We are considering new marketing approaches to spread the word about improved North Oakland school test scores.

Even in this downward enrollment cycle, there is no plan to sell any district property. Thousands of new housing units are either under construction or in the permitting process in Oakland—and neither the School Board nor Dr. Ward wants to sell school sites that may be needed in five years.

Piedmont Avenue Elementary School

Closer to home, our own neighborhood school, Piedmont Avenue Elementary, continues to maintain stable enrollment (330 students) and to thrive because its reputation for good teachers and its desirable location attract students from all over the city.

According to school district records, 53% of the Piedmont Avenue students live in the attendance area, and 47% of the students transfer in from other neighborhoods. Nearly 100 students who live in our neighborhood transfer to other district elementary schools, and many more attend private schools. (The district does not keep numbers on private school students.)

The efforts to market Piedmont Avenue Elementary School and attract neighborhood students are continuing. A community carnival sponsored by the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood School Association (PANSA) attracted hundreds in May. Family Reading Nights and regular open houses are also popular. There will be after school care available for all families beginning next year, thanks to the work of parent John Woodbury and others. Our local librarian, Jamie Lee Turbak, wants to create an after school link between our neighborhood library and the school. And—our test scores continue to rise and the district and the community have invested millions in facility upgrades.

Thank you for your continued support for Oakland public schools. Don't hesitate to call with questions, concerns or offers to volunteer. Call me at 879.8653.

Trees, Parking, and other issues

PANIL June meeting

District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner was the featured speaker at PANIL's June meeting. **Highlights —**

Budget: Oakland is in the middle of our two-year budget cycle. Good news! Oakland, unlike many municipalities, budgeted on the assumption that Sacramento would restrict the amount of DMV fees returned to local governments. So Oakland had not counted on that income. Thus, while funds are still "tight," Oakland's position is better than anticipated.

Revenue: The real estate transfer tax continues to be an ongoing source of revenue. Folks still want to purchase homes in many of Oakland's districts.

Trees/Sidewalks: As everybody knows, cracked and uneven sidewalks are a problem in Oakland, and many blame city owned trees for these problems. Ms. Brunner does not agree with new rules proposed by the Public Works Department, which could have the effect of removing many trees. Her proposal is scheduled to go before the Life Enrichment Committee on Tuesday, 7/13, 6 pm. For more information, call 238.7001 or go to http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/council/coun_mem/brunner/treelatter.htm or http://clerkwebsvr1.oaklandnet.com/meetings/4044_A_Life_Enrichment_Committee_04-06-22_Meeting_Agenda.htm. Click on item 7 6-22-04.pdf.

Parking garage/library: A developer has contacted Ms. Brunner's office relative to developing the parking lot at 41st and Piedmont Avenue. While all discussions are in the preliminary stage, the Councilmember advised she feels any development should include plans for a new neighborhood library.

PANIL needs your input on this issue. Please email rklahti@aol.com or call 655.1723 with your comments.

Councilmember Jane Brunner's Annual Summer Picnic

Sunday, 7/11, 10 am to 3 pm
North Lake Temescal Picnic Site
(Parking \$4.00)

Barbeque/drinks provided

Bring a dish to share

Call 238.7001 for more information

Glen Echo Park

Earth day, the creek, and the path

By Arleen Feng

A big Thank You to all the volunteers at our Earth Day event in April. Over two truckloads of ivy were cleared from the south side of Monte Vista, opening up a view of the newly restored creek and making way for new plantings. Continuing projects include ivy control, informational signs, and a new planting area in the hydroseeded meadow at Montell Street. Call Arleen Feng 654.1930 for more information, or join the new Yahoo e-group for announcements and discussion about the creek and surrounding neighborhood. To sign up, go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/glenechowalk>

The end of the rains seemed to stop the mud problems on the new pathway between Montell and Monte Vista. The Creek Committee is trying to get the County Flood Control engineers to test the path to ensure that it won't turn muddy again next winter. Call Valerie Winemiller at 653.4552 for more information.

Thank you!

PANSA Owl Park raffle

The Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood School Association's (PANSA) second raffle brought in another \$4,829 for Owl Park. In addition, they raised \$1,500 at their recent carnival. Go to www.kitshop.biz/piedmont/ for pictures.

PANSA thanks the following local artists and merchants for their raffle donations: Harriet Hutchinson, Ruby Long, Denise E. Roberson, Carol Anne Fusco, Sew Images, Pimlico Place, Jazzercise, Valerie Wineiller, Poppy Fabric, and the B&B on Fairmount. Thanks also to the following: Diablo Publications, Rocco's Pizza, and the Lark Creek Café.

Thank you to new/renewing members:

Gayle Reynolds and Keith Hollon, Sonia Connolly, Emily Campbell, Teri Barr, Ike and Helen Sofaer, Eleanor Levine, James Cook and Heidi Price, Rory Conneely, Jim Ploss, Joyce Benna, Gina Larue, Arleen Feng, Susan Martin, Andrea Ford Roberts, Nancy Sampson, Judith Sutherland, Citibank, Ilse Stern, Valerie Winemiller, Anne and Martin Huff, Rachel Venning and Laura Weide, and Moira Nichols.

Calendar

PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month,
(See page 1 for information)

Steering Committee

1st Thursday of the month, 7 pm
923.1748

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

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

PANSA Meeting

1st Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Piedmont Avenue School
654.6591

Summer Tours

Oakland's Tour Program

Free weekly tours, 10 am
http://www.oaklandnet.com/community/walking_tours/tour_front2.htm
or call 238.3234

Oakland Heritage Alliance

<http://www.oaklandheritage.org>
or call 763.9218

\$5 members/\$10 non-members

Mountain View

2nd Saturday of the month
10 am, free, 658.2588

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597.5011

Paddleball Expert

7/12, 7 pm, Daniel Volk

Live Animals

& Wild Crafts

7/15, 3:30 pm

A family literacy workshop

Note: registration required

Refreshments — participants will receive a hat & a book bag

Juggler/Magician

7/26, 7 pm, Timothy James

Zoomobile — 7/21, 11 am

Meet live animals at the library

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, email Minnie Sage at mamsage@earthlink.net.

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League
P.O. Box 20375
Oakland, CA 94620
www.panil.org

Count Me In!

Here's my check for \$_____ (minimum \$15.00) to join PANIL.

Please send me a safety whistle (\$3.50/each).

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