

## IT'S GARAGE SALE TIME AGAIN!

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### Announcing the 6th Annual JOHN STREET JUMBLE SALE

WHEN: Saturday, July 7  
TIME: 9:30 am—2 pm

Want to participate?  
Contact Lesley Mandros-Bell at 654.1386 or email  
lmbell@slip.net

## PANIL MEETING

June 7

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

### Agenda

- Results of the safety walk
- Panel discussion with Kerry Hamill, members of the Oakland Community Policing Unit and representatives from Oakland Tech. TOPIC: The PANIL Neighborhood and Oakland Technical High School

For more information  
email: rklahti@aol.com or  
call 655.1723

## An Overview of the Safety Problems and Solutions at Oakland Technical High School

by Kerry Hamill, Member, Oakland Board of Education

Regardless of what you read in the newspaper, I urge you to resist the temptation to define Oakland Technical High School by its lowest common denominator.

Yes—it has been a sometimes leaderless and menacing place this year—and its violence has spilled over into the neighborhoods. A number of students from the school have been arrested after a series of incidents since March involving robbery and physical attacks against citizens.

The violence is a headline grabber. But it's not the whole story. As a school board member and the mother of two girls who will eventually attend OTHS, I spend many hours weekly there and find the school as complex and compelling as the city itself—teeming with challenges but still a thriving, sophisticated educational center which boasts some of the state's award-winning "academy programs" for literature, California studies and engineering.

The recent incidents of OTHS students attacking area residents after

school must prompt fundamental changes in the school's security form and function. And as we endeavor to make the campus exist in better harmony with the neighborhood, a number of pivotal pieces must be aligned.

The first has to do with an environment and an attitude about children and learning. It means a strong teacher in every classroom who challenges students but is respectful and enthusiastic. It is a school where nearly every child comes equipped with basic educational skills like reading, writing and math. It's a place with strong leadership—where teachers are supported to ensure that they have what they need, including some daily time to think, process and create. Safe schools are places where there are codes of conduct that are clear and fairly implemented, and where students who cannot or will not follow the rules are not allowed on campus.

All of these features are lacking at Oakland Technical High School in varying degrees, and contribute to this year's unruliness. Beyond the school environ-

ment, some basic tactical features of the campus interfere with control. The school is overcrowded with nearly 2,000 students, and many students feel invisible. The school's successful "academy programs" should be broken up into smaller "schools within schools" around the campus so that students become a part of a small learning community and don't get lost.

There are over 30 entrances and exits throughout the school and many cavernous hidden corners—like basements, stairwells and long hallways. Campus security officers, police officers and the administration often work without communication. There are never enough adults visible throughout the campus—and no intentional policy that puts teachers in the hallways where they are visible between class periods.

The Oakland police department changes shifts at 3 pm—exactly at the time when school ends and students are on the streets in droves, sometimes making trouble and sometimes being victim-

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