PANIL Notes

Volume 33 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620 March 2008

ASKED ON THE AVENUE

Your Solution to Oakland Crime?

Michael Moore
Perry Place

The only thing you can do anywhere to reduce crime is educate people, because education creates opportunities.

Aaron Brown
Harrison St.

People need to talk to one another and watch out for one another. When our car was hit in front of the house, our neighbors saw and told us about it. And keep your porch light on!

Jim Prentiss
Piedmont Ave.

Bomb the place? It's hopeless. It's endemic; cemented in the neighborhood. Unless you can get some neighborhood philanthropy going, like the stuff Bill Gates does.

Michelle Stone
Grand Ave.

A strong police presence. It's really the only thing that will work.

Erica Lundberg
Monte Vista Ave.

More neighborhood networking! A policeman recently told me that when neighbors talk, communicate, the neighborhood is a better place to live and much less attractive to criminals.

MACARTHUR BART STATION TRANSFORMATION

MacArthur Transit Village Moves Closer to Reality

By Bill Manley

Is there a better use for the parking lot at the MacArthur BART Station? For years, many have envisioned a multi-use "transit village," but efforts to create it have been slow or stymied. Now, a revised plan with a Environmental Impact Report, is being presented to the community.

On February 7, in the Beebe Memorial Church gym — directly across the street from the parking lot in question, a standing-room-only audience learned about plans for a transformation of that site. The meeting, organized by Councilmember Jane Brunner, was the first public presentation of the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the MacArthur BART Transit Village.

In 2006, PANIL Notes described this proposal (*Transit Village – Alive and Kicking* Nov/Dec. 2006) and stated that an EIR would be forthcoming in February – but we meant Feb. 2007! The 1,300- page document has finally appeared. During the wait, many people were concerned that the turmoil in the housing markets and the economy would derail yet another attempt to build the village.

Transit, bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly

Walter Miles, long-time chair of the ad-hoc Citizens Planning Committee for this village, could not suppress his enthusiasm as he opened the meeting. He recounted the long series of starts and stops in his 15+ year involvement. His issued a special thanks to Lynette Sweet, the BART Board member who had always expressed her strong support for the project.

Continued on page 2

March PANIL Meeting

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

7:30-8 p.m.—**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council**
Audience participation and input: voice your public safety concerns directly to our neighborhood police officers.

8-9 p.m.—**Neighborhood Gardens**
Traffic Circles, Median Strip Gardens, Creekside Plantings, Native Plants for Your Garden, and more

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

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

PANIL *Notes* is the monthly publication of (PANIL). Writing, editing and layout are all done by volunteers.

Articles may be reprinted only with the permission of the editors.

Circulation: 2,000 copies

Steering Committee and Working Groups

Advertising/Library/Media
Joan Dark
338-1316
jdark@pacunion.com

Beat 9X NCPC Co-Chair/ PANIL Distribution
Margitta Gardner
652-6609
migbrynas@aol.com

Beat 9X NCPC Co-Chair/ Finance and Membership
Bill Manley
658-2419
bmanleynow@yahoo.com

Senior Liaison
Moira Nichols
652-3192

Zoning/Building
Valerie Winemiller
653-4552
vwinemiller@hotmail.com

PAMA

Ann Kraynak
428-2698
piedmontsys@sbcglobal.net

City Government

District 1 Councilmember
Jane Brunner
238-7001
jbrunner@oaklandnet.com

Maria Barra-Gibson
238-7014

District 1 School Director
Kerry Hamill
879-8653
kerry.hamill@ousd.k12.ca.us

Oakland Police Dept

Capt. A. Toribio
238-6703
atoribio@oaklandnet.com

NSC Paul Brekke-Miesner
Neighborhood Services Coordinator
238-3102
pbrekke-miesner@oaklandnet.com

PSO Frank Gysin
Problem Solving Officer
Cell: 393-8675
fgysin@oaklandnet.com

MacArthur Transit Village

Continued from page 1

Against a backdrop of artist's conceptions displayed on surrounding walls, the next speaker, Carol Galante of Bridge Housing, provided an overview of the project, which did not differ substantially from what we saw in 2006:

- 632 residential units, 108 of which would be "affordable" (below market rate)
- 35,000 feet of commercial space
- 5,000 square feet for a community center
- 1,300 parking spaces (300 of which would be dedicated to BART patrons)

Despite these high numbers, the developers—McGrath Properties and Bridge Housing—tried to keep the project within the scale of the neighborhood. Buildings along Telegraph would be 4 stories high, stepping up to 6 stories along the freeway. Some could argue that this is still too big, as most of the buildings across Telegraph are still only 1-2 stories. Earlier plans by these same developers showed two 20+ story buildings against the freeway, but community opposition and economic realities prompted a reduction in the size of the buildings and the number of units.

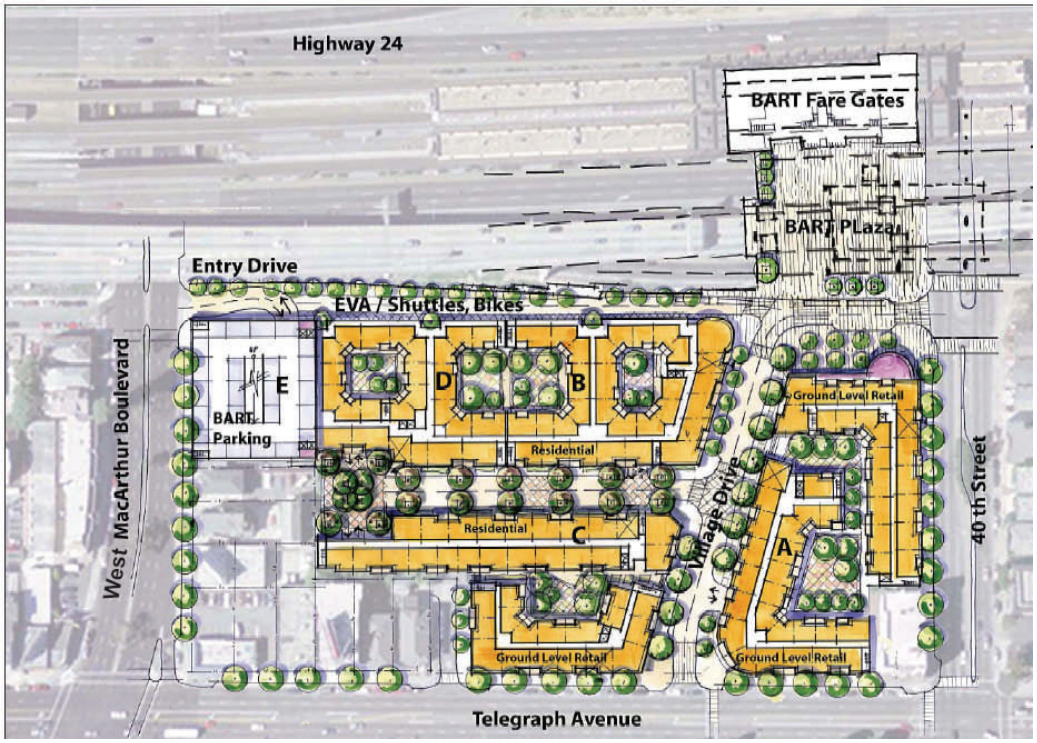
Bicycle access from the east-west directions will be enhanced by reducing median width on 40th Street and adding bike lanes; west of Telegraph. Bicycle access will be promoted on 41st, explained Jason Patton, Manager of Oakland's Bicycle and Pedestrian program, "Safe bicycle access to the station is a key concern." The station already has one of the highest rates of bicycle use in the BART system.

The commercial space is expected to be a great convenience to commuters as well as the neighborhood, which is relatively underserved by retail resources.

From a circulation perspective, the current frontage road between the parking lot and the BART station itself will be converted from a one-way to a two-way street, and the new parking garage will be located on MacArthur to take advantage of the wide boulevard and easier access. The site will have two pedestrian-oriented streets between the housing, labeled for now "Village Drive and Internal Street." An audience member suggested, to a round of applause, that the Frontage Road be named Walter Miles Drive in recognition of Miles' dedication to this effort.

Parking

Several in the audience decried the reduction in BART parking. Others said it was "the right thing to do" in view of the high cost of the garage, especially considering the fact that only 10% of patrons come to the station via private auto.



Of the $32 million in city funds for the project, about half will go to subsidize the affordable housing and the other half for the garage (about $53,000 per parking space!). But, from a public cost standpoint, this is significantly less than the $120 million in public funds expended on the Fruitvale Village. Some suggested charging a higher fee for parking, which could encourage carpooling or other choices. Others suggested unbundling the proposed 1000 non-BART spaces, so they could be available for BART patrons.

Domasio Treisman, a resident of Webster Street saw problems with the parking because currently the overflow brings cars to his street and in front of his residence daily. He fears that will potentially worsen. One remedy is for the city to require residential parking permits, used widely around Rockridge BART and of course right here in the Piedmont Avenue area. Jane Brunner, added her support to the requirement for parking permits, but cautioned that the city is examining a substantial increase to the current $15 annual fee in light of the high costs of program administration. Watch for public meetings on that subject.

Many in the audience raised the issue of crime in the area. While sympathetic, the developers pointed out that, while they had a vested interest in a safe neighborhood for the success of the project, they could not take on the wider safety issues the city is facing.

A few people were concerned about impact to existing buildings such as the older 3-story structure on the corner of Telegraph and 40th. The drawings show the new structure smack against the walls and windows of the older building.

Kathy Kleinbaum invited the audience to get a free copy of the draft EIR by downloading it from the city Website, http://oaklandnet.com/government/ceda/revised/planningzoning/MajorProjectsSection/environmentaldocuments.html, or picking up a copy from the Planning Department at 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, 3rd floor.

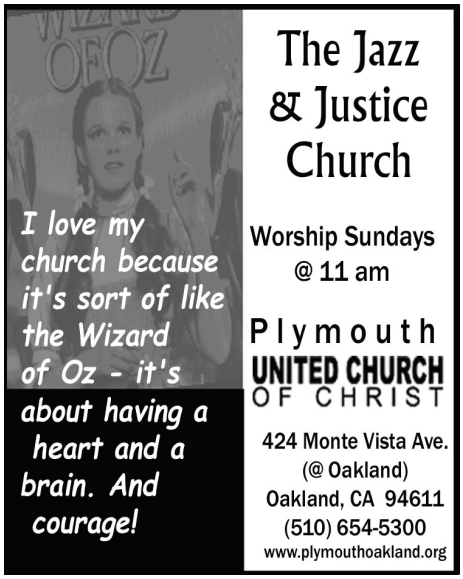
There will be a Planning Commission hearing in City Hall on March 5, at 6 p.m., and the comment period will close on March 17 at 4 p.m.

NEXT MEETING MARCH 19

Senior Village Planning Continues

Want to stay in your own home as you age? A group of neighbors is planning a Piedmont Avenue senior village, a membership program that would provide in-home services to seniors who need them. Eight neighbors attended the first meeting, on Feb. 13; a second meeting will be held Wednesday, March 19, at 7 p.m. Come to the sixth-floor Concepts Room at Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st St. with your questions and ideas.

Successful senior villages have launched in San Francisco and Palo Alto. For background, see "It Takes a Village," in the San Francisco Chronicle, Dec. 12, 2007. For more information about the Piedmont Avenue senior village, contact Judith Coates, jdcoates13@yahoo.com or 653-1183.



Calendar

(for more neighborhood events go to www.panil.org/calendar)

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
email **contact@panil**.org for time, date and place of monthly meeting

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 Saturday of the month
10 a.m., FREE

Events at the Chapel of the Chimes

4499 Piedmont Avenue
654-0123

Historical and Botanical Tour
3rd Saturday of the month
10 a.m. to noon, FREE

Jazz at the Chimes
3rd Sunday of the month
$20/children under 12 FREE
2 to 4 p.m.

Oakland Heritage Alliance Lecture Series
2nd Thursday of the month
7:30 p.m.
$5 OHA members/$10 non-members/$5 low income
For more information contact: www.oaklandheritage.org, 763-9218

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.

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, send e-mail to: contact@panil.org

Home Improvement

by ShopGirl

Give your home a spring makeover with the help of these local experts in décor, renovation, and refurbishment.

Whether you're looking for a natural-spectrum light bulb for a desk lamp or under-cabinet halogens for your kitchen, **Piedmont Lighting** can brighten your day. The small, well-stocked shop carries table lamps, floor lamps, sconces, ceiling fixtures and specialty lighting in a wide range of styles, from contemporary to Victorian. Owner **Siavash Haddad** opened the store 11 years ago after a long career as a systems engineer in Kansas City; he's glad to fill special orders and rewire your old, non-working lamps. One of the niftiest items in the shop: a portable, rechargeable, energy-conserving LED lamp ($29)—a good item to keep in your earthquake kit.

Family-owned **Piedmont Doors & Windows** has occupied four Oakland locations during its 20 years of business, three of them on or near Piedmont Avenue. In its current location just off the avenue, the store has limited showroom hours but continues to consult and work on selected projects. As in the past, the company offers sales and installation of doors, windows, locks, and hardware from respected manufacturers such as Marvin,
Jeld-wen, Art Glass, Baldwin, Ashley Norton and Schlage.

A stress-free new kitchen, bathroom or addition? That's the aim of **J.B. Turner & Sons**, which offers comprehensive design-build services—"from pulling the permits to installing everything," says designer **Marilyn Gardunio**, who owns the business with her husband, John, a general contractor; and son Sean, a finisher. The showroom features a wide range of products and lines and currently has a "green" display of bamboo and eucalyptus-wood cabinets, cork flooring and recycled glass countertops. Look for big changes in the summer, when, after 54 years in the same location, J.B. Turner moves to 1866 Pleasant Valley Ave., next door to the Kona Club.

Most tile shops are staffed by salespeople. At **Art Tile**, your salesman is an experienced tile installer—and that makes all the difference, says owner **Kevin Martin**, who bought the 22-year-old business five years ago from founder Royal Yates. "Our three employees have a total of 40 years of experience," says Kevin. "They've seen every type of installation." The shop specializes in Arts-and-Crafts–style designs that work with North Oakland's older homes—lines such as Dirk Elliot, FeatureTile and the Craftsman series. Art Tile also carries an extensive selection of glass tiles, popular for backsplashes and tub surrounds. "And if you don't see what you're looking for," says Kevin, "bring in a sample and we'll match it."

A good painting job is all about "superior preparation," says **Dean Byington**, owner of **Aurora Painting and Decorating**. Dean, who lives on Robley Terrace, manages six crews that have painted many houses in the neighborhood, including several historic homes: he recently painted the interior of the large Julia Morgan house at Gilbert and Ridgeway. In business for 25 years, Dean also specializes in natural wood refinishing and re-varnishing, and uses the services of a color consultant on every project. Aurora's artistic approach is no accident: Dean is a fine artist who shows his work locally at the Paule Anglim Gallery in San Francisco.

Modernseed's owners, Melissa Pfeiffer and Shanette Westphal, didn't just start a business back in 2003—they created a new market niche: contemporary furniture and design for young children.
Modernseed's stylish, well-crafted products include a molded plywood log rocker for one to two children ($215); the Tripp Trapp chair from Norway, which "grows" as the child matures ($230; available in eight finishes); and a soft resin Kiss Bench in lipstick red ($500). The showroom on upper Piedmont Avenue stocks only a sampling of everything available online, but there are always sale bins ($10 to $15) and a complete selection of swatches and finishes. Sign up to get e-mail notices of twice-yearly sidewalk sales, and don't miss the Moms & Dads area of the website, with furniture and accessories for grown-ups.

Although **Wooden Window** isn't on Piedmont Avenue, it has strong ties to the neighborhood. A longtime advertiser in *PANIL Notes*, the company has worked on many neighborhood houses and three years ago completed a large pro-bono job for Oakland Technical High School. "We persuaded the powers that be to go with wood instead of aluminum, and made that transition for them," says
company owner Bill Essert. Wooden Window works almost exclusively on houses built between 1880 and 1940, and has implemented many "green" strategies: it recycles old hardware and glass and delivers sawdust to American Soil, where it's composted. One more neighborhood connection: on the second Thursday of every month, Bill—a former trumpet player with the Oakland Symphony—plays with his band, Jazz Katz, at the Park Avenue Bar & Grill at 4184 Piedmont Ave.

Continued on page 6

MARCH 19, 7 P.M.

Concert to Benefit Christopher Rodriguez

Christopher Rodriguez was a student in the Oakland Youth Chorus, and that group will perform in a benefit concert for Chris on March 19. Proceeds will be used for his continuing treatment and rehabilitation as he resumes daily activities. Christopher was paralyzed from the waist down by a stray bullet fired during a robbery at Piedmont Avenue and Pleasant Valley on Jan. 10.

The Oakland Youth Chorus for Music Education will join Keith Terry and Crosspulse Percussion Ensemble, East Bay Anointed Voices, and other groups at 7 p.m. at First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 14th and Castro streets.

Tickets, $15 in advance, $20 at the door, are available by calling 287-9700 x110 or from www.oaklandyouthchorus.org.

Home Improvement

Continued from page 5

Piedmont Lighting
4094 Piedmont Ave.
923-1115
piedmontlightingstore.com

Piedmont Doors & Windows
8 Rio Vista Ave.
601-5540

J.B. Turner & Sons
3911 Piedmont Ave.
658-3441

Art Tile
4336 Broadway
547-8288

Aurora Painting & Decorating
655-9267

Modernseed
4456 Piedmont Ave.
547-4445
modernseed.com

Wooden Window
849 29th St.
893-1157
woodenwindow.com

Lireille
Gallery of Contemporary Jewelry and Art

3980 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, CA 94611
Ph: 510-5473455 Open Daily www.lireille.com

MARCH 28 THROUGH APRIL 26

Piedmont Avenue Tulip and Art Festival

The third annual, month-long Piedmont Avenue Tulip and Art Festival begins with Mountain View Cemetery's Tulip Extravaganza the last weekend in March and features artists sponsored by Piedmont Avenue merchants, music and other activities every weekend at Key Route Plaza—all culminating in a merchant fair the last weekend of April.

Inspired by the over 30,000 tulips that bloom each year in Mountain View Cemetery, this spring festival is a community celebration with something to engage everyone in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood.

A View In the Cemetery

By Roland Rodriquez

Passing through Mountain View's gates (passing up the tempting delights of the Chapel of the Chimes for now), we enter a perfect place for someone who loves nature and an integrative aesthetic.

The cemetery's master plan has been credited to Frederick Law Olmstead, best known for designing New York's Central Park. Supposedly inspired by American Transcendentalism (e.g. Emerson and Thoreau), Olmstead integrated natural and geometric elements into a coherent landscape design. The trees he selected (simple in form, yet distinctive in shape) complement the buildings, roads and walkways, creating settings of beauty and grace.

Just past the largest fountain by the cemetery entrance, the principal object in the landscape is the long mausoleum along Main Avenue, designated by Olmstead as the primary axis. This Beaux Arts structure is aligned with this east-west line, like a ship anchored at the waterfront. Its commanding presence is the consequence of architectural vocabulary, relative scale, layering and siting.

The choice of the Beaux Arts style, with its easy formality, manages to impress without overwhelming the viewer. The design is not a surprise, given the building's function and its period of construction (the core building dates from the early 1930's). In spite of the formality of the symmetrical pairs of identical elements, it feels appropriate in this park-like setting. We can easily associate the exterior's Greek motifs with mental images of Hellenic temples in romantic natural settings - those beautiful ruins far from the chaos of Greece's noisy cities.

The building's central entry is the focus of the façade. Up a few steps we encounter twin Doric columns of heroic proportion framing the opening. Above this classic entry there is the suggestion of a pediment with a bas-relief panel: three maidens in flowing drapery. They are depicted in a stylized, somewhat Art Deco, manner.

Straight ahead, at the core of this funerary interior, is the high-ceilinged chapel. The central space in the building, it is amazingly the darkest, with only one source of natural light: a large window up front that looks out into a bright internal courtyard. The chapel is a pared-down space with decorative touches that make it feel strangely toy-like, despite its chunky and clunky scale. Perhaps it's the boxy trusses and the decorated wooden ceiling above them that are chiefly responsible for this. Below them everything feels hard and cool. Then, way above us, atop the wrap-around frieze of draped figures, there are open wood triangulations with beautifully painted decorative surfaces. Like those cigar boxes made of reddish wood and colored paper trim that we can remember from childhood, they are hard to resist.

The Main Mausoleum's large footprint is the result of successive additions, achieved with a fair degree of finesse. Walking through the interiors, one experiences a meld of architectural styles that flow one into another without grating dissonance. I like to walk the corridors of this quasi-labyrinth, completely at ease, without total knowledge of its spatial organization. The intricacy of the building's parts as they unfold in surprising ways seems a fitting expression for the mystery of *the* ultimate destination. It's a pleasing alternative to the predictable layouts of many modern commercial buildings.

I think there is something really beautiful about returning to a place where we transcend our nutty idiosyncrasies and separateness. Here, in this particular place, along these marble-clad corridors, people do assume a new identity, integrated into the architecture. Let's just say that it's more dignified than the niches and arches constructed out of human bones in Rome's Capuchin Burial Crypt. Here, at least, everyone lies side by side behind an identical slab of cool white marble, a very democratic and equalizing arrangement.

Architecture is supposed to be about the spaces between—the spaces that define surfaces and structural elements. It's really about the poetics of light, the way it's collected, transmitted and manipulated. The edges are critical to this definition; here, there's real poignancy in humanity shaping this light.

Next time: Paying Homage to Maybeck and Morgan

Roland Rodriquez is an architect/artist recently relocated from San Antonio, TX to the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood.

Spring Break Art Camp
March 24 – 28, 2008
9:00 am – 12:30 pm

Join us for a Hawaiian Holiday

- Daily Drawing Lessons
- 3D Projects
- Experienced Instructors
- Healthy Snacks
- Build Confidence and Learn to Focus

Discover the MONART Difference!

Noelle, age 9

monart
Drawing Studio

Fine Arts Classes for Children, Teens and Adults

5427 Telegraph Ave., Oakland • 1918 Encinal Ave., Alameda
Call 510.654.DRAW (3729) or visit www.monarteastbay.com

PIEDMONT AVE
PHOTO GALLERY

A View of the Avenue

Our neighborhood is filled with characteristic sights. This was captured by Richard Friedman and appears on his photo blog at www.rchrd.com/photo.

We invite photographers to send pictures taken on the Avenue or in the neighborhood to www.panil.org .

PIEDMONT GROCERY

PERSONALIZED SERVICE
Open 7 Days
Mon-Sat 9 am-8 pm
Sun 9 am-7 pm
Credit Cards & ATMs Accepted
FREE PARKING IN REAR

COMPLETE LINE OF
U.S.D.A. CHOICE MEATS
GOURMET PRODUCE
WINES & SPIRITS
GROCERIES-GOURMET FOODS

4038 PIEDMONT AVENUE
510.653.8181

Piedmont Systems

mail & parcel receiving ▲ telephone answering
voice mail ▲ copies ▲ fax ▲ word/data processing
internet ▲ bookkeeping ▲ UPS / FedEx shipping
mailings ▲ shipping & select stationery supplies

▲ NOTARY PUBLIC AVAILABLE 6 DAYS A WEEK

3871 Piedmont Ave 510-428-2698
428-9132 FAX M-F 8 to 5 SAT 10 to 4

LIFEMARK GROUP ™
Chapel of the Chimes
OAKLAND

"Every Life Leaves Its Mark"

510.654.0123
4499 Piedmont Avenue,
Oakland, CA
www.lifemarkgroup.com
FD# 1254

COMPLETE END-OF-LIFE PLANNING, SERVICES, SUPPORT

RABBI COLETTE SIDI-SCHOULAL Psy.D.
Non-Denominational Pastoral Counseling
Bereavement, Grief, Life & Death Issues
Individual, Couple
Gay & Lesbian
Sliding Scale -- 510.459.6698 for appointments

Representing Buyers and Sellers in Oakland, Piedmont, Berkeley
Pacific Union GMAC Real Estate Services
1900 Mountain Boulevard
510-338-1318

Joan Dark
"The Neighborhood Realtor"
Proud supporter of Piedmont Avenue School

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League

P.O. Box 20375

Oakland, CA 94620

PANIL *Notes* March 2008. PANIL Notes is printed on recycled paper by PIEDMONT COPY 4237 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA 655-3030

START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP

Making Community Policing Work

There are four things everyone can do to make their neighborhood safer, according to the Oakland Police Department:

1. Form a neighborhood watch group.
2. Keep your porch light on at night.
3. Make sure your address is visible from the street.
4. Organize block participation in National Night Out (held in August) **nationaltownwatch.org**.

As the city of Oakland makes a commitment to neighborhood policing, the Oakland Police Department encourages you to form a Neighborhood Watch Group -- a partnership between neighbors and the police officers assigned to your beat. In the PANIL area, our Neighborhood Services Coordinator, Paul Brekke-Miesner, meets with new groups to give them specifics about how to recognize and report suspicious activity on their streets and specifics such as when to call 911 and when to call the non-emergency number 777-3333.

At the February PANIL meeting, 5 Block Captains area reviewed their experiences. Mike Lydon and his neighbors may have the longest standing group; he said his area has been organized since the late 1970s. About 50 people are on their e-mail list and directory and participate in frequent activities.

The newest group is on Montgomery Street. where Chris Abrams is co-captain. For each of the block captains, the emphasis was on the practical benefits of creating closer links with your neighbors.

For information about how to start a group, see the PANIL website at: http://panil.org/ncpc/index.htm#hood_watch

Block Captains of PANIL Area Neighborhood Watch Groups

Paul Brekke-Miesner Neighborhood Services Coordinator for the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood (Beat 9X) with Block Captains

Jay Byron, 100 block of Howe Street

Chris Abrams, 4200 block of Montgomery Street

Mike Lydon, Entrada, Glen and Arroyuelo avenues

Margitta Gardner, Ramona Avenue

Phil Laing, Kempton Avenue

Photo taken at the February PANIL meeting.