



A Message from Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library



Vol 3 #11

August 15, 2020

What You Can Get from the Closed Libraries

All the Oakland Public Libraries are closed, but they continue to provide vital services with resources. Here is just a small sample. These and many more are available from this site:

<https://oaklandlibrary.org/online-resources/articles-and-databases>.

Click on whichever you want and enter your library card number to see the full resource.



CreativeBug is free with your library card! Librarian Mickey Vo (Teen Services) says: "Creativebug offers a variety of arts & crafts video lessons, taught by expert designers and artists. Topics include art & design (like ceramics and painting), sewing, quilting, food & home, and much more! Classes welcome all skill levels and ages, and the tutorials are self-paced, making it easy to take your time in learning."

Tutor.com offers free, homework help, and test preparation for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as students and adult learners. The site includes job searching support, such as help writing a cover letter for a job and resume writing. Live one-on-one assistance is available everyday from 12pm (noon) until 12am (midnight). Live Spanish-speaking support is also available for math, science, and social studies subjects.

Tumblebooks (for kids) are animated, talking picture books that can be played on your computer while The Story Book collection includes a fun variety of stories for different age levels. The pace of the stories can be controlled by the reader - or set to automatic. The Tumble Readables are large print "read on your own" children's books.

CustomGuide gives you a variety of online training modules in computer basics and software, including Microsoft Excel, Word, and Outlook. Tutorials are self-paced and let you your own progress. You can also print out one-page resource sheets for most popular software applications.

Clinton's Auto Repair includes thousands of year, make and model combinations covering the most popular vehicles of the past 30 years, plus additional coverage of specialty models; designed so you can service or repair virtually any system on your vehicle.

Two more branches have been added to the list of those providing **sidewalk service**, for a current total of 10. All the info is at oaklandlibrary.org/sidewalkpickup.

The Big Picture – Spotlight on Staff at OPL

The job of Matt Berson, Public Information Officer for Oakland Public Libraries, is very much like that of

head chef in a well-known and popular restaurant.

Berson is in charge of community relations for the library – what do patrons want to know? What do they click on when they use the computer? What books do they request? What questions do they ask the librarians? In short, he acts as a liaison between the branches and the public.

In these days of COVID the vision of how the library can serve the public has expanded beyond that of a chef in a kitchen and dining room to include the entire community. Matt's innovative staff creates content for the library website, shifting the focus from paper to digital and putting e-books, audio books and publications like the New York Times on line.

E-services aren't his only purview, however. He's also in charge of the YouTube trips kids can take to local parks and places of interest and the fifty five story times they can enjoy. At last count there were 190 subscribers to this service.

But, wait, you say. Can I still get a real book from the library or is everything digital? Yes. You can order on line or by phone and pick it up at the curb in front of some libraries. For the Piedmont Avenue area, books can be picked up at the Rockridge Branch on College Avenue. For details about time and place, check the library website or call the main library at 510-238-3134.

And how do I know that process protects everyone from spread of the COVID virus? Anyone in the library handling books wears a mask and gloves, and all returned books are held 96 hours before being loaned again to make sure they contain no active germs.

A number of staff who have been displaced because of closures are helping to provide food service for those in need. At the time of this writing 100,000 meals had been served. If any food is left over, it goes to the nearest homeless camp.

Matt's expanded vision of the role libraries can play in our community will surely lead to other possibilities. Who knows where it will lead?

By Ruby Long, a neighbor whose work has appeared in local and national publications.

What Our Librarians Are Doing Now

Each of our Piedmont Avenue Branch staff members continues to provide vital services even while all of our Oakland Public Libraries are closed. Margaret sent these details for us:

Nikki and Paulette are taking good care of our little library and emptying the bookdrops. Jessica is currently at the Main. Russell and I are both at Asian Branch but in different "pods" on different days of the week. We're not busy there, so if you are tired of waiting in line for your holds, have them sent to Asian! Your library staff misses you.

Our young friends at Piedmont Avenue Elementary are back in school, doing distance learning for now. If you're interested in volunteering for the public schools, the Oakland Ed Fund has organized some [virtual volunteer opportunities](#).

Big thanks to Helen and Paul for removing 5 garbage cans' worth of weeds from the library grounds!

Friends of PAL to Meet On-Line in September

The Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library met once a month in our library for many years, but COVID-19 put a stop to our ability to sit together, working on our projects.

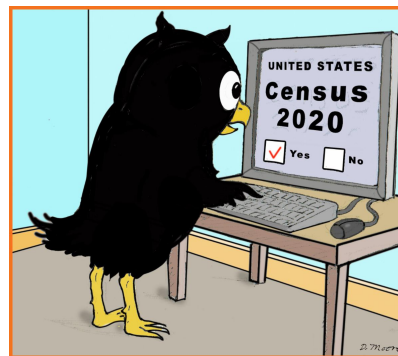
Nonetheless, we continue to focus on ways to keep our neighborhood library connected to our community.

The Friends of PAL is planning an online meeting in September. If you have agenda items to suggest, please write to us at contact@friendsofpal.com with your ideas. Watch for the notice of the date and time of the meeting and instructions for how to link in.

Have you been counted yet? 2020 Census

You know that it is federal funds that support many of the necessities of our lives, like schools, libraries, health care, treatment for clean drinking water, and road repairs that benefit everybody. More than \$1.5 trillion in federal funding is allocated among different areas of our country by federal decision makers who have to know where people live in order to know where resources are needed. Those decisions are based on census data.

Did you complete and return your 2020 Census questionnaire? If not, or if you have questions, go to www.mycensus.gov.



Our Vote is our Voice; Check on your Registration to Vote Today

<https://registertovote.ca.gov>

All California voters will be sent a vote-by-mail ballot with prepaid postage for the General Election. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail/vbm-nov2020-general-election/>

To make sure you get your ballot, California Secretary of State's office is asking all California voters to double-check their voter registration at: <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov>

You can ensure a smooth voting experience by confirming your mailing address and signing up for ballot tracking notifications.

For voters unable to take advantage of vote-by-mail, you can still visit a polling place for safe in-person voting and same-day registration. There will be no neighborhood polling places. Instead you can vote at 100 in-person Vote Centers. You will receive a notice of those locations.

More details are in an article from CalMatters: *California's 2020 all-mail election, explained* <https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-all-mail-election-explained-november-2020/>



Share Your Story, COVID-19 East Bay Community Archive

Thinking about how history will record this coronavirus pandemic and show the incredible impact it is having on our everyday lives, the Oakland History Center of the Oakland Public Library is inviting all East Bay residents and workers to share their experiences and tell how they've adjusted their lives due to this pandemic. From now until December 31, anyone in the East Bay can fill out an [online form](#) answering questions about your life and our community during the pandemic. You can also submit photographs, documents or other items that will give depth and detail, creating a repository to help future

historians understand this moment in time in our nation and our

region. <https://oaklandlibrary.org/locations/oakland-history-center/contribute-covid-19-east-bay-community-archive>



The Bookworm Recommends

Troop 6000: The Girl Scout Troop That Began in a Shelter and Inspired the World

by Nikita Stewart

This book, the true story of a unique New York Girl Scout troop, shows the power of scouting to change the lives of all girls – in this case those who live in the city's homeless shelters.

Written by a New York Times reporter whose beat encompasses homelessness, mental health and poverty, the book highlights the efforts of Giselle Burgess. Burgess is a mother of five, who, in spite of the fact that she had a professional job, ended up homeless. She was convinced that Scouts would be a way to

inspire and give confidence to her daughters and the other girls who lived in the Sleep Inn, a hotel turned homeless shelter.

Within a year, Burgess not only had put together Troop 6000 at the Sleep Inn, but she and other employees of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York had expanded it to 16 shelters in all five boroughs, with the help of a \$1.1 million grant from the city of New York. From its first meeting of eight girls in the breakfast room of the Sleep Inn, Troop 6000 now serves more than 600 girls and adult leaders.

And Giselle and her scouts have become local celebrities, with appearances on The View, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, Today, Good Morning America and The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, as well as being the subject of a New York Times front page article.

The book, however, is not just about Giselle and the Scouts. It shows us just how difficult it is to be homeless. Readers will learn about the challenges of dealing with the social services bureaucracy. The horror of parents and their children being bounced from shelter to shelter. And the difficulties faced by a family of six forced to live in a single hotel room. It shows the triumph of the human spirit and how one person can make a difference in the lives of parents and their daughters.

Although it happened after the book was published, her experience starting Troop 6000 gave Burgess the confidence to run for public office. She is now a candidate for the New York City Council in the 2021 election.

By Judy Jacobs, a former Girl Scout and mother of an Eagle Scout, Judy Jacobs is a great fan of scouting. She is also a journalist who has worked both in Asia and the U.S.

What's Happening at the Library

Effective March 16, the Oakland Public Library closed all Library locations to help limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). These closures will remain in effect until further notice. All programs are canceled while our library is closed. The Friends of PAL will send out a notice when we know the date the library will reopen.

The library's **Summer Reading Program** is happening! Please visit oaklandlibrary.org/summer for kid, teen, and adult Summer Reading. Kids have until 8/22 to log reading online (or put a paper reading log in a library bookdrop) and have a chance to win a Chromebook.