

A MESSAGE FROM



Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library

HOOT

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S  
FIT TO HOOT!

[www.FriendsofPAL.org](http://www.FriendsofPAL.org)

Vol 6 # 3 December 15, 2021

### Some Ideas from Our Librarians for Gift Books

From Leni Matthews, a list of some of the most popular – the most checked out in the past months -- new books at Piedmont Avenue Library:

#### Non-Fiction

Crying in H Mart: A Memoir by Michelle Zauner

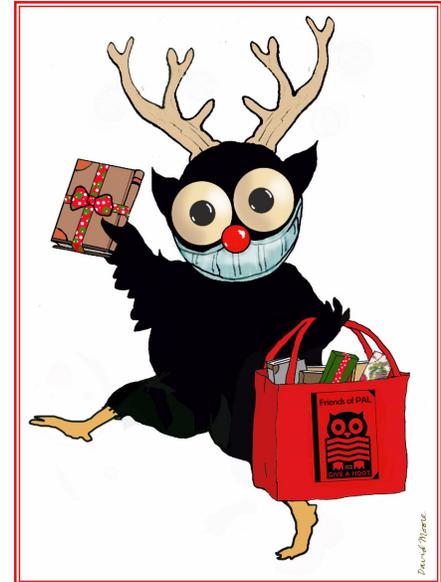
Learning in Public: Lessons for A Racially Divided America From My Daughter's School by Courtney E. Martin

#### Fiction

Malibu Rising: A Novel by Taylor Jenkins Reid

The Last Thing He Told Me: A Novel by Laura Dave

While Justice Sleeps: A Novel by Stacy Abrams



Shani Boyd, our children's librarian, has included a variety of choices for young readers.

#### For Teen Reads:

- Shadow & Bone by Leigh Bardugo
- Towering by Alex Flinn

#### For Youth Graphic Novel:

- The Only Child by Guojing
- Glitter by Andi WatsonPlace



#### Picture Books:

- Old Bear and His Cub by Olivier Dunrea
- Knit Together by Angela N. Dominguez

#### Moving Up:

- Diary of an Ice Princess by Christina Soontornvat
- Rabbit & Bear Rabbit: Rabbit's Bad Habits by Julian Gough & Jim Field

#### Chapter Books:

- Breadcrumbs by Anne Ursu
- Pax by Sara Pennypacker

## Tree Lighting on the Avenue

Late afternoon of Saturday, December 4 was a time for family, fun and freebies when the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood gathered in the plaza at 41st and Piedmont Avenue to welcome the holiday season, enjoy the enlightenment (pun intended) it always brings, and check out the Xmas tree, bedecked but not lighted.

When the volunteers from Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library (PAL) arrived to set up their tables, some families were already there, waiting for Santa to appear. The library table, with four volunteers seated behind it, was loaded with craft kits and children's books for all ages. The books, donated by the Oakland Public Library, were popular. Before the end of the evening, more than 90 had been given away. Two-year-old Miles, grandson of Joanna Smith a member of the Friends of PAL, was on hand to help.



Some parents carried their little ones up to the table to check out the books, some held the hands of their children and consulted with them about their choice, but most of the crowd were older youngsters who came along the increasingly crowded sidewalk on their own.

Among the adults spotted was Shani, our children's librarian from Piedmont Avenue Library. Many children -- carried, walking, sitting in a stroller or being chased by a parent -- were seen. Several dogs were there, too, on leash and behaving themselves.

Soon, among the ever-enlarging crowd, the sound of an accordion could be heard, playing familiar holiday songs. At the same time, a table with coffee and cookies, donated by Piedmont Avenue Merchant Association, was set up and soon surrounded. While that was happening, the accordion music stopped, the Pacific Boychoir arrived, with an organ and someone to play it, and began serenading the group. As they ended one of their songs, a murmur was heard passing through the crowd. Santa was arriving. Yes, Santa and Mrs. Claus (does anyone know her name?) began making their way to the Xmas tree. He greeted the crowd and reached for the light switch. Almost immediately the tree became a beacon for the holiday season.

And there it is and will remain, now without the music and the ceremony and the volunteers, for you to enjoy for the rest of the year.

Happy holidays from HOOT!

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



## Be a Friend of PAL

**There is no meeting in December. We usually meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting is January 18th, 6:30 at the library. Please join us and support our library.**

## **PART Promotes Student Reading Proficiency and Pleasure**

On a typical school day at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School (PAES), five or ten volunteers can be seen enthusiastically working one-on-one with a paired student to help improve the student's reading skills and enjoyment. They are reading tutors -- members of an informal association called the **Piedmont Avenue Reading Tutors (PART)**.

The students they work with are the ones chosen by the PAES teachers because they can benefit most from the special one-on-one attention and relationships that the PART tutors provide. Most volunteers are tutoring in person, while a few connect via Zoom link with their students in school, PART's roots as reading tutors at PAES go back 14 years. Many of the current PART volunteers have been in this program for somewhere between two and eight years.

There are other active tutoring groups at PAES including Reading Partners ( a weekly program focusing on developing readers) and Children Raising (a weekly program to tutor students in math).

This school year, 27 PART volunteers are working with about 50 PAES students. The students are from all grades, with a particular focus on first and second graders, and a recently created kindergarten component.

Each paired PART volunteer and student meet twice weekly in structured 30–45-minute tutoring sessions. Each session is individually tailored to focus on the reading skills chosen for that particular student. The tutor supports the student in reading interesting texts that present some challenge to the student. Each session typically ends with the tutor reading aloud and having a conversation about the book.

PART tutors regularly assess each student's reading skills and reading level and report their progress back to their teacher

As hallmarks of the program, PART tutors:

- Receive frequent training in tutoring skills;
- Use a group-created extensive library of tutoring techniques, tips, and effective student literacy building activities;
- Build solid working relationships with the teachers to foster cooperation and coordination between classroom literacy activities and the structured PART sessions.
- Develop trust, comfort, and friendship with their students, so that they can become not only effective reading tutors, but also informal mentors; and
- Help instill in their students a "growth mindset" so that, through the student's personal effort and openness to new learning experiences, each student can achieve academic success and lifetime accomplishment and happiness.

None of what PART does would be possible without the amazing support of the entire PAES community--administrative staff, teachers, parents and students--including **Zarina Ahmad** (long time PAES principal and PART supporter), **Kelly Haider** (tireless second grade teacher and supervisor/mentor for the PART program), and **Lilly Smith** and **Teresa Giacomani** (of the volunteer services team at the Oakland Public Education Fund that oversees and supports PART's work).

The PART volunteers are privileged and proud to be part of the PAES learning culture that promotes reading proficiency and joy, as well as a positive growth mindset for learning and achievement.

For a lot more detail and interesting anecdotes, see the interview of two PART tutors published by the Oakland Public Education Fund:

<https://www.oaklandedfund.org/2021/01/08/community-volunteer-feature-piedmont-ave-elementary/>

For other information or questions contact PART at [partutors@gmail.com](mailto:partutors@gmail.com).

*By Jack Nagle, PART Volunteer Reading Tutor*

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## 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.

## The Inhabited Woman by Gioconda Belli

I taught history for many years. Some students walked into the classroom already loving history, its complexity, its uniqueness and, at times, its utility. But more often, students felt history was alien and barren soil. It was “the lie agreed upon,” “a nightmare from which... [they were] trying to awake,” or, simply, it was “bunk.” Underlying this skepticism lurked another deeper critique, the idea that history is a chronological catalogue, of “great men [sic],” of treaties and wars and battles, only recited by teachers with great memory but little passion or insight into, or feeling for, the past. In the words of Eduardo Galeano “[T]he past was lifeless, hollow, dumb. They taught us about the past so that we should resign ourselves with drained consciences to the present: not to make history, which was already made, but to accept it.”

During my teaching years I taught a course on history, Latin American Social Revolution. Many students, because they were Latin American or had deep ties to “nuestra América,” or had traveled extensively in the region, didn't need convincing of the virtues of historical inquiry. But others, who came to the class because of simple curiosity or because they had to fulfill a humanities requisite often didn't feel the allure of history.

To that end I always included a historical novel for the students to read. Sometimes it was from the pen of Carlos Fuentes, or Mario Vargas Llosa, or Jorge Amado, or Manuel Puig, or José Maria Arguedas or Ángeles Mastretta or Edmundo Desnoes. But I think the most successful and accessible historical novel that captured the hearts and minds of students and encouraged them to boldly engage with history, was Gioconda Belli's The Inhabited Woman [1989].

Although the country where the novel's action transpires is unnamed, make no mistake, the novel takes place in Nicaragua. Like Lavinia, the protagonist of The Inhabited Woman, the novel's author was born into a family of wealth and privilege. Like Lavinia, Belli was a strong-willed woman, a nascent feminist, who grew up in a *machista* society. Like Lavinia, Belli resisted her family's bourgeois values. Like Lavinia, Belli became increasingly attracted to and would eventually join the insurgency that overthrew rapacious and venal dictatorship led by a brutal general (in the novel, he is the Great General; in Nicaragua, he was Anastasio Somoza Debayle, fl. 1967-1979). It is fair to say that Lavinia is a literary representation of Belli's life and a reading of her memoir The Country Under My Skin, [2003], confirms this judgment.

The novel is full of love, idealism, contempt, rebellion, romance, and revolutionary zeal as it follows the protagonist's compassionate journey along her revolutionary road. The Inhabited Woman also includes some fine examples of Magical Realism, one of Latin America's great contributions to world literature. Many of my students loved the book. You might, too, for it confirms the adage about great literature that whether or not it happened, it's true.

*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.*

## What's Happening at the Library

Our library is open six days per 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.

**Lucky Day books are here!** These books are popular titles that patrons can't put on hold or renew because they are in high demand.

There will be a total of 24 books each month that will circulate across the branches and they will be checked out on a first come first serve basis.



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The Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our tax ID is 84-4203055.  
All contributions are tax deductible.