PANIL Notes

Volume 28 Issue 8—Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League—PO Box 20375—Oakland CA 94620—July 2003

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, July 9, 7:30 pm
PANIL Meeting
Piedmont Gardens
110 41st Street
Sky Room, 11th Floor

Agenda:
Mountain View Cemetery development plans—
historic space, modern structures
Carijama Festival—
short discussion on its impact on our neighborhood

To place an item on this month's agenda, call Valerie Winemiller at 653.4552

Saturday, July 12
10 am to 2 pm
3rd Annual PANIL Garden Tour
Tour six neighborhood gardens

Tickets and maps will be available at the Kiosk at 41st and Piedmont Avenue

$3 for PANIL members
$5 for non-members

Sunday, July 27, 2 to 4 pm
Tour the *Piedmont Avenue Commercial District* with Avenue-resident Ruby Long

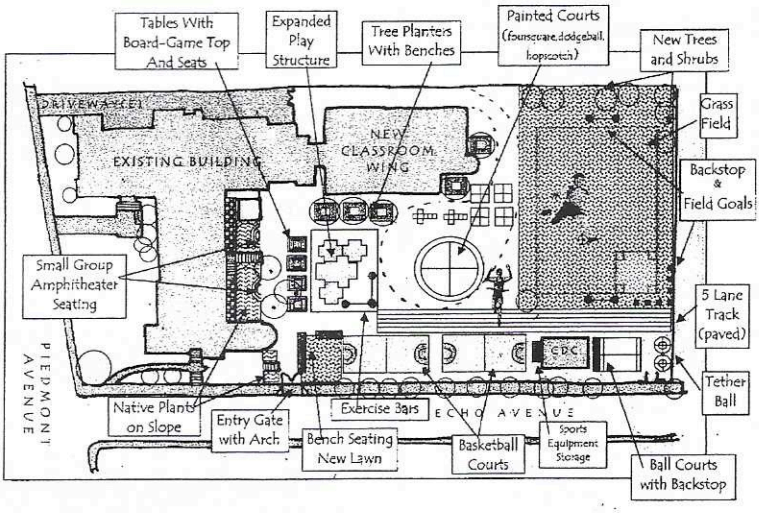
Sponsored by the Oakland Heritage Alliance, the tour will start from the Kiosk at 41st and Piedmont Avenue

$5 for OHA members
$10 for non-members
Free to those who join OHA on Sunday

Wear comfortable shoes and bring water

Happy 4th of July!!

OWL PARK—
Proposed community park for Piedmont Avenue School's playground



We're on our way!

Great news. The recent raffle sponsored by PANSA and PANIL raised over $9,000 for Owl Park.

Thanks to—

- All the neighbors who purchased and sold tickets.
- The merchants who provided great prizes: local realtor **Joan Dark** ($250 cash plus a history tour of Mountain View Cemetery including lunch for 20 friends), **Bay Wolf** (dinner for two with wine), **Bella Ceramica** (hand-painted vase valued at $250), **Harmony Road/Piedmont Piano Company** (piano lessons—$100), **J. Sahadi Jewelers** (pearl earrings with gold posts valued at $125), **Diablo Publications** (Hornblower Yachts boat tour with champagne brunch for two and A's tickets), **Kids in Motion** (two free gymnastics classes), **Pioneer Bike Shop** (mini-scooter), **Oakland Zoo** (two family passes), **Piedmont Lighting** (night lights), **OmniDesign** (wardrobe organizer), **Rooz Café** (two travel mugs), **Inside Out Gym** (eight sessions—$58 value), **Front Row Video** (13 free videos), **Dakotart** (10% discount on custom framing), and gift certificates from **Tropix Restaurant, Baja Taqueria**, and **Collector's Corner.**
- District 1 School Board Representative **Kerry Hamill**, her assistant **Kelsey Krausen**, and Avenue-residents **Laura Gentile** and **Renate Woodbury** who obtained these wonderful prizes.
- **Katherine Falk** who helped design the Owl Park logo, poster, and tickets.
- **Piedmont Copy** who printed the tickets.
- Neighbors **Curt Scribner** and **Elizabeth Hansen** who each sold in excess of 100 tickets.
- **And, most importantly, the teachers, students, and parents of Piedmont Avenue School who worked so hard to see that ticket sales goals were met.**

Nothing gets done unless there are folks willing to step up and make it happen. In this case, we are very lucky to have two such individuals—**Lesley Mandros Bell** and **John Woodbury**—who have been involved with Owl Park since the beginning. They are the two who have carried the burden of meeting with community groups, city officials, and interfacing with the school district. Without their dedication, we wouldn't even be

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

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Zoning Updates
By Valerie Winemiller

Mountain View Cemetery controversy

Mountain View Cemetery representatives were asked to meet twice with a subcommittee of the Landmarks Board to examine possible design changes to their proposal for a modern chapel and mausoleum at the entry circle. The Board members were most concerned about the siting of the complex, which crowded close to the entry circle, inconsistent with the setbacks of other historic buildings. To the dismay of the Landmarks Board, the cemetery representatives reportedly came to the meeting prepared only to argue the merits of their original plan, not to discuss other possible solutions. The only change the cemetery has proposed to date has been to eliminate the outer circular roadway around the entry fountain to add extra space in front of the new structures. It is not clear whether the roadway was part of the original historic cemetery design. An Initial Study was required under the California Environmental Quality Act because the cemetery is rated to be of high historical importance. Public comments were due June 20 on the study, which concludes that no Environmental Impact Report is needed. There could be significant impacts on Glen Echo Creek because the proposed copper cladding on the chapel and its entry wall could leach copper, a toxic metal, into the creek and Lake Merritt. The study recommends first treating the copper with acid wash to give it patina, containing the runoff during that process, then sealing the copper.

The landscaping appears to be part of a planned complete re-landscaping of the lower portion of the cemetery. Cedar trees ten feet apart would line all the roadways. These green walls were part of Frederick Law Olmstead's 19th century plan, to be symbolic of the Biblical Valley of the Shadow of Death, but this portion of his plan was never executed. While this would be a radical change from the historic appearance of the cemetery, the re-landscaping was not considered as part of the Initial Study. More public hearings are ahead for the chapel and mausoleum project, and PANIL wants your input on the effects, positive or negative, on this beloved community resource. Please attend the July 9 PANIL meeting. Further information: Valerie Winemiller at 653.4552

Fentons opens, many issues unresolved

Fentons Restaurant and Creamery was granted an unusual permit to open in spite of the fact that its three major building permits had not received final completion approvals. To the neighbors' sleepless horror, Fentons was allowed to operate its noisy rooftop compressors before any required noise baffling structures had been built or even fully designed. Other outstanding issues include size and placement of the rear addition, open trash storage with an inadequate pickup schedule, and most importantly, the revelation that there had been manufacturing for wholesale at the site, contrary to zoning codes. Fentons had been manufacturing its own product for wholesale, as well as subletting its kitchen 3 days per week to a gelatto maker who also was producing for wholesale.

Fentons customers and supply trucks have all been creating traffic chaos and hazards by double parking, and blocking residential streets, driveways and fire hydrants.

Neighbors, PANIL, and attorney Leila Moncharsh are working with the city and the Fentons landlord to expedite noise containment and resolve other issues. An appeal of the Planning Commission decision on the operation is still pending, and will be heard at City Council July 29.

Owl Park, continued from page 1

thinking about an Owl Park. What makes our neighborhood so great? People like Lesley and John!

Project Status

In addition to the $9,000 raised during the raffle, PANSA had already raised $11,000. Council members Brunner and Chang have each pledged $20,000 from their discretionary funds.

Construction on the park is expected to start after completion of the school annex (scheduled for October, 2003).

Two more fund raisers are planned for the Fall: another raffle (see, you still have a chance to win!) and a Coin Harvest on the Avenue. Yes, we ARE on our way!

SIDESHOWS ON PIEDMONT AVENUE?

Post-festival disruptions raise questions about Carijama's future

By Valerie Winemiller

Memorial Day Weekend's 15th annual Carijama Festival in Mosswood Park dissolved into traffic paralyzing chaos when crowds of young adults blocked a number of intersections around the park, including MacArthur Boulevard and Piedmont Avenue where the neighborhood saw its first large "sideshow" activity. Police reported reckless driving, speeding and cruising, as well as people jumping on cars attempting to drive through the intersection of Piedmont Avenue and Broadway. Though the festival ended at 6:00 pm, the crowds of up to 1,500 people were not considered under control until about 10:30 pm. Because of past problems, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission declined to support the event financially this year as it had in the past, through its Oakland Parks and Recreation co-sponsorship program. However, considerable permit fees were waived, and the event organizers received a grant of $16,367 from the city's parades, runs, and festivals fund to cover police costs. The Oakland Tribune later reported the actual police overtime cost at $32,000.

Carijama has been a popular showcase of Caribbean music and dance, but the increasing crowd control problems in recent years have created controversy about its future. PANIL wants your thoughts about the festival. Have you attended the festival? Did you enjoy it? Did your block feel any impacts from the festival? (Please be specific.) Do you see a constructive solution to security problems? Do you think the festival should be held again next year at Mosswood Park?

Come to the next PANIL meeting for a brief discussion of Carijama, or send your written comments to Valerie Winemiller at vwinemiller@hotmail.com or PANIL, P.O. Box 20375, Oakland CA 94620; comments may also be left at 653.4552.

Remembrances of 3970 Piedmont Avenue

By Mark Jang, Owner, OmniiDesign

Prior to 1982, the building at 3970-74 Piedmont Avenue housed a paint store operated by Pearson's Hardware and a fabric store which evolved into the legendary "button shop"— every kind of button imaginable. There were rows and rows of huge bins of loose, mixed up buttons with some rare ones in the mix. The space was a time capsule: 12-foot ceilings, old fashioned display windows, Art Deco glass ceiling lights.

The Avenue itself was a time capsule then. Shoe repair shops, an old-fashioned hardware store, two or three real gas stations, a tailor and a variety store which could have passed for 1959. And plenty of parking!

OmniDesign moved into 3970 Piedmont Avenue in 1982 at a time when The Avenue was just beginning to be "gentrified." The building, however, remained the same.

OmniDesign took over the 3974 side—and then the second floor also—just as we were experiencing the start of a renaissance in home furnishings. Within a year, the store was totally packed with new designs, bright and bold colors, innovative products, European imports—many of which are mainstream today. Taking advantage of the high ceilings, we designed a system of high display/storage platforms. Martin Hammer, a local craftsman, now an architect, designed and built them for us. The results were spectacular. Many of the concepts are incorporated in prominent two-story furniture stores of today

Until the early 1990s, Piedmont Avenue had gone through a total transformation of new shops, eateries and service businesses. Cocolat, Rosebud, Panoply, Peet's, Folks Art, Bay Wolf, Barney's, Piedmont Book Company, Vive Le Croissant, Lucca Deli, Just Desserts, Piedmont Springs, Gaylords, Greetings, Given Gold, J. Shadi, OmniDesign, SimonPetit, and more... all flourished during this era. It was the best of times—before the malls, the big box stores and the Emeryville stampede—when Piedmont Avenue was the absolute number one shopping area in the East Bay.

When we decided to leave the building, there were a number of developers interested in the space, but it was kismet that another Piedmont Avenue merchant, a husband and wife, with young children, who live nearby and have ties to the community, would take it over. They rode the crest of the next big thing and turned the space into Piedmont Yoga.

When OmniDesign vacated and the lower floors were completely cleared out, I stood at the entrance of the former button shop and the "feel" was still the same as 1972! It is a credit to the many building owners over the decades that the façade has been remarkably preserved, same as it was built. It is that kind of ambience that a mall or "big box" can never duplicate.

Calendar

PANIL

7/9, Wednesday, 7:30 pm
Sky Room, 11th Floor
Piedmont Gardens
110 41st Street, 653.4552

Steering Committee
7/3, Thursday, 7 pm
655.1723

PANIL Garden Tour
7/12, Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm
41st and Piedmont Avenue
653.4052

Glen Echo Creek Work Day
7/12, Saturday, 9:30 am
Monte Vista Avenue, 654.1930

PANSA

General Meeting
Book Care Night
7/1, Tuesday, 7 pm
Piedmont Avenue School

Oakland Heritage Alliance tour of the *Piedmont Avenue Commercial District* led by Ruby Long
7/27, Sunday, 2 to 4 pm
Meet at the Kiosk at
41st and Piedmont Avenue

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

Sing songs with popular Bonnie Lockhart
7/8, Tuesday, 4 pm

Magic by Alex— a fun and amazing show
7/23, Wednesday, 11:30 am

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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.

Thank you to new and renewing members:
Jason Jed and Luz Salazar-Jed, Judith Sutherland, Mr. And Mrs. Albert Blicher, Anne and Martin Huff.

Correction: In prior issues we have referred to the NCPC as the Neighborhood Community Policing Council. The correct name is Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council.

Illustrations: Page 1, John Woodbury

The Piedmont Avenue School
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To volunteer call
Ruby Long at 595.9514 or
Donna Bersaglieri at 482.0862

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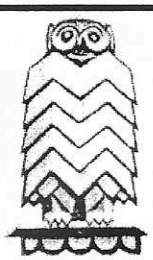
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