

May 2008

Volume 1, Issue 11, Series 2

PHA Newsletter

Published by the Panoramic Hill Association

Oakland/Berkeley, California

Announcements:

PHA ANNUAL MEETING
June 8th, 2008
4-6pm
650 Panoramic Way

Bring a dish to share with your neighbors. Kids and non-members welcome.

2008 PHA membership fees due! Please renew today if you haven't already.

SCIP legal fund needs your continued support!

Inside:

Rambles from the Pres

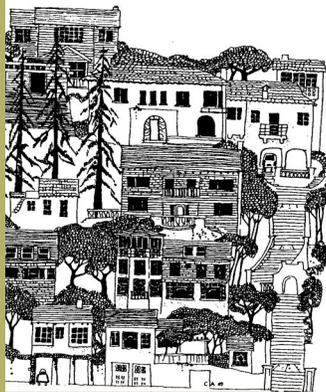
Crime Alert

161 Panoramic Update

Boardmember Elections

Hill Icon Passes

911 Response



PHA ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday June 8th, 2008
4-6pm

Home of Paul Salz; 650 Panoramic Way
See back page for agenda!

Bring a dish to share with your neighbors. Kids and non-members welcome.

PHERC MAKES PROGRESS IN SEARCH FOR ALTERNATE EMERGENCY ACCESS ROUTE

By Dick White

Emergency Routes
Anyone?

If you attended the last PHA General Meeting you heard a brief report on the feasibility study for a new emergency access road into the Hill. You may also recall that, upon the advice of representatives of the three most relevant fire departments (Berkeley, Oakland, and East Bay Regional Parks Fire Department), we broadened our scope to include *emergency pedestrian evacuation routes*. To bring you up to date on all this, there'll be a report at the

PHA Annual Meeting June 8th. Until then you might take some comfort from hearing that it looks like the routes *may* not need to cross either creeks or privately owned land. And *we may* have found a way to get the benefit of the City of Berkeley's matching fund, which until now would have required that we sign a 14-page, single-spaced contract with onerous liability clauses.

In addition to the words above from Dick White, the PHA board wishes to say that "it is encouraged by the work of the Panoramic Hill

Emergency Route Committee in their investigation of Emergency Access and Egress issues for the Panoramic Hill community" and hope you can all join us at the meeting on June 8th to find out more about the progress being made on this monumental project especially in light of the recent wildfire in Santa Cruz.

Rambles from the President

By Jerry Wachtel

That's All, Folks:

This is my last column as President of the PHA, and it sure has been an action packed few years. So as to leave some space in this newsletter for more important and relevant topics, I'll keep my rambles short.

When I was young(er) and making lists upon lists of all the things I needed to do, I had the naïve notion that, once I accomplished a task and crossed it off the list, the list would get ever shorter and I could look forward to the day when I would be list-free, and could devote my time to pursuits that I wanted to do rather than those I had to do.

Well, I need not tell any of you how that concept worked out. Here am I, no longer quite so young, and the "To Do" lists are longer than ever. The same can be said for my time in the President's chair of this esteemed organization. The famous (or apocryphal) proverb has certainly come true for us. We have been living in "interesting" times, and most of the topics that have made my life interesting for the past few years remain on the list:

Oakland rezoning? Check! But no merger ordinance yet, and the threat of future development continues to loom over us.

The effort to stop development at 161 Panoramic Way? Check (but in the wrong column)! We lost the battle, although we put up a good fight based on solid arguments. But the (construction) war has yet to begin, and there are very few among us who think that the developer will be able to pull off his high wire act while staying within the constraints imposed by the City.

The lawsuit against UC's Student Athlete High Performance Center? No check yet. Could any of us have predicted that the judge *still* hasn't issued her ruling? And regardless of how this issue is resolved (and I remain confident that we will prevail, at least in some of the CEQA issues), the fight over the stadium itself has not yet begun.

An emergency route for Panoramic Hill? No check yet (literally) but great progress is being made, and, perhaps, in the next administration, we will have something real to

show for our 60 years of effort.

A building moratorium on the Berkeley side of the hill? No check, just promises and delays from the City. The recommendations for this moratorium have been in the City's hands for six months. What can we expect?

It's been fun, tiring, exhilarating, frustrating, and highly educational. I thank you all for your support. I could not have done it without a smart, motivated Board of Directors (three Boards, actually). You guys have been great.

One of my heroes, Dylan Thomas, reminds me to "not go gentle into that good night." And so I won't. I'll stick around on the Board a while longer. There are still a bunch of things to check off the list.

"There are still a bunch of things to check off the list"



Jerry Wachtel
President

BOARDMEMBER ELECTIONS

By Eric Choate

After four years of service on the Panoramic Hill Board Marcos Gandara and Eric Choate will be stepping down due to ever growing family demands. In addition, Regula Muller regrets having to leave the board due to the fact that she and her husband may have to leave the hill this summer unless they can find a new place to live on the hill.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Eric Choate, Marcos Gandara, and Regula Muller submit the following nominees to serve on the PHA board of directions for the 2008-2009 year to be confirmed by vote of the members at the Annual Meeting on June 8th, 2008:

Jerry Wachtel,
Dick White,

Cathy Orozco,
Susan Chainey,
Michael Kelly,
Paul Salz,
Janice Thomas,
Suzanne Scotchmer.

According to the PHA bylaws, directors must be "full members" and can only be nominated by a "full member". In addition, nominations may be taken from the floor at the meeting.

161 PANORAMIC WAY USE PERMIT APPROVED

By Cathy Orozco

Berkeley City Council Approves Use Permit for Construction of House at 161 Panoramic Way

On March 25, 2008, the City Council in a 5-3-1 vote approved Bruce Kelley's plans to build a house a 161 Panoramic Way. The address is confusing because the entrance to the house will be on the narrow section of the 200 block after the third hairpin turn.

Frequent readers of this Newsletter know that the PHA has been concerned about the impacts this project will have on the neighborhood public safety. Many residents expressed their concerns at the City council meetings. Neighbors told the Council that partial blockage of the road for

construction activities will increase emergency response time to an unacceptable level. Fire Chief Pryor assured the Council that emergency vehicles would still be able to get by during the four days that construction activities will narrow the lower road to 14 feet.

Kelley's next step is to ask City Council to approve a major encroachment permit to allow construction of the driveway in the public right of way on the northern side of the property. The hearing date on the encroachment has not been confirmed, but should probably occur at a June council meeting. Curiously, when this application was before the Zoning Adjustments Board, the city staff recommended that the

applicant should be required to pave an additional section of the road equal to the amount of encroachment he would be granted; i.e., if he is granted a 50 foot encroachment, he would widen an additional 50 feet either above or below his property.

Mysteriously, the city staff, currently working on the project, seem to be unaware of the previous recommendation.

If the encroachment permit is granted, Kelley will be able to get building permits. At that time, the PHA will advise neighbors of all of the conditions relating to the permit because it will be up to us to notify the city if the applicant fails to comply

"Mysteriously, the city staff ... seem to be unaware of the previous recommendation"

Please see pg 5

Letter regarding recent 911 Response

By Jerry Wachtel

May 15, 2008

Mr. James D. Edwards
Deputy Chief and Fire
Marshal
Oakland Fire
Department
150 Frank H. Ogawa
Plaza, # 3354
Oakland, California
94612

VIA EMAIL

Dear Chief Edwards:

A troubling event arose on Panoramic Hill last Wednesday, May 7th. Since you have been instrumental in attending to the emergency access concerns up here, I felt that it was urgent to share this with you and ask for your advice and action.

At 0815 that morning, one of our neighbors (an emergency physician)

called 911 (from a landline at his Oakland home) on behalf of a neighbor who lives at 511 Dwight Place. A Fire Engine from Company 19 and an ambulance were dispatched. It took the ambulance approximately thirty (30) minutes to arrive on scene; the Fire Engine never arrived, as it was stuck at the second hairpin turn (at the intersection of Panoramic Way and Mosswood Road.) One of the fire fighters told the neighbor that they "always" get stuck coming up Panoramic Hill, and that the rig has even needed to be towed in the past.

It was my impression that Oakland Fire Department personnel make regular tours of Panoramic Hill during fire season, to ensure clear and safe passage in case of emergency. I don't know whether the equipment

that responded to this 911 call was larger than the engines normally sent to the hill, whether the particular crew was unfamiliar with the location, or whether some other problem prevented their ability to reach their destination.

Regardless of the reason, the inability of a Fire Engine to respond, and, of course, the half-hour delay for an ambulance to arrive, are of great concern to us. I know that you and your team, as well as your counterparts at the Berkeley Fire Department, have worked hard to ensure the fastest possible response to emergencies on Panoramic Hill. With the record-setting temperatures expected over the next few days, and with the onset of fire season, we are particularly concerned. I am hopeful that you will

look into this incident in an effort to identify the root cause of the problem, and work with us to ensure a successful response to future events.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or need more information. As always, I value your interest and concern, and we are ready to work with you to do whatever we can to be sure that this doesn't happen again.

Sincerely,

Jerry Wachtel
President
(510) 848-0250

Copies:
Oakland City Council
Member Jane Brunner
Berkeley Mayor and City
Council Members
Berkeley Fire
Department
PHA Board

Oakland Fire Chief Responds:

"I am going to refer this to the Operations Chief, Deputy Chief Williams, to investigate thoroughly. I did talk to an officer at Station 19 today who referred to the Station journal, which indicated that the engine crew had made patient contact, but were subsequently released by AMR who arrived on scene prior to the engine.

As for the comments by the firefighter, I have never heard of one of our apparatus being stuck in that vicinity. I do know that it can take a few minutes to navigate past that sticking point. I personally have been up their in an engine and was the Operations Chief for the Stonewall fire where we had a large number of

apparatus strategically located at the top of Panoramic to confine the fire and protect your neighborhood.

Respectfully,
James Edwards
*Deputy Chief
Fire Prevention
/Communications
Oakland Fire
Department
(510) 238-4053"*

161 (continued)

with any conditions, especially those which affect the public safety of the neighborhood.

The potential hazard of this construction activity is particularly frightening given the most recent events:

1) At 0815 May 7, one of our neighbors (an emergency physician) called 911 (from a landline at his Oakland home) on behalf of a neighbor who lives at 511 Dwight Place. A Fire Engine from Company 19 and an ambulance were dispatched. It took the

ambulance approximately thirty (30) minutes to arrive on scene; the Fire Engine never arrived, as it was stuck at the second hairpin turn (at the intersection of Panoramic Way and Mosswood Road.) One of the fire fighters told the neighbor that they "always" get stuck coming up Panoramic Hill, and that the rig has even needed to be towed in the past.

2) May 15: Around 3pm a neighbor saw Berkeley Fire engine Number 3 coming up the hill. It appeared that they were out on a practice run, possibly to test

response time. The engine encountered a car coming downhill right after the 2nd hairpin which brought the engine to a full stop for just less than a minute while the car figured out that it had to back up and pull off to the side.

3) 6p.m. May 16 Another neighbor observed that a fire engine attempting to maneuver downhill at the Mosswood turn took about 3 minutes of backing up and reconfiguring the truck to get it downhill.

CRIME AND TRAFFIC ON THE HILL

By Eric Choate

Hold on to your gutters, pipes, and railings, if they're made of copper that is. With the increase in copper value recently, copper thefts are on the rise and Panoramic Hill is not immune to this growing crime statistic. Just ask Kathy Sullivan of 3541 Dwight Way who had her copper railing ripped from the ground by brazen recycle thieves on March 10th, 2008.

Neighbors report hearing an unusual amount of noise the morning of the theft but dismissed the sounds as

coming from the myriad of garbage trucks around at the time.

Beyond copper theft there have been numerous incidences of mail theft as well in recent months. Many residents have replaced their mailboxes with more secure ones. Hill resident, Nhu Miller, had this to say about the thefts "I called the postal inspection service to report the theft. They suggested that anyone who has a description of the thief call 415-778-5911. They might be able to set up a decoy or do something to prevent further theft. It has been a huge

inconvenience for those of us missing checks, tax information, credit cards etc."

Others suggest it might be time for video surveillance. Whatever the solution, Police can't and won't do anything about it if incidents aren't reported to them. So if you have been a victim of any crime on the hill, please call the police to make a report for every occurrence. The only way to get increased Police presence and patrols is through demonstrated statistical need.

Please see pg 6

"Neighbors reported hearing an unusual amount of noise..."

Traffic (Continued)..

Sadly, Penny Russell of 3373 Dwight Way, reports that her beloved cat (Voodoo) was recently struck and killed by a speeding motorist and hopes something can be done about the "Many [who] drive far too fast without concern for who or what might be around the next bend". In her list of offenders she includes neighbors, work trucks, and visitors alike. She also suspects the

frequent partiers that drink and smoke near the top of the hill to be a contributing factor. Aside from dangerous driving, Penny also wonders what ever happened to good old fashion courtesies? Like waving when others pull over to let you by, or stopping to say hi to a neighbor out for a walk.

So far, video cameras and speed bumps have been suggested to help fight crime and

speeders on the hill. If you have other ideas, bring them to the next PHA meeting.

And again if you see any suspicious activity, or possibly drunk or stoned drivers, CALL THE POLICE!

In an emergency call 911, otherwise:

Oakland Police: (510)777-3333

Berkeley Police: (510)981-5900

CITY OF BERKELEY WITHHOLDING INFORMATION?

By Jerry Wachtel

Is the City of Berkeley withholding information from the Panoramic Hill Association? You be the judge. Here is a copy of the first page of a City of Berkeley consultant report on the Berkeley moratorium obtained by Cathy Orozco after 6 long months of hounding the city. If this outrages you, please come to the next PHA meeting to find out more about the moratorium and the City of Berkeley's lack of responsiveness on this issue.



Office of the City Manager

DRAFT **DRAFT**

ACTION CALENDAR, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Phil Kamlarz, City Manager
 Submitted by: Dan Marks, Director, Planning and Development Department
 Subject: [REDACTED]

RECOMMENDATION
 [REDACTED]

SUMMARY
 [REDACTED]

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION
 [REDACTED]

BACKGROUND
 [REDACTED]

The Oakland part of Panoramic Hill has no public access from Oakland and can only be reached via a substandard, winding Berkeley street.

Former hill resident killed in hit and run accident

Laura Baum, a long time Hill resident, was hit near her home in Montclair by what police think may have been a sport utility vehicle that kept going.

She was not discovered for at least 10 minutes and died from major injuries Feb. 21 at Highland Hospital.

At least 200 relatives

and friends attended a memorial service for Laura Baum on Feb. 27 at the University of California Faculty Club. Longtime friend Dorothy Berndt described Baum as "one of the world's most beautiful ladies."

"Many people spoke movingly of her," said Berndt, an attorney. "She was a wonderful person, a devoted mother and a

dear friend." "She was completely devoted to her sons," Berndt said. "They were her world."

Baum had worked in sales before devoting all her time to raising her sons Nicolas Baum, 22, and Sam Baum, 20, who are now in college. She was a very active volunteer while they attended Bentley School and Berkeley High School.

Beloved former hill resident dies at age 89



By Mary Christenson

Fran McKinnon April 25, 1917 – April 29, 2008 died peacefully at the Berkshire where she had been a resident since 2004, all the while maintaining close contact with her many friends on the Hill and elsewhere.

A native of Oregon, Frances moved to Berkeley to study ceramics in the early 1940s but soon after the move went to work as a

welder in the San Francisco shipyards. She was fiercely independent as well as a loyal friend. She made relationships with people all throughout her life in all kinds of circumstances. Among her friends she counted M.C. Richards, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, David Tudor, Charles and Rae Eames, Dorothea Lange, Imogene Cunningham, Elenore Breade, Ruth Asawa, and Starker and Betty Leopold.

As manager of Fraser's,

the Contemporary Art store on Telegraph Avenue, she supported many local artists like Bob Stocksdale and John Coleman. She also remained friends with many employees and customers.

Frances had no immediate family but she left a large group of friends – many who still live on the Hill – each one grateful to have known her unique spirit. We will celebrate her life on Saturday June 28th from one till three in the afternoon, at Live Oak Park, Picnic Area 2, 1275 Walnut Street (near Berkeley Art

Center on south side of Codornices Creek) in Berkeley.

Please help spread the news to those who you think would want to know.

During the years that Fran lived in various locations on the Hill, she made many friends. She was very modest but she seemed to know everybody in the neighborhood. We are particularly indebted to her for permission, just after the 1991 fire, to build on one of her lots a shed to house the emergency fire-fighting equipment that several Hill residents bought, and to hold our annual emergency preparedness exercises on her property.

A Thank You from Molly's Mother

Jim Kantor recently received a note from Anne Keane who lives in Connecticut in which she asked: "Would you please thank all those neighbors who I did not know but spoke so many heartfelt words at Molly's 'Celebration' [on

March 8th]. That meant a great deal to me."

You may recall hill resident, Molly Keane, died tragically off the coast of Northern California while attempting to save her dog earlier this year.

Panoramic Hill Association

P.O. Box 5428
Berkeley, CA 94705

E-MAIL:
info@PanoramicHill.org

About Our Organization...

The Panoramic Hill Association is a non-profit mutual benefit association dedicated to serving its members and community. The association strives to ensure the safety and preserve the character of the neighborhood by working with local officials throughout the year.

General meetings are held three times a year, with board members elected at the annual meeting in the Spring.

Membership is a modest \$15 per household per year. Membership is not required to attend meetings.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.PanoramicHill.org

Boardmembers

Jerry Wachtel	President	JerryWachtel@PanoramicHill.org
Michael Kelly	Vice President (UC)	MichaelKelly@PanoramicHill.org
Susan Chainey	Secretary, Newsletter Editor	SusanChainey@PanoramicHill.org
Marcos Gandara	Vice President (Oakland)	MarcosGandara@PanoramicHill.org
Cathy Orozco	CNA Liaison	CathyOrozco@PanoramicHill.org
Eric Choate	Webmaster	EricChoate@PanoramicHill.org
Paul Salz	Treasurer	PaulSalz@PanoramicHill.org
Regula Muller	Vice President (Berkeley)	RegulaMuller@PanoramicHill.org
Dick White	Parliamentarian	DickWhite@PanoramicHill.org

PHA Membership Enrollment/Renewal Form Year 2008

Mail to: _____ or drop off at 650 Panoramic Way
 PHA Treasurer
 PO Box 5428
 Berkeley, CA 94705

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Dues for the PHA are a modest \$15 per household per year and cover the calendar year from January to December. Please renew today so that the PHA can continue to protect and improve your neighborhood and keep you informed with the newsletter, website, advocacy and our annual emergency preparedness event.

Calendar

Event	Date/Time	Location
Annual Meeting	Sunday, June 8th, 2008 / 4:00pm – 6:00pm	Home of Paul Salz: 650 Panoramic Way
Agenda:		
1. Boardmember Elections		
2. Update from PHERC (Panoramic Hill Emergency Route Committee) by Dick White		
3. Update on SCIP (Southeast Campus Integrated Projects) Lawsuit by Michael Kelly		
4. Update from the folks working to "Save Strawberry Canyon" by Janice Thomas		
5. Update on Berkeley building moratorium and consultant's report by Jerry Wachtel and Cathy Orozco		
6. Discussion and possible vote on Panoramic Way repaving project		
*** Please bring a dish to share with your neighbors. PHA will supply beverages ***		