

PANIL

Piedmont Avenue

Neighborhood Improvement League

News and Notes / Volume 36 / Jan-Feb 2011

PANIL was formed in 1974 and to this day continues its mission to be the voice of the community on matters of public interest, public safety and neighborhood affairs. Member dues, advertising, and volunteer services pay for all activities.

Piedmont Avenue Library May Move to Modular Unit in October

By Peg Janosch

On January 12th PANIL and the Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library hosted a meeting where the Oakland Public Library's Associate Director, Gerry Garzon reviewed the status of the Piedmont Avenue Library. As we know, in 2009, Citibank sold the property rented to the Oakland Library. Citibank had been charging a token rent of \$1 per month. The new landlord is charging \$4,250 per month.

The City Council of Oakland agreed to lease the property until 10/31/11 at this rate. The cost is paid by Measure Q funds, not the City's general fund. In fiscal years 2009-2011 the Library's general funding has decreased by approximately \$3.7 million.

The Library and the community have been studying a number of options in 2010. Several options were considered. Staying in the current location will cost \$51,000 per year. The money is not available in the Library budget. Other locations on the Avenue were considered for rental but none were substantially less expensive. Purchase of a site on Piedmont Avenue was discussed, but the City Attorney has determined that Measure Q funds cannot be used for major capital construction or purchase.

Meetings were held with City Staff, community members and a private developer to consider the possibility of a multi-level development on the city-owned Key Route

parking lot, but they found that it was not economically feasible for either the City or the developer.

Moving to the Broadway/MacArthur Redevelopment Area was not popular with the community in the 2010 survey and most of the RDA funds are dedicated to the MacArthur Transit Village Project and are not available.

A temporary solution is the only one that seems possible today. The Library will recommend to City Council that the Piedmont Avenue Library move to a modular building leased at approximately \$18,000 per year. The modular will be slightly smaller than our current library but will be ADA compliant and will have bathrooms and air-conditioning. The location of the modular building has not been decided but two potential locations are being considered: the Key Route parking lot and Piedmont Avenue school yard. The move will be completed by the end of October.

The modular building will be temporary until the economy improves and other options, including establishing a Mello-Roos tax district, can be considered. It is important that our community stay involved in the budget process, making our commitment to keeping our library open and useable obvious to all our representatives.

The Piedmont Avenue Merchants' Association is hosting a neighborhood meeting with Councilmember Jane Brunner on Thursday, 2/24 at Piedmont Gardens where the library will be an agenda item, and Mayor Quan has said she will call a district-wide meeting in April — date and place to be decided.

PANIL monthly meetings bring the information to you and let you ask questions.

Wednesday, February 9

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm

General Meeting — 8:00 pm

Officer Eddie Simlin, Neighborhood Services Technician

Oakland Police Department

Personal Safety and Home Security

PANIL meetings are the second Wednesday of each month

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

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The Buildings Of The Church Of St. Leo The Great

By Rev. Timothy K. Johnson
Pastor, Church of St. Leo the Great

The church of St. Leo the Great celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2011, and a full year of celebration is planned.

The Church of St. Leo the Great began as a response to the growing number of Catholics in the new City of Piedmont and the surrounding area of Oakland. The first Mass was said on January 1, 1911 in Mowbray Hall in Piedmont with thirty people present. After two months there, the founding pastor, Fr. Owen Lacey, experimented with a different location: The Standard Grocery at 4056 Piedmont Avenue, near 41st Street. Before the heyday of the automobile, this location proved preferable to Mowbray Hall, and the congregation grew.

The community sought a suitable spot for a permanent parish building and found it in the family home of Thomas Hill, noted California painter, at the corner of Piedmont and Ridgeway. The Hill home had extensive frontage on the Avenue and was for sale for \$16,000. The congregation bought it, and it became both home for Fr. Lacy and the church for services.

Alongside the house on Piedmont Avenue, a wooden church with a vague resemblance to California mission style was built for a cost of \$9,000. The furnishings at that time cost \$6,500. The new Church was dedicated on January 16, 1912, only a year and a couple of weeks since the first Mass in the new parish. This original church was later moved to Howe Street where it is now the school auditorium.

In its early years, the community was renowned for its parish dances,

galas, teas, whist parties, raffles, minstrel shows, and plays. The congregation grew and religious services and educational programs expanded.

In 1920, a new rectory was built at the corner of Ridgeway and Howe. It was intended to be a convent for sisters who would teach in the parish school that the congregation hoped for but would also serve as Church offices and priests' residence until the school could be built.

By that time, the community was outgrowing building they had erected eight years before. In 1912, and plans for a new church were made. It was built on the Hill's family property but reoriented to face Ridgeway. The Italian Romanesque Church we see today was dedicated in September, 1926. The cost was \$125,000 including furnishings.

St. Leo's features in the quip of the late San Francisco Chronicle columnist, Herb Caen, that the seven-block Howe St. in Oakland is the only street he knew of where you can be born, married, and buried.

The difficulties leading up to the Great Depression precluded the building of a rectory right next to the Church near Piedmont Avenue. The school that was hoped for in the 20's and delayed by the depression and World War II was finally built on Howe Street and dedicated on October 18, 1948. Because there was no money to build and move the rectory, the home at 4264 Howe Street, next door to the school, was purchased and extensively enlarged to serve as a convent for the sisters who first staffed the school.

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Advertisers can reach over 2,000 neighborhood households!
For details, see PANIL's website http://panil.org/misc/PANIL_Rates.pdf
or contact **Margitta Gardner**, 652-6609 or contact@PANIL.org

Redevelopment of Safeway Rockridge Shopping Center

The issues involved in proposed redevelopment of the Rockridge Shopping Center are well described in the web site of the Rockridge Community Planning Council at <http://www.rockridge.org/safewayRockCent.html>. The Rockridge Community Planning Council are the neighbors on the north side of the project. Links are also included to PDFs of Safeway's proposal, as well as to alternate site plans developed by architects volunteering with two community groups from the surrounding area.

The Rockridge Shopping Center is one of the largest properties in North Oakland, and a rare opportunity to transform a suburban-style sea of parking to an area also friendly to pedestrians, bicyclists and transit-users without loss of parking spaces. Paid employees of the Safeway project have been collecting signatures in support of the project without alteration, and in the process, sometimes misrepresenting the community concerns expressed at earlier meetings and hearings.

The Buildings Of The Church Of St. Leo The Great

(continued)

Fr. Owen Lacey, who had overseen the founding of this parish in 1911 and all of the subsequent expansion, died on January 9, 1951 -- just over forty years since the first Mass at Mowbray Hall.

The last of the parish buildings to be developed was the Parish Hall and Gymnasium at the corner of Ridgeway and Howe opposite the Church and Rectory. That was dedicated on May 6, 1962.

In the last eighteen years, since 1992, all of these buildings have been seismically

upgraded, re-roofed, and painted. In 2001, the Church had major seismic re-habilitation and deferred maintenance issues addressed.

Both the parish and school communities have changed a great deal in the last one hundred years. However, the Church of St. Leo the Great begins its second century dedicated to continuing to serve the City of Piedmont and the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood.

PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month
7:30 to 9 p.m.
Piedmont Gardens
110 41st Street
11th Floor Sky Room

PANIL Steering Committee meets monthly
For the time, date and place email contact@panil.org

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month
Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 a.m.
654-1930

Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour
2nd and 4th Saturdays
10 a.m., FREE

Oakland Heritage Alliance

February 10, 7:30 pm.
Holly Alozo
will speak about the
Peralta Hacienda
at the Peralta Hacienda
2465 34th Ave
(at Coolidge Ave and Hyde)

For information:
<http://www.oaklandheritage.org/>

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597-5011

Storytimes
Toddlers

Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.
Pre school
Wednesday, 11 a.m.

Saturday Knitting Club
Every Saturday 3 to 4 p.m.

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Note: Contributions to PANIL are not tax deductible

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League
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*Organization matters.
 Persistence matters.
 PANIL delivers these.*

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Saturday, March 19
**Fundraising Auction
 for Oakland Tech**

On Saturday, March 19, 6:30-10:30 pm at the T. Gary Rogers Rowing Center, 2999 Glascock Street, Oakland there will be an evening to support Oakland Tech with silent and live auctions, food, fun, and entertainment. The auction is Tech's main fundraiser. Monies raised enhance students' academic, performing arts and sports programs, college tours, and after-school activities. Tickets are \$25 per person before February 25, \$35 afterwards. To purchase tickets, contact auction@oaklandtech.com. For information: <http://oaklandtech.com/otpsa/auction/>

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**Community Meetings
 with Jane Brunner**

Saturday, February 5
 10am to noon
 Peralta School, 460 63rd Street

Oakland's Plan for
 Violence Prevention
 For information: 238-7001

Thursday, February 24
 7:00 p.m.
 Sponsored by
 Piedmont Avenue Merchants Association
 Piedmont Gardens
 11th Floor Sky Room

Topics Include discussion about
 Piedmont Avenue Branch Library