



Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library

HOOOT

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S
FIT TO HOOT!

www.FriendsofPAL.org

Volume 6 No. 7

SUPPORTING THE PIEDMONT AVENUE BRANCH, OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

April 15, 2022

Celebrate National Poetry Month at our library



From Nikki Giovanni's 2007 collection
Acolytes (public library)

MY FIRST MEMORY (OF LIBRARIANS)

This is my first memory:

A big room with heavy wooden tables that sat on a creaky
wood floor

A line of green shades—bankers' lights—down the center
Heavy oak chairs that were too low or maybe I was simply
too short

For me to sit in and read
So my first book was always big

In the foyer up four steps a semi-circle desk presided
To the left side the card catalogue
On the right newspapers draped over what looked like
a quilt rack
Magazines face out from the wall

The welcoming smile of my librarian
The anticipation in my heart
All those books — another world — just waiting
At my fingertips.

Signs of Progress Toward Making the CDC Building a Home for Our Library Branch

Friends of PAL has learned that negotiators for the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) have accepted the City of Oakland's recent Letter of Intent regarding a potential joint-occupancy lease on the former Child Development Center (CDC). Proposed details will be brought to the OUSD Board and City

Council later this year for their approval. Meanwhile, the current lease on the portable building that now houses our library would be extended. Please join the Friends of PAL email list to be notified when and how your support may be needed, <https://www.friendsofpal.org/>

Notes from our Librarians



From Leni Mathews, Librarian:

In March, the library circulated 7,971 items. This is nearly nine hundred more than last month!

Oakland Public Library (OPL) has purchased access to creativebug.

"Creativebug.com has thousands of award-winning art and craft video classes taught by recognized design experts and artists."

OPL has purchased access to LinkedIn Learning.

"LinkedIn Learning, formerly Lynda.com, features video courses in technology and business skills, from 'soft skills' like communication to 'hard skills' like Python and SQL."



From Shani Boyd, Children's Librarian:

We had our first outdoor toddler storytime on April 5th with over 25 friendly faces in attendance. Piedmont Avenue Branch Library currently has toddler storytime on Tuesdays at 10:15 am outside on the patio, weather permitting.



TOP: Origami forest above the J fiction collection. Each animal was made by a staff member at the Piedmont Avenue branch! MIDDLE: Outdoor toddler storytime. BOTTOM: They left with a new book bag and a 1st library card.

Spring Book Sale

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is having their semi-annual Spring Book Sale on Thursday, April 21 through Sunday, April 24, 11am-4pm.

Come shop and support the library at The Bookmark Bookstore, located at 721 Washington Street, between 7th and 8th Streets in Old Oakland, convenient to AC Transit and BART's 12th Street station. Call us for more information (510) 444-0473.

Our new Book Bags
are here.
Only \$10 (until 6/7/22)



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.



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

The next meeting of the Friends of Piedmont Avenue Library (PAL) is Tuesday, April 19 at 6:30 pm at the library! To learn more about the Friends check out our website 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.



History of the Rain [2014]

BY NIALL WILLIAMS

I read a lot of books that start well, have something new to say, are decently writ but somewhere along the way they lose their way. As the great Irish poet said, “things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.” Sometimes the narrative just disintegrates, sometimes the editing is bad, sometimes the writer’s spirit turns out to be ugly and misanthropic. And I can’t read the book any longer. But for the HOOT forum, I will give no negative reviews. For what is the purpose of tearing something apart? Occasionally it’s okay to tear into a book but for you dear readers, I am an avid reader, guided by enthusiasm and only wish to commend my readers to excellent books.

And oh my, this is an excellent book! The narrator is 19 year-old Ruthie Swain and she lives in the west of Ireland near the mouth of the Shannon River. She is ill, bedridden, and very, bookish. She is determined to understand her missing father -Virgil, an unpublished poet- by methodically going through his abandoned library. So, in this sense, *History of the Rain* is a daughter-father book, or a coming-of-age book. The novel is suffused with affection and puzzlement, startling insights and extended shaggy tales. It’s full of sharp-tongued humor and clever word play that will make you chuckle. But it’s much more than this. It is stocked with memorable people. It is also a history of Ireland and its “800 years of Rain,” of Ireland’s poverty, dignity, wit and barbed eloquence. On another level, it is Williams -through Ruth’s- send-off of the books he -and she- love. It’s a bibliophile’s paradise. Ruth’s father, an auto-didact who has read widely and wisely, bequeathed this library to her. And so, in the wake of the Bankers’ crisis, Ruth searches her past through perusing her father’s books.

Rain is, if you will, an exemplary book of Irish Magic Realism. It reminds me of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* [the intergenerational snares of history] and of *Sometimes a Great Notion* [a river runs through it]. Both García Márquez and Kesey have cameo roles in the book, along with Faulkner, Shakespeare, Milton, Yeats, Dickinson and Seamus Heaney. Indeed, two score or more writers inhabit the novel’s lush wordscape.

On occasion, the tale is a bit cloying and too romantic for my taste but the cloy hardens and reveals enlightening and abiding truths about love and alienation with multiple celebrations of natural and human beauty. I finished reading the last pages of the book in Café Chiave and I wept. If you love books and Gaelic wit and the resilient and the eccentric in our species check out this wonderful novel.

Other Irish writers to read if you develop the taste: Kevin Barry’s *Night Boat to Tangier*, Seamus Heaney’s *100 Poems* and, James Joyce’s *Dubliners*, *Portrait*, and, if you travel with a hardy group of co-dependents, *Ulysses*, and for Irish wit in the digital age, Sally Rooney’s recent novels.

By Louis Segal. 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.

Information and a request from the OPL Advocates

Support Measure C in the June 7 election

Please join the Friends of the Oakland Public Library (FOPL), the Library Advisory Commission (LAC), City Councilmembers and Oakland teachers, librarians, families, and community leaders in supporting Measure C on the June 7 ballot. All Oakland voters will receive a ballot in the mail the week of May 9.

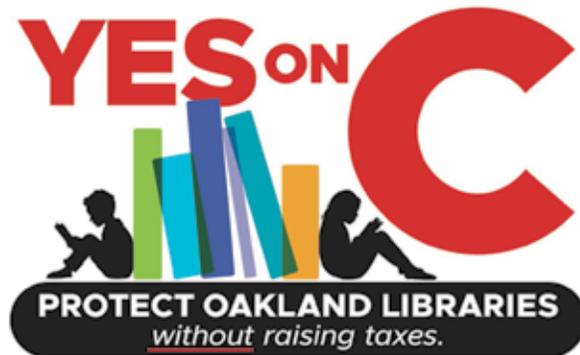
A two-thirds YES vote on Measure C is needed now to keep our library services in place. Measure C will not raise taxes; it continues one already in place. The funding was approved years ago by voters but only for a specific time; now voters need to extend that time.

Without those funds, our neighborhood libraries will be forced to cut hours and services, and some will likely close. If Measure C passes in the June 7 election, the funding will remain in place and we can ensure students, seniors, and working families access to public library services when they need them.

We know that Oakland Public Libraries are an essential community resource. They provide safe spaces for our children and teenagers and provide homework assistance, tutoring programs, and other resources that help students succeed. OPL provides literacy programs for adults and seniors and connection to government services and assistance. Oakland Public Library branches help our community members find jobs; start small businesses; find housing, legal, and tax assistance; access the internet; and so much more!

There are protections in Measure C: the funds can be spent only for Oakland Public Libraries; the City cannot spend this money for any other purpose. The measure includes exemptions for low-income seniors and residents, community oversight, and regular independent audits. Measure C is time limited and after 30 years cannot be extended without a new vote of the people. Now is the time to support and extend that funding.

In addition to voting YES on Measure C, here are other ways you can support the campaign to protect Oakland Library funding. To take action on any or all of these, please go to the official campaign website at: <https://www.protectoaklandlibraries.org/>



- **Donate individually to the campaign, encourage others to donate.**
- **Endorse Measure C individually and encourage your organization and others to endorse**
- **Host a house or lawn party to encourage donations and volunteering.**
- **Deliver/distribute lawn signs help in front of the library 4/30 or Keyroute Plaza.5/14.**
- **Put a sign in your window/or on your lawn**
- **Monitor and post social-media content.**
- **Phone bank Monday evenings from home.**
- **Speak at/visit meetings, community groups, house parties, union meetings.**
- **Door-to-door campaigning beginning May 23rd.**
- **Spread the word far and wide!**

For more information, please go to the Measure C FAQ page at: <https://www.protectoaklandlibraries.org/faq> or contact Ronile Lahti (ronile.lahti@gmail.com) or Helen Bloch (helenibloch@gmail.com).

Please help Oakland Libraries by supporting Measure C! Thank you!

Helping A Child Gain Reading Skills: Book Fair at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School

Next month, on May 11 at 5:30 p.m., in the school yard, Piedmont Avenue Elementary School (PAES) families—parents, guardians, students, their siblings, and even grandparents from near and far--will gather to get free books, watch a live animal show, have dinner, and participate in a workshop about how to support their child's reading during the summer break.

If you are a PAES student's parent/guardian or grandparent, you're invited to experience the joy and satisfaction of helping a child gain reading skills.

The event is co-sponsored by PAES Principal Mrs. Zarina Ahmad, all the teachers and staff at the school, and Piedmont Avenue Reading Tutors (PART). PART is a group of volunteer tutors who for nearly 13 years have

been working one-on-one with students chosen by their teacher to improve reading skills. Last year, 27 PART volunteers worked twice every week for 30 to 45 minutes each time with about 50 students, and they reported great satisfaction with their work.

This year, kindergartners have been added to the tutoring program for the first time, joining students of all other grades that have long been part of the program. A typical session has the tutor guiding the student in reading a text, with time also for the tutor to read an interesting story to the student. Then they discuss what they read about.

The volunteers work closely with the PAES teachers, including PART mentor teacher, Ms. Kelly Haider, to augment and support what is happening in the classroom.



Jack Nagle is a typical PART tutor who joined the group after he retired about eight years ago, following in his mother's footsteps, as she was an elementary school librarian. In addition to his work at the school, he coaches sports for Special Olympics.

Some PART tutors have previous experience as elementary school teachers or children's librarians, although no prior teaching background is required to volunteer. All PART tutors receive extensive ongoing training in teaching literacy skills. The December 2021 issue of Hoot included an article by Nagle describing the organization's work. For a lot more detail and interesting anecdotes, see the interview of two PART tutors published by the Oakland Public Education Fund: <https://www.oaklandfund.org/2021/01/08/community-volunteer-feature-piedmont-ave-elementary/>. For other information or questions contact PART at partutors@gmail.com.

To meet the PART team and learn more about PART, get some free books, and have a great multi-generational evening, all families of current PAES students are warmly welcomed to the PAES school yard at 5:30 p.m. on May 11.

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



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.