



A Message from Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library



Vol 4 #2

November 15, 2020

What's Up at the Library

The Oakland Public Library is in the planning and union negotiation stage, looking forward to opening branches to patrons in early 2021, assuming that there is no change to Alameda County Health Department mandates.

Currently, patrons are not allowed in the branches, but they continue to use the very successful sidewalk check out service at the branches that offer it. For example, **Piedmont Avenue Branch** library checkouts and renewals at the sidewalk pickup totaled 9,216 from its start on September 15th to November 5th.

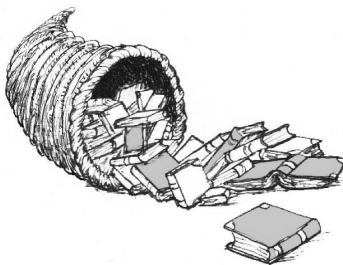


Food distribution will continue through December 2020 at the **81st Avenue, Melrose, and Chavez branches**, according to OPL Director Jamie Turbak. "While food distribution may continue past that date," said Director Turbak, "there is no identified funding from World Central Kitchen (WCK) longer than 2020. However, WCK has extended several times as they found new funding sources."

Another Step Forward Toward a Permanent Home

Kudos and appreciation for everyone who completed the City of Oakland's survey last month and voiced their support for the Piedmont Ave. branch library moving into the CDC building. It was the city's short survey about Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Friends of PAL responded with a detailed write-up on why this project is important. Thank you all. We hope this will help move the Piedmont branch up in priority for funding before the next CIP budget is proposed for City Council discussion early in 2021.

To see a summary of the comments submitted, click [HERE](#):



Our Library Today

One of the rewards of sitting at a table outside the Piedmont Avenue Library is seeing the variety of patrons and hearing, if you ask, their stories. Sometimes you might even learn something.

For instance, Michael, who lives across the street and subscribes to the HOOT, uses a number of the library's services. He checks out books, but he also receives them on his Ipad. He gets some books on Libby and others on Hoopla, both library programs. He streams movies and can access older media. He says that in non-COVID times the staff librarians are helpful and knowledgeable and he thinks the current team, brought together from several branches, is doing a remarkable job during this difficult time.

Cora, who walked over, makes her requests online and picks up the books when she gets a notice they're on site. Her children, six and four, really miss being able to go inside, attend Storytime, and browse through the books.

Deborah joined us and couldn't say enough praises about the regular staff and the current service. "They deserve five stars," she said. "No, more. Seven, at least seven. It's amazing how they're coping."

In the midst of patrons coming and going, collecting and returning books, a van with the library system logo on its side pulled up in the loading zone on the street. Todd, the driver unloaded several bins full of books onto a dolly and pushed them to the back door of the library. Soon he returned with a bigger load he had collected inside, hauled them to the van, then headed to the main library. Three of these vans and drivers provide this service to all the branches.

It took a minute to realize that Sumona had a tiny baby strapped to her chest. At three weeks old and sleeping, the baby didn't stick out very far and wasn't moving. Her four-year-old sister, at home, has been coming to the library since she was a baby. Sumona likes books on Kindle; her husband prefers hard copy, hold-in-your-hand books. With Sumona was Sara, the girls' grandmother, from Michigan. She was using Sumona's library card to get the book her reading group at home will be discussing at their next meeting.

Keeping library services available for readers and listeners is a real challenge these days, but five days a week, from 10 to 1, Emily Odia, whose usual job site is Eastmont, and her crew are there, making sure patrons get the books they ordered. Be sure to say thanks when you go to pick yours up.

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



Friends of Piedmont Avenue Library

If you missed Friends of Pal's Zoom meeting on November 10th, here is what was discussed.

The Treasurers Report showed \$23,370 on hand -- the current total of funds received from donations and sales of books and book bags.

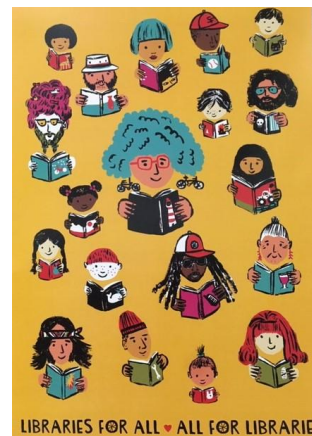
Status of 501(c)3 – Friends of PAL should have IRS approval (hopefully!) by the end of the 1st quarter of 2021.

Special thanks to Arleen Feng for submitting Friends of PAL's comments in the survey conducted by the City of Oakland in preparation for deciding how to allocate funds through the Capital Improvement Program.

There are two new members of the OUSD School Board after November's election, and Friends of PAL will invite both of them to our meeting early in 2021. They are Sam Davis, District 1, and VanCedric Williams, winner for District 3, which borders District 1 and where many Piedmont Avenue Elementary School students live.

Measure Y -- School Bond Measure -- has passed and included on the Site-Specific list is a kitchen for Piedmont Ave Elementary.

Watch for a new, more user-friendly Friends of PAL website that will be central to our communication with the community along with this HOOT newsletter, articles in the Piedmont Post, and postings in the kiosk on Piedmont Avenue. Next we need to revive the social media messages.



Board members will check to see if we can distribute materials via the library's sidewalk checkout table.

HOOT columnist Ruby Long is looking for ideas for her column. Send to contact@FriendsofPAL.org.

Meetings: No December meeting; January meeting, Tuesday 1/12/21, 7pm.

"This branch library is not a luxury but an essential public good. It provides a safe space for kids to read and learn and educational programs for community members of all ages" - Friends of PAL survey Oct 2019



OPL Kids: Toddler Songs - OPL Children's Services is excited to share their love of books and support early language development while OPL indoor areas remain closed. Toddler Song videos allow you to enjoy songs and active rhymes with your child ages 18 months – 36 months.

Each week's Toddler Song video will be shared on **Facebook** and **Twitter** (@oaklibrary) every other Saturday. To view the video and the rest of the **Toddler Song** video playlist,

visit the **Oakland Public Library's YouTube** channel. Saturday, November 21, 2020 - 10:30am & Saturday, December 5, 2020 - 10:30am

You are invited to the OPL Advocates Holiday Mixer



The Oakland Public Library has done some amazing work supporting our community this year. Join us for some well-deserved celebrating at the 8th Annual Oakland Public Library (OPL) Advocates Holiday Mixer, **Sunday, Dec. 6, from 1-3 p.m.** We'll be celebrating on Zoom. We'll provide easy-to-follow instructions for attending the mixer when you [RSVP](#).



The Bookworm Recommends

At Lady Molly's
by Anthony Powell

Does anyone remember the author Anthony Powell? A few decades ago, some critics considered him one of the finest authors of the twentieth century. He was sometimes called "the English Proust." The Proust comparison was largely based on his twelve-volume series, "A Dance to the Music of Time," following a man's life over the course of five decades. That's a little bit like Proust's "In Search of Lost Time". He even got the word "time" in the title.

Well, Anthony Powell isn't Proust. The good news is that he's more fun. Proust, as I recall, is hard work. I just finished reading "At Lady Molly's," the fourth volume in Powell's series. I had been looking through my bookshelves for something to re-read, and came across a volume of the "First Movement" of the "Music of Time" series. (The twelve novels are conveniently organized into four movements of three novels each.) I had read that a long time ago, found it interesting, but hadn't been moved to carry on. But now, sheltering-in-place, there's more time for this sort of thing. I got the next "movement" from the

library. Glad I did.

“At Lady Molly’s” is set in the mid-1930s. Most of the characters are from the British upper classes, so it’s a little bit like Downton Abbey, with lots of marriages and love affairs, lots of intersections with literary and artistic bohemia, politics and business. Events in Germany and Central Europe simmer in the background.

In the opening chapter, our narrator attends a slightly wild party at Lady Molly’s bohemian home, with lots of witty, cutting, gossiping conversation. The conversation references dozens of different people, which is a little confusing, but for me a little like real life. All these people come and go through the long tale, so gradually you can figure out who they all are.

The narrator’s observations make all this conversation especially entertaining. Here’s an example: “I had the impression that she was teasing him, not precisely for my especial benefit, but, at the same time, that my presence as a newcomer to the house afforded a particularly favorable opportunity for the application of torments of this sort.”

Here’s another moment in a major scene that takes place in an after-hours “night club” – a “club” because you have to buy a bottle to be enrolled and gain access. “The charm he exercised over people was perhaps largely due to this ability to juggle with two contrasting, apparently contradictory attributes: the one, an underlying implication of sinister, disturbing undercurrents: the other, a soothing power to reassure and entertain.”

Sometimes, when I’m reading novels from the 19th century, or novels set in the 1930s or 40s, or even 50s, I ask myself why I’m enjoying them – assuming it’s good writing, like this one. It’s obvious, isn’t it? Reading a story set in another place and time is a way of traveling. That’s always a pleasure, never more than now, while we’re stuck, sheltering in place, waiting for something resembling normal to return to our lives. It’s a pleasure traveling with Anthony Powell. I’ll soon be taking the next step in the “Dance to the Music of Time.”

By Peter Sownie, a retired gentleman who has lived in the Bay Area for 57 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.



www.FriendsofPAL.org