

# PANIL Notes

Volume 28 Issue 7—Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League—PO Box 20375—Oakland CA 94620—June 2003

## NSC UPDATE

In the FYE 2004-2005 budget proposed by Mayor Brown, 7 Neighborhood Service Coordinator (NSC) positions out of the current 18 were scheduled to be eliminated. Currently, five of the seven are filled and two are not. This means that the remaining NSCs would each serve 4 or 5 Neighborhood Community Policing Councils (NCPs). They would be stretched so thin that it is unlikely that any NCP would be served well or that any NSC would be effective.

After Thursday's budget meeting, it now appears that several council members are in favor of restoring all seven positions. However, our council member, Jane Brunner is not. She, according to her Chief of Staff Justin Horner, only favors restoring the five currently filled positions. This means that our Police Service Area (PSA 2) will only have 2 NSCs to cover 10 beats. The same will hold true for Police Service Area 3.

PANIL has long held that the NSCs are critical to what is left of community policing and opposes any reduction in their number.

There are still two chances to be heard on this issue:

**Tuesday, 6/17, 11:00 am**

**Thursday, 6/19, 5:30 pm**

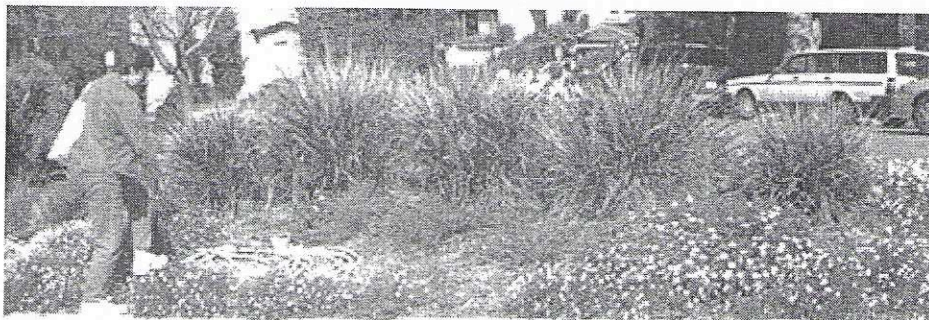
**(both hearings will be held in the City Council Chambers, City Hall)**

Voice your opinion on these cuts by emailing:

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## Our gardens at mid-summer

By Joanna Smith



PANIL member Miriam Valesco enjoys the neighborhood garden at Gilbert and Mather Streets

What kind of vegetables can grow in the Piedmont Avenue area? How do gardens look at midsummer? Join us for a tour of flower and vegetable gardens at the third annual Piedmont Avenue Area Garden Tour, Saturday, July 12, 2003 from 10 am to 2 pm. Tickets and maps will be sold the day of the tour at the Key System Plaza, at the corner of 41st and Piedmont Avenue. Ticket prices will be \$3 for PANIL members; \$5 for non-members. Additional amounts will be gratefully accepted as contributions benefit the activities of PANIL, especially the production of this newsletter.

## Target: MacArthur BART

By Bill Manley

No. This is not a terrorist warning or a new action movie; it is the latest development in the decade-long effort to integrate MacArthur BART into the surrounding community by creating a transit village around the station. The concept of the transit village brings housing and commercial activity to transit hubs so that people can walk to and from housing and business without driving. For over a year, the City and BART have been working with a developer, Creative Housing, on a master plan for the area bounded by MacArthur, Telegraph, 40th Street and Highway 24—most of which is currently the BART parking lot.

The latest proposal from the developer calls for a 170,000 sq. ft. Target store to be located on the site along with 325 units of housing. Another 250 units are proposed for the west

side of the freeway on Martin Luther King Blvd. While staff is studying the details, Kathy Klinbaum of the City of Oakland and Patty Hirota of BART reported highlights of the proposal to the MacArthur BART Citizens Planning Committee (CPC) on May 21 at Mosswood Park. The CPC is a group of concerned community members formed to bring the needs and desires of the community into the planning done by BART and the City.

Several CPC members expressed wariness (if not outrage) at the idea of one massive store dominating what is supposed to be a transit "village." One audience member stated that a store that size is larger than many Costco stores. Another person said that Target should not be rejected just because it's a chain, but rather should be valued for the variety of retail services it brings to a community. Another countered that it may ruin the few locally owned retail

(Continued on page 2)



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

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**PANIL Notes**

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*(Transit Village continued from page 1)*

shops struggling to survive on Telegraph. A fuller exploration of the proposal and alternatives will be presented at the June 25 CPC meeting.

The CPC also learned of the formation of a design committee—funded by a Caltrans Environmental Justice Grant—to improve pedestrian access to the BART station from the west—from Martin Luther King Boulevard. This could include a pedestrian tunnel under Highway 24. Convenient walking access would do much to reunite a neighborhood that was divided when the freeway and BART were constructed in the 1960s.

If you would like to get involved or have some ideas you'd like to express on the transit village, contact PANIL's CPC representative, Bill Manley, at 658.2419 or bmanleynow@yahoo.com.

**PIEDMONT AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY**

**2003 summer reading  
program: June 7- August 16**

**R**ead 8 hours during the summer and become eligible to win a free book, a certificate good for a free mini-pizza from Round Table, passes to entertainment centers such as Chabot Space and Science Center, plus other prizes!

Parents and older kids may read to children who aren't reading yet. Sign up at our branch library.

**Upcoming events**

**Saturday, June 14, 11:00 am**

Craft program with East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse. Kids can make a wizard's hat or a magic wand.

**Thursday, June 19, 11:00 am**

ZOOiversity—introduction to animals.

**Tuesday, July 8, 4:00 pm**

Sing songs with popular Bonnie Lockhart.

**Wednesday, July 23, 11:30 am**

Magic by Alex—a fun and amazing show.

While there will be no branch closures, Mayor Brown's proposed FYE 2004-2005 budget does reduce the library's book budget city-wide by \$164M. To help make up this short-fall, "wish lists" have been posted on Amazon.com. Go to "wish list" and type in Piedmont Avenue library.

And, kudos to the Friends of the Piedmont Avenue library and all the neighbors who purchased books at their recent sale. Over \$1,200 was raised for our branch!

**PANIL UPDATES**

**Steering committee elections**

By Bess Ellinger

**W**ould you like to help improve the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood? Do you have a few hours a month that you could spare? Please consider joining the PANIL Steering committee. Enthusiasm, but no experience required. Contact Bess Ellinger at elellinger@netscape.net or call 923.1748.

The annual election for PANIL Steering Committee members will be held in July. Steering Committee candidate bios will be published in the July issue of PANIL Notes. Ballots will be mailed to all members in July. Join PANIL now so you'll have a vote!

**Volunteer needed:**

**Once a month, update the calendar page for PANIL's website**

**Requirements:** You must have and use email, be able to use Excel, and have Excel on your computer. You must be willing to publish your phone number and email address so people can contact you to give you information.

**Tasks—Every month:**

- Receive information by phone and email
- Add the information to an Excel file
- Send the Excel file by email to PANIL's web group

**For other information, and to volunteer:** contact Ronile Lahti at 655.1723 or email rklahti@aol.com.

**Summer tours of Oakland**

Piedmont Avenue is on Oakland Heritage Alliance's 2003 summer tour list with a tour of the *Piedmont Avenue Commercial District* led by Avenue-resident Ruby Long on Sunday, July 27, 2 to 4 pm. The tour will start from the Kiosk at 41st and Piedmont Avenue.

For information on other Oakland Heritage Alliance summer tours ([www.oaklandheritage.org](http://www.oaklandheritage.org)) call 763.9218 or email [info@oaklandheritage.org](mailto:info@oaklandheritage.org).

For information about the free guided walking tours of Oakland, call the tour hotline at 238.3234 or the Oakland Convention & Visitors Authority at 839.9000.

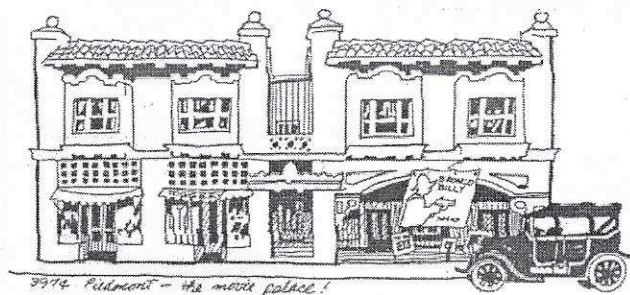


## Avenue history

From a series by local history Ted Wurm, which first appeared in PANIL Notes in 1977.

The American Bank was the first such institution to open a branch on Piedmont Avenue. In 1921 they located at No. 4058, after much pressure from the many merchants who had become fed up with having to hop a trolley car downtown to do their banking business. Later known as American Trust Company, the bank had a most attractive building erected at the southwest corner of Piedmont and 40<sup>th</sup> in 1927. American Trust eventually merged with Wells Fargo and the sturdy building was demolished late in 1971. (The wrecker was dismayed that it took three times as long as estimated to wipe out this fine old "fortress.")

The present bank property represents a considerable expansion, and among the small retail-type shops eliminated were Red Arrow Cleaners at 3965. This had previously been a tailor shop operated by the dad of Tony Martin (vocalist of the "Big Band" era). Upstairs at 3967, Doc Yore, the dentist, opened his first office in 1932. The original Piedmont Branch Library came to the Avenue in 1925 and was located at 3975-77. Five years later the library was at 3943-45 and finally settled at the present location on 41<sup>st</sup> Street in the attractive Spanish-style building erected in 1933.



Continuing down the avenue, at 3974 had been the second movie "palace," operated by Katherine Heber. The upstairs windows at that time were part of a false front, apparently to disguise the building. Nels Carlson told us the theater featured mostly westerns with Bronco Billy and lively piano accompaniment. (Note: Mark Jang's memories of this building will be featured in the July issue of PANIL Notes.)

At the corner of Piedmont and Yosemite, No. 3800 was for many years the attractive, gleaming-white location of Margaret

Burnham's Cottage candies. On the other side of the street, opposite Yosemite, stood one of the neighborhood's favorite buildings, the Plymouth Church complex, which ran through to Howe Street. 3791 was the address and it comprised the Plymouth Congregational Church and Center, the latter being a large recreation hall making up Plymouth Center Athletic Club in the late teens and early twenties. Leo Guerra told us that most of the kids used the hall in the evenings for basketball games and other productive activities. The eyesore parking structure that replaced Plymouth Church was a backward step from the neighborhood's point of view.

Just up the street from Plymouth, back in the 1910 era, was Theresa L. Merchant Home for Fabiola Nurses, 3791 Piedmont Avenue. Fabiola, as old-timers recall, was the big hospital at Broadway and Moss, which was incorporated into Kaiser Hospital at the time of World War II. The nurses' home became Norway Hall, scene of many fashion shows, parties, and meetings until fairly recent years. It, too, fell when the parking building was thrown up.

Finally, we come to Moss Avenue, but now it's called MacArthur. The broad boulevard was created to feed the Bay Bridge, opened in 1936. Moss had been a narrow, crooked old part of Highway 50, but it ended at Telegraph between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup>. There was considerable agitation, sup-

ported by Piedmont Avenue merchants, to make 40<sup>th</sup> Street the main bridge approach, since it was already 100 feet wide. The "Bay Bridge-Fortieth Street Lateral Campaign" claimed that by using "the streets we already have" the city "can put the bridge on a paying basis from the start!" Moss won out; it was straightened and widened and a few Piedmont Avenue stores were wiped out.

While we're in the area, we can point out that St. Mary's College stood on Broadway at the end of Piedmont Avenue from 1888 to 1928. Catholic residents of the area often attended Sunday services at the college chapel before St. Leo's was opened in 1911, and baseball teams from several of the old neighborhoods could use the college's field on Sundays.



## Calendar

### PANIL

7/9, Wednesday, 7:30 pm  
Sky Room, 11th Floor  
Piedmont Gardens  
110 41st Street, 655.1723

### Steering Committee

7/3, Thursday, 7 pm  
655.1723

### Garden Tour

7/12, Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm  
41st and Piedmont Avenue  
653.4052

### Glen Echo Creek

#### Work Day

7/12, Saturday, 9:30 am  
Monte Vista Avenue, 654.1930

### John Street Jumble

#### Sale

Saturday, 6/28  
9 am to 1 pm  
654.1584

### PANSA

#### General Meeting

#### Book Care Night

7/1, Tuesday, 7 pm  
Piedmont Avenue School

### First Friday Night Out

Plymouth Church, 7 pm  
Music, Board Games, Food  
424 Monte Vista, 654.5300

### Councilmember

#### Jane Brunner's

#### Yearly Picnic

6/22, Sunday 1 to 5 pm  
Drinks/Bar-B-Que provided  
Bring a dish to share  
Meet at the North Temescal  
picnic area — 238.7001

### Piedmont Avenue

#### Branch Library

160 41st Street  
597.5011

#### Family Storytimes

##### Toddlers

Wednesday, 10:30 am

##### Pre School

Wednesday, 11 am

#### Lawyers in the Library

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 5:45 pm



**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.

I will distribute PANIL Notes to my neighbors.

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to PANIL, PO Box 20375, Oakland, CA 94620

Contributions to PANIL are not tax deductible

Please check your expiration date

## Complimentary Copy

PANIL Notes is printed on recycled paper by Piedmont Copy Center, 4237 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA, 655.3030.

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Illustrations: Page 1, Debby Valesco Prohias  
 Page 3, Valerie Winemiller



**The Piedmont Avenue School  
 Reading Partners need you!**  
 To volunteer call  
**Ruby Long at 595.9514 or  
 Donna Bersaglieri at 482.0862.**



Clean out your closets, basements,  
 and attics—it's time for the  
**JOHN STREET JUMBLE**  
 neighborhood yard sale  
 Saturday, June 28, 9 am to 1 pm

Do you or your block want to participate?  
 Call Lesley Mandros Bell at 654.1386

Donate items to PANIL's booth  
 Call 923.1748 or email [ellinger@netscape.net](mailto:ellinger@netscape.net)



Joan Dark

The Neighborhood Realtor  
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**PANSA**

**Piedmont Avenue  
 Neighborhood  
 School Association**

Piedmont Avenue School Library—4314 Piedmont Avenue

General Meeting and Book Care Night  
 first Tuesday of each month, 7 pm

Call 510.654.6591 for more information

