



Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library

HOOT

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S
FIT TO HOOT!

www.FriendsofPAL.org

Volume 6 No. 4

SUPPORTING THE PIEDMONT AVENUE BRANCH, OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

February 15, 2022



Notes from our Librarians:



FROM LENI MATHEWS, LIBRARIAN:

There were 7,282 items checked out in January.

OPL subscribed to LinkedIn Learning where you can choose from thousands of online courses to learn in-demand skills from real-world industry experts. Get started with your library card. Click here <https://www.linkedin.com/learning-login/go/oakpl>

I've updated signage, thanks to the help of one of our visiting staff members. The owl is our mascot.

FROM SHANI BOYD, CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN:

In our January children's craft session, we made Dreamers Clouds and invited children to write what they dream and wish for themselves or the world. This was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other dreamers who shaped the world. We also offered lantern crafts celebrating Lunar New Years. We plan to keep the decorations up through the month of February.

We invited children in the community and the neighboring schools to make Valentine's Day cards for residents of Piedmont Gardens. We delivered the cards to Piedmont Gardens on Saturday February 12th.

Lots of new books are being added to the collection including winners of this year's Youth Media Awards, the Coretta Scott King Awards, the John Newbery Medal, Michael L. Printz Award, Pura Belpré Awards, and many others.

Did you know each month we offer two new take-home crafts for children at the branch? Come see what you can make.

We now have two French children's magazines in our collection at the Piedmont Ave. Branch. Be sure to take a look and enjoy the other children's magazines we have to offer.

Virtual programming is still going strong at OPL, so be sure to join our virtual story times and crafts for children and families. Events are posted on the OPL website. <https://oaklandlibrary.org>

We now have "Lucky Day" books circulating. These are popular books circulating from branch to branch that cannot be placed on Hold or Renewed. First come, first served! Look out for the Lucky Day sticker on book spines.

We're collecting book reviews and posting them in the stacks near its designated book. They are bright orange! This is a way to get the community members involved by giving them the opportunity to share their reads with others. Ask at the desk.

OPL will be closed Mon. Feb. 21st (President's Day).



Measure Q Needs Your Support Again - NOW

The parcel tax created by Measure Q is one of the 3 main sources of funding for Oakland Public Library. In 2004, Oakland votes approved Measure Q with a 20-year lifespan so that it will expire in 2024. To make sure there is plenty of time to protect and sustain the funding for our libraries, efforts have already begun to reauthorize it with a measure on the ballot in June of this year. Step one was completed on February 15th when the Oakland City Council approved placing the Library Services Retention

and Enhancement Extension on the June 7, 2022 ballot. Without reauthorization, some library services, hours, and locations will shut down.

For information about the renewal of Measure Q and how you can participate and offer your support, see the OPL Advocate website – OPLAdvocates.org. Sign up now! It is not too soon to get involved.

Meet Paulette, Library Staff



If there is anything you want to know about the Oakland library system, Paulette can tell you. She has been part of it for fifteen years and has worked in every branch. She is the one who teaches the Oakland library system to new OPL employees and to patrons who want to learn it. This is especially important right now as patrons encounter the automatic checkout process. That means there is no contact with a librari-

an, and if a patron is somewhat daunted by the new way of doing things, Paulette can demonstrate and help them as they learn.

Paulette really likes her job. She likes helping people in general and, as a bonus, she frequently learns from the people she is assisting about books she never heard of before.

She also especially likes seeing the generation mix the library attracts. Grandparents frequently come in, holding the hand of a grandchild. To introduce a child to the library at an early age often opens a whole new world for them.

Paulette began her work for Oakland in the Mayor's office, but when a new mayor was voted in, she moved to the library system, first as a tutor in PASS, an after-school program for elementary school students, then to the actual libraries where she has continued to develop strong relationships with the community.

Her work puts her in contact with a wide range of ages and library experience. So, if you need help the next time you are at the Piedmont Avenue Library, do not be afraid to ask. We are fortunate to have a great group of librarians there. Paulette, with her long experience and wide knowledge, joins them three days a week, and, with the rest of the crew, is ready to help you.

“Well beyond lending out books... [librarians] help local people figure out the complexities of life, from navigating the health system to helping those with housing needs.”

—Brookings: How public libraries help build healthy communities [How public libraries help build healthy communities \(brookings.edu\)](https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-public-libraries-help-build-healthy-communities/)

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



Meet Mary Moore

Mary is our super security guard and a meaningful member of the Piedmont Avenue Library team! She greets every patron with a smile, she keeps our plants healthy, and most importantly she is committed to keeping the branch and community safe.

Mary is with us for one half of the week. She straightens up the outside of the branch and cleans up the leaves. Sometimes she is lucky enough to get help from young community members.

Be sure to give Mary a smile when you see her.

By Shani Boyd, Children's Librarian

Black Culture Fest: A Celebration of the African Diaspora

This annual Oakland Public Library effort, now in its third year, is coordinated by members of the OPL staff who happily and proudly share the brilliance and strength of their heritages.

There are programs and activities planned throughout the month of February with writing, curated book lists, music, and celebrations of various aspects of Black Culture.

Here is an example of a OPL blog post during this month:

Unsung Heroes that Helped Desegregate Public Libraries, by D Nichole Brown February 4, 2022

Although most children learn about the Civil Rights movement, they rarely learn about public library sit-ins. This blog on the OPL website gives a brief history of some of the people who fought to desegregate American Public Libraries.

See all that is offered at <https://oaklandlibrary.org/black-culture-fest/>.



Notes from the Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library (PAL)

The next meeting of the Friends of Piedmont Avenue Library (PAL) is Tuesday, March 15th at 6:30 pm. This is a Zoom Meeting. We will send the Zoom link in a reminder email. To learn more about the Friends check out our website <https://www.friendsofpal.org/> Please join us to support the Piedmont Avenue library - give a HOOT.

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.



Huck re-writes Mark Twain

Passing Through to the Territory [2010] by Bob Wells, is a profound meditation about the United States in the years leading to the outbreak of the great Civil War. It is historical fiction and, like all great historical fiction, it is deeply immersed in the history of its time. It is written in the voice of Huckleberry Finn and, delightfully, by extension, in the voice of Mark Twain, and therein *Territory* gives an account of Huck and Jim's experiences after being abandoned by Twain in the closing chapters of his *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In Wells' book we learn what could have happened to the two central figures, Huck, and Jim, as the War approaches. Wells emplots their journey going down the Mississippi and then north west of the Mississippi to Missouri and then to the Kansas Territory, the land of the Bloody Kansas' border wars where pro-slave raiders clashed with John Brown and his Jayhawks, battles which would lead directly to the Civil War. This conceit serves Wells -and his readers- well.

Wells' evocation of Huck's expropriation of Twain's narrative is ingenious and gives Wells a freehand to pay homage to, and to critique, Twain's works. Twain, himself, on his good days would enjoy Wells' lampoon. More to the point, what emerges in the book is a morality tale where young Huck is torn between hunger for family, friendship, and paternal authority and his growing awakening to the evil of slavery as he and Jim meet and ride with John Brown and combatants. Huck, like most of Americans of his zeitgeist -and ours- is ambivalent. He loves Jim as a friend but at crucial turns, he plays the "skin game" with the scoundrels the Duke of Bilgewater and the Dolphin King of France who use Jim as bait in their grift. Indeed, towards that end, Huck becomes a grifter himself. Ultimately Huck abhors the treatment of Jim and yet, paradoxically, he becomes a mascot to a band of Southern pro-slavery raiders who have invaded the border territory to intimidate and sabotage the abolitionists and install slavery in both the Missouri and Bloody Kansas. The book ends before the beginning of the Civil War with a question: In 1861 Huckleberry Finn would have been seventeen or eighteen years old. Would he have soldiered? If so, in which army?

And so we have an icon of the 19th century -free-spirited, resilient, honest Huck- torn between being a white man and being an abolitionist at the dawn of the Civil War. There's little room to equivocate. We are drawn to Huck but in Wells' book, by turns witty and passionate, we don't know whether he'd soldier or, if he does, with whom he'd soldier. A fair question, I think, and a question that resonates in our world today.

Full disclosure: Wells is a friend of mine. We drink coffee and sometimes Guinness and talk about Ireland, books and writing, politics, and social justice. When Covid abates we can occasionally be found in Café Chiave on Piedmont Avenue.

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.

There are currently no programs scheduled at our library, but Oakland Public Library (OPL) has some great online programs. Among them is Kanopy which provides free access to thousands of movies with your library card. <https://oaklandlibrary.org/resources-types/movies-tv/>



Find out more about
Friends of Pal at our
website.

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