



A Message from Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library



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Virtual Hugs from the Staff at Your Piedmont Avenue Library

Your library workers miss you and can't wait to see your faces again, masked or no. Meanwhile, we're available in several different ways to help you stay connected with our resources.

Our e-book collections are getting more use than ever. If you'd like help getting with e-books, [you can set up a phone appointment](#), for a 30-minute session, and if you're lucky, your helper might be Russell from our branch! To set up an appointment, use whichever way is most convenient for you:

1. [Schedule online](#) (only for regular hours)
2. Leave a message at (510) 238-3134.
3. Send an to eanswers@oaklandlibrary.org



Not sure what to read next? Try OPL's Book Me! [Fill out this form for personalized recommendations for yourself, students, or a loved one.](#) The asks you to name a few of your favorite books and authors and let us know why you like them. Make sure to list anything in particular that you most like in a story such as action, strong characters, the way the author uses language, or location.

for people needing legal advice: [Lawyers in the Library is back, now online!](#)

It is a program co-sponsored by Alameda County Bar Association, [Legal Access Alameda.](#) To an appointment, eAnswers@oaklandlibrary.org or call 510-238-3134. Library staff will get back to you within three days.

HOOT readers should out [OPL's YouTube channel](#), for fun and useful homemade content. There are story times and how-to videos from Oakland librarians. [Make a No-Sew Face Covering](#) has been especially popular.

We are currently discussing what the library services may look like once we can resume circulation of physical library materials. We do not have a timeline for when that may happen, but we'll be sure to keep you up to date.

by Margaret Rodriguez, Librarian

The Lonely Library

Where is everybody? No one has walked through my door for weeks. The phone hasn't rung once. Wait – I hear something. It's someone pulling on the front door. He says he can't open it because it's locked. Why?

I miss the kids. There is almost always at least one climbing or crawling around or sitting on someone's lap. And I can feel their squeals of laughter in my walls when someone reads them a funny story. There's no one at the computers either; that's really odd. No feet shuffling at the new books section; no one by the window rattling the newspaper.

You may be wondering how I know what's going on. I have no eyes, no ears, but I feel the weight of someone sitting in a chair. I feel feet pushing against my floor and heat from people's bodies. The vibrations from people's voices make my walls move. I know when folks are here, and I know when

there's no one here. I miss you all. You make me feel alive, and I don't feel alive. I feel empty.

You'd think with all these books and computers, all this access to knowledge and information in here, that I could find a way to open up, but I can't. So all I can do is sit here, wonder what's going on, and hope it ends soon. I want to get back to the way things used to be, with the hustle and bustle of the past.

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

Here's an Opportunity to Help in this COVID World

Piedmont Avenue Elementary School is using a GoFundMe site to raise funds for the parents who are out of work or have shortened hours during the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis. All the funds collected will be distributed directly to PAES families to support them in paying for rent, food, and educational resources to continue at home learning.

Click on Piedmont Avenue Elementary School's [fundraising page for PAES families in need](#) and you'll see their expression of thanks for support of their students, families, and community. They will appreciate donations of any amount.



The Bookworm Recommends

Novels by Benjamin Black

Do you like mystery novels? Do you like elegant writing? Here's a name for you: Benjamin Black.

If you're an avid mystery fan, you might already know this name. I didn't. I was wandering around a used bookstore in Milwaukee a while back, kind of restless, annoyed and impatient with the flat, dull writing I had been running into recently. I reached up haphazardly and opened one of Black's novels, read a page and a half, and said, "This guy is great!"

Never heard of the guy, so I Googled him and found he had won the Man Booker Prize. That certainly didn't make any sense; this major annual award for the best original novel written in the English language does not usually go to a crime novel. Took me a while to realize Benjamin Black is the pen name used by John Banville to write crime novels. This guy writes exquisitely, whether it be "literary" stuff or mystery novels.

So far I have read four Benjamin Black books featuring a pathologist in 1950's Dublin named Quirke. Some titles in this series, *Holy Orders*, *Even the Dead* and *Christine Falls*.

I can't say these books are cheerful. They have a noir quality, with a troubled atmosphere and a dark history around Quirke's past, his present, and his relationships with all the friends and family members he loves. He has a drinking problem, and, since it's the 1950s, he and almost everyone else are constantly smoking cigarettes.

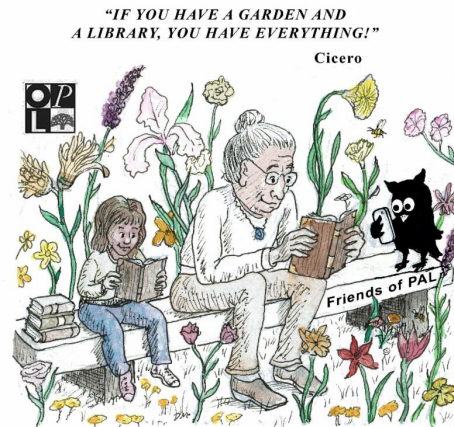
These stories don't really have happy endings. Things are finally understood, truth is finally revealed, but justice is not always done. However compromised the resolution at the end, I find myself rooting for Quirke, glad he persevered through all the difficulty to learn the truth, even if the bad guy doesn't go to jail.

All through Quirke's difficulties, the writing is a joy. One element I've found delightful is how often the

natural surroundings describe the feeling of a scene. Here's a sentence at random: "The plane trees on the other side of the street rustled their leaves excitedly as if they were discussing these two young people standing there in the midst of a Sunday morning in summer." How often do you find poetry like that in a mystery novel?

Beautiful writing helps beautify life. Maybe things in our lives are a bit gloomy right now, but I'll gladly step, once more, into 1950s Dublin with Quirke, regardless of the cigarette smoke, and stretch out to solve another mystery, with the leaves of the plane trees rustling around me.

By Peter Sounie, is a retired gentleman who has lived in the Bay Area for 56 years, 35 of them working for large banks, while somehow remaining a basically good person. He likes to travel, ride his bicycle, visit libraries and bookstores, and have dinner with friends. When possible.



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.

Oakland Tribune October 9, 1914

PIEDMONT LIBRARY MEETING.
The Piedmont district wants one of the Carnegie branch libraries, and tonight at 8 o'clock a mass meeting will be held by residents of the district at the Piedmont-avenue School for "full and free discussion of the subject." Speakers and music are on the program, and the Piedmont Improvement Association of Oakland invites everybody to attend and "boost the district."