



Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library

HOOT

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S
FIT TO HOOT!

www.FriendsofPAL.org

Oakland Public Library to Expand Hours June 15

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library is open six days a week!



Sunday Closed

Monday: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Thursday: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Friday: 12 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Masks are still required and there will be limited seating because we still must abide by the 6 feet, social distancing ordinance. Oakland Public Library wants everyone in the community to use their discretion for social distancing as they come inside and can again browse in the library. The librarians will help you remember, with verbal prompts along with their welcoming greetings.

Celebrating Teachers & Staff with our Appreciation Station

After an unprecedented and strenuous year for the teachers and staff of Piedmont Avenue Elementary School (PAES), Friends of PAL wanted to show our gratitude for their incredible work and their success in keeping their students' love of reading strong. We did that with an Appreciation Station.

On May 25, four of us Friends set up tables outside the front doors of PAES and adorned them with homegrown flowers from our gardens. We worked with the amazing Lisa Lefrak Newby from Mr. Green Bubble to order custom drinks for each PAES teacher and staff member of the school. Arleen Feng single handedly carried folding tables to set up, while Joanna Smith, Renate Woodbury, and Gina Ma ferried boxes of drinks from Mr. Green Bubble. It was quite a colorful display of beverages ready to distribute during the lunch hour.

As the clock struck 11:30 am, teachers and staff started to emerge and joyfully approached our table to select from the fresh juices, boba teas and smoothies

continued



and to chat with us for a moment. Elena Njemanze, the kindergarten teacher, was our first guest; we loved speaking with her about her class and how much they miss the library. There was a special appearance by Principal Zarina Ahmad, and we enjoyed a few minutes of connecting with her, as well as her son, Akintunde Ahmad.

Many of the teachers talked about their deep appreciation for the library's virtual services during the pandemic school year, particularly Ms. Margaret's children's programming. They also expressed their excitement about the possibility of the Childhood Development Center building

becoming a new space for their students to enjoy as the future home of the library.

In the end, 25 of the teachers and staff had visited with us at the Appreciation Station. As the hour came to an end, Ms. Njemanze and others took beverages inside the school for those who had not been free to come outside during the lunch break.

Huge thanks to the absolutely incredible team at PAES for surviving this school year and helping their students thrive!
—By Gina Ma, member of the Friends of Pal Board responsible for our social media

Were you there?



October 2012 for the Halloween parade down Piedmont Avenue? Wheelbarrows full of books were pushed from the previous library site next to Citi Bank to Piedmont Avenue Elementary School grounds. It was an event organized by the Friends of Piedmont Avenue Library (Friends) to introduce the new library location to our neighborhood.

People dressed as characters in books, and even dressed as books, and were led by Jenera Burton, the librarian at that time, along Piedmont Avenue, headed for the mobile building on Echo Avenue that had just opened as our temporary branch library. The Friends had worried that people might ignore the drab mobile building and thought the mundane-looking premises could use some sprucing up. How to make it look less institutional and more fun and welcoming?

With the help of artist David Moore, Friends created colorful wooden cutouts to hang on the fence around the mobile building. "How about an owl?" said one. "Owls symbolize wisdom, and you get that when you use the library." And David sketched an owl just like the one on the front of Piedmont Avenue Elementary School. "How about a book-worm? A sheep playing the accordion?" It was done!

David sketched the collection of different animals, and the Friends made Margitta Gardner's backyard into the construction site to cut the shapes out of large pieces of plywood with a hand-held electric saw. Many coats of paint were applied; faces were drawn, and many details were added to create the creatures seen today on the fence around our branch library.

But how would everyone know it was a library? A group of teenagers, led by Noah Steigler, who was working on an Eagle



project with the Boy Scouts, made a large wooden sign with the library's name to hang above the cutouts.

Now, we no longer worry that people might see only a drab mobile building on mundane looking premises. With many programs like docent talks from Berkeley Rep, Baby Café, visits by Park Naturalist, magicians, authors, and more, our beloved library has become a destination in our community. Imagine what we can do when we have a permanent home!

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

The Avid Reader By Louis Segal

I've been an avid reader since I could read. In high school I used to cut school to read in the Berkeley Public Library. I'm writing this column to share some of the books I love. I hope, perhaps, you might grow to love a few of them.



Well, it's June and I'd like to introduce you to the strangely sublime novel, *Night Boat to Tangier* [2019,] by the Irish author Kevin Barry. Barry writes with wit and mordant compassion about two aging Irishmen, Maurice Hearne and Charlie Redmond who the reader will meet sitting in the squalid Ferry Building in the Port of Algeciras. The men are waiting for the arrival of the night boat from Tangier. The ferry may, or may not, carry Maurice's wounded and wandering daughter, Dilly, on a return from a long Moroccan sojourn. Maurice and his daughter are estranged and the father, now feeling very mortal, wants to make amends with his daughter before it's too late.

The two OGs talk through the night as they wait, reminiscing about their youthful capers and crimes, drug trafficking, love affairs, wounds and scars and the relentlessness of remorse. They cajole, console, taunt, confess intimacies, share shards of hard-earned wisdom. They clearly have a history with each other. As the night wears on they, drink, eat and wait. They strong arm a frightened young man who runs afoul with them in the terminal, thinking that he might know Dilly. But most of the novel radiates from the lucubrating conversation of the two men. The boat arrives, the passengers disembark, and the two men, deep in conversation, barely look up to see the arrivals. The father and daughter don't meet. But if you listen carefully to the two men talking in the ruins of the old ferry terminal near the Straits of Gibraltar you will find wondrous story of love and betrayal, revenge and forgiveness and the dignity and the wisdom that can come from these wounds. Barry has spun a wonderful tale.

If you are a fan of the twists and turns of Irish storytelling, of Irish cadences, of Irish humor and sadness, in a word, of Irish history you will love this book. And if you're like me, you will return again to, or discover for the first time, the greatness of Irish literature. Colum McCann says of Barry on a dust jacket blurb: "Try the name Flann O'Brien, Try James Joyce, Try Roddy Doyle. Try Patrick McCabe. Try Wilde, try McGahern, try Behan. And now try the name Kevin Barry. See how it fits perfectly among the others..." And of course, that other Irishman, Samuel Beckett, to whom in a funny way, *Night Boat to Tangier* renders homage. Nothing happens and everything happens.

Louis was born in Oakland, raised his family in Oakland, dropped out of school in 1968, worked many jobs over the decades, dropped back into school in the 80s, got a Ph.D. in history, taught as an adjunct professor from 1993 to 2015. Retired but not withdrawn.



Find out more about
Friends of Pal at our
website.