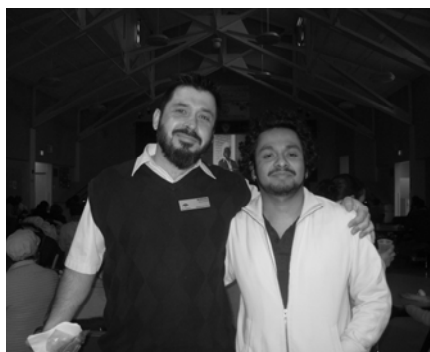


EAST OAKLAND RESIDENTS COME TOGETHER TO SHARE HISTORY AT SPECIAL FILM SCREENING

Author: Kathleen Hirooka

Photo: Library Assistants Anthony Propernick (left) and Carlos Gutierrez at the public screening of East Oakland Stories



What do a former Black Panther Party member, new immigrants from Mexico blending old and new traditions, a high school drop-out turned principal, and recollections of ACORN Woodland School have in common? Their narratives were among nine videos that were screened at a recent event held on February 19 at the school to culminate a year-long grant project, California of the Past: East Oakland Stories.

Anthony Propernick, who produced the videos along with Carlos Gutierrez, welcomed over 70 people from the local community who came to view the videos. These memoirs were among nearly two dozen that residents of East Oakland recorded as part of a California State Library grant awarded to the Oakland Public Library – in partnership with the ACORN Woodland Elementary School and EnCompass Academy.

Other speakers included Gerry Garzon, Associate Director of the Oakland Public Library; Kimi Kean, Principal of ACORN Woodland Elementary School; and Rene Yung, the Public Artist, who will merge

these videos with her own collection, Our Oakland: Eastside Stories, when the new East Oakland Community Library opens this summer at Rudsdale and 81st Avenue.

According to Propernick, “Digital stories create an opportunity for cross-cultural and community dialog in a unique way. Not only did storytellers have an opportunity to share with their community and family, but they are re-sharing their own experiences with themselves.”

In one of the videos, “Our New Library,” several residents and staff at the ACORN Woodland School talk about what having a new branch library on the site of their school will mean for the surrounding neighborhood: Internet access, books, a safe place to study, a community meeting center, and a place to share these memories of the wider East Oakland neighborhood.

Members of the Friends of the Oakland Public Library who attended the screening were treated to a special walk-through of the new library, which will be the first joint school/public library in Oakland. The Friends are leading a fund-raising campaign to purchase new books, DVDs, and other materials for the new East Oakland/81st Avenue library.

For more information about the California of the Past: East Oakland Stories or the new East Oakland Community Library, see the Oakland Public Library’s Website online:

<http://www.oaklandlibrary.org>

To participate in the public art project by sharing your own stories, log on to:

<http://www.ouroakland.org>



Bookmark Bookstore Spring Sale

FOPL members save 30% during the “Members’ First Choice Sale” on

Wednesday, April 7th, 10:30-5:30

Everyone saves 30% from
April 8-11, 10:30-5:30 daily

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BUILDING A LIFELONG LOVE OF LIBRARIES

Author: Sophie Fynland Souroujon

Earth Day

Announcing "Earth Day" at the Main Library! Do you like to pull weeds? Are you interested in making the grounds around the Main Library look better? Do you own gardening tools, some gloves, and a knee pad? Library staff are organizing a weeding party in celebration of Earth Day, Main Library on:

Saturday April 17, 9-12

Library Director Carmen Martinez promises lots of hot coffee, tea, and breakfast goodies to keep energy levels high.

There will also be a "garden raffle prize" awarded at noon. If you would like to help out with this fun and needed effort, please contact us at :

cmartinez@oaklandnet.com

or

Rosalia Romo - (510)238-3281

We will gather email addresses and phone numbers of interested volunteers and send weekly reminders with more information.



On Thursday, January 14, 2010, Genevieve (Gen) Katz, FOPL Board Member, came to my home for an interview for the Off the Shelf newsletter.

As we sat in my kitchen (too cold to sit outside that afternoon) and drank hot tea and enjoyed fresh, sweet blackberries and other fruit, Gen began telling me how she first discovered the existence of the Friends of the Oakland Public Library.

The year was 1998. Gen was visiting the Dimond branch, her local public library, and a place that she frequents till this day. She saw a small notice that FOPL was seeking new board members. She decided to go to the meeting as a guest and see how she could help. At that meeting, Gen spoke with Harry Hirsch, a board member, and discovered, with much pleasure, that they had both attended the prestigious Cooper Union College in New York City. Gen was soon invited to join the FOPL board and over the years has served in various committees such as Membership, Publication, Advocacy, and more.

In 2000, Gen was a fundraiser for the 50-year celebration of the Oakland Public Library. In 2004, she was 100% involved in helping to promote Measure Q, the Library Parcel Tax Extension, City of Oakland, a measure that passed with a 77.2% YES votes! In 2003, Gen was appointed to serve on the City of Oakland Library Advisory Commission (LAC), a position that she continues to hold.

When I joined FOPL in 2001, I was given a 3-colored pin to wear with the word "FOPL" on it. I had no idea until last week that Gen was the person who had designed that same pin. She used

the colors green, yellow and red, the pin resembling new Oakland Public library cards that had recently been issued.

Her maternal grandfather who immigrated from the Ukraine, was known as the village storyteller, and her mother passed down to her children these same stories. Only as an adult did Gen realize that these stories were a mix of tales from Grimm, Andersen and Aesop. Bedtime stories did not consist of the familiar American children's classics, but Greek and Roman mythology.

After a few years, her family moved from Detroit, Michigan to the Bronx in New York City. Gen distinctly recalls how her mother walked with her to the library to get Gen's first library card when she was six years old.

In the library, Gen saw a long shelf filled with books. What attracted her was one with the title, "The Story about Coal." Hmm. Coal. That black substance that slid down into the basement from the black delivery trucks. Gen sat down to read the book, and ultimately ended up reading the entire shelf of books in that section. She was building a new vocabulary, a new world of the unknown, and a natural curiosity that has kept her enthusiasm alive and well till this very day.

While reading books, Gen says, "my eyes move, and moving pictures fill my head. It's addicting." There are books in every room in Gen and Lou's home. They rarely get rid of their books. Gen loves the touch of each book, she remembers when she acquired it and what was going on in her life and the times when she read it.



Libraries remind Gen of the jeweled garden in the Aladdin's Lamp folktale, fantastic treasures just for the picking. For her, libraries are even more important than schools. Why is that so? Because a school is a place that one "has" to go to while a library is the place where one "wants" to go.

After receiving her Bachelor's of Science degree in Education at NYU, Gen taught school in New York City for one year. She liked the children but did not like what she saw in the tenured teachers. Gen was especially interested in teaching science because she herself was curious in how things "work." Her students were primarily Chinese and Puerto Rican. She also taught nutrition and gave an example of what she did. Students were asked to bring labels and wrappers from the cans and boxes of foods used in their homes. By collecting the labels, Gen got some idea of their diet and from there could go on to the importance of basic foods, the pros and cons of a healthy diet.

Gen received a scholarship to The Cooper Union School of Architecture. She related that when she applied to Cooper Union, she, along with other prospective students, were given 2 lbs. of clay and asked to do a person with a pet. Without something for an armature, she created the figure of a small boy riding a turtle. She believes that her creativity with that small piece of clay may have been a decisive factor in her ac-

CONTINUED FROM P.2

ceptance to enter Cooper Union on a scholarship.

After Cooper Union, Gen attended Columbia University, where she received her Master's in Architecture. Her Master's thesis was 3-D Building Computer Modeling, using guest access at the Biology department's Computer Graphics Facility run by her husband Lou. She worked for a number of large architectural firms. Her most memorable jobs were the animal facilities at the cancer laboratories of the National Institute of Health and the Reception Pavilion in Jeddah for King Saud.

Gen said that she met her future husband, Lou Katz, at a party in New York City some 40+ years ago. What she immediately noticed were his "sparkling eyes." When Gen first met Lou, he was working at the Biology laboratories Computer Graphic Facility at Columbia University, where he was a pioneer in computer graphics.

Gen and Lou moved in 1981 from New York City to Oakland, California.

She started an AutoCAD Users group and taught computer-aided design at the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) in Oakland, as well as at the University of California at Berkeley. She has written two books on AutoCAD (translated into 4 different languages).

In the 1980's, Gen attended a Games Show in Los Angeles where Nintendo was promoting the Color Game Boy machine. She noticed that all the games at that conference were directed to boys; nothing for the girls. She asked someone why there were no games for girls and was bluntly told, "Girls don't play video games." That did it!

Gen returned from that show and

quickly thereafter developed two prototype games for the PC - for girls. She started a videogame review site named: games4girls.com.

Gen said that girls play differently from boys. Games can be continuous - there needn't be an ending, cooperation is valued over competition, shooting bores them and they don't like to die and start over. They do like interesting and beautiful graphics, good stories and interesting characters and informative manuals.

The game review site has grown from just games4girls.com to games4women.com and games4grandmothers.com (and grandfathers). After all, says Gen, "I am a grandmother. I play games. Because we only review non-violent games - we have spun off a site, familymedialiteracy.com that provides a list on non-violent games produced each year for parents who are looking for games for their children.

Gen belongs to the AAUW Morning book club. While she does not particularly enjoy reading fiction she likes the company of the women in the club. Her list of favored authors/books are, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Haroun and the Sea of Tales, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Oryx and Crake*, Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, and *The Clef*, *The Second Sex* by Simon de Beauvoir, and *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan. Currently reading, *The Invention of the Jewish People* by Shlomo Sand.

Besides books, Gen likes to read and write poetry. One of her haiku poems was published in *Modern Haiku*. An example:

**"Earthquake
talk stops
and begins again."**

Gen belongs to the Oakland

Visit us online @
www.FOPL.ORG

Chapter of the League of Women Voters, and the AAUW (American Association of University Women).

She is a member of the Oakland Museum of California and a year-round active volunteer for the White Elephant Sale that is the fundraising charity for the Museum.

FOPL board member Gen Katz is currently serving on the Branch Friends Task Force, visiting various branches and encouraging a continuous connection between the Friends at each location. She observed that there are strong and active Friends groups, and they are passionate about what is needed in their particular branch.

Gen envisions FOPL as the impetus for encouraging the connectedness of Friends group with others. By sharing the knowledge and passion with Friends in other branches, the message of "Friends Helping Friends" would contribute to the overall understanding of what a public library truly means - a free and open learning institution for every citizen in each town or city, regardless of its size.

Hold the Light for Haiti & Chile

The Bay Area Writers are responding to the shattering earthquake devastations of Haiti and Chile by gathering to share their work and to provide information to people who can assist with helping those countries. This event will be held on April 30th, 6:00 to 9:00pm at the Muslim Cultural Center near the Oakland Main Library. The Muslim community is donating the use of their lovely space and the writers are all donating their time and talent. For more in. For more information, please contact Kim McMillon at kimmac@pacbell.net or (510) 681-5652.



Happy Birthday Montclair Branch

Join us in celebrating the 80th birthday of the Montclair branch of the Oakland Public Library. To learn more about the festivities, please visit the Friends of Montclair Library at:

montclairlibrary.wordpress.com

Member Benefits

Members who join at the BookFriend (\$50) level or above also receive discounts at the participating local bookstores. Please show your BookFriend membership card to qualify for the discount.

Bibliomania, 1816 Telegraph Ave
Book Zoo, 6395 Telegraph Ave
Laurel Book Store, 4100 MacArthur Blvd
Marcus Books, 3900 M.L.K., Jr. Way
Montclair Book Tree, 6123 LaSalle St
Pendragon, 5560 College Ave
The Spectator, 4163 Piedmont Ave
Walden Pond, 3316 Grand Ave



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If your membership has expired,
PLEASE RENEW NOW!

More ways to support the Friends...

- Share this newsletter. Ask a friend to join a growing organization - 800 strong - dedicated to supporting the Oakland Public Library.
- Donate your gently-used books and DVDs to the Bookmark Bookstore. Call (510)444-0473 for more information.
- Do you have a few hours per month? Visit www.fopl.org or call (510)444-0473 to learn more about volunteering.
- Donate your Vehicle. Charity Connection, a service of Volunteers of America, will sell your vehicle, and contribute a portion of the proceeds to FOPL. Call (800)559-5458 and be sure to mention that your tax-deductible gift is for the Friends.

Join Us

Yes, I want to show my support for the Friends of the Oakland Public Library!

Enclosed is my check payable to FOPL for \$ _____

___ New (1 year membership) ___ Renewal (1 year membership)

___ Donation (\$ _____ in addition to my membership dues)

Supporting Membership Levels:

- ___ \$1000 Book Angel Name(s) _____
- ___ \$500 Bibliophile _____
- ___ \$250 Book Conservator Address _____
- ___ \$100 Book Worm City/Zip _____
- ___ \$50 Book Friend Gift in Honor/Memory of _____

Basic Membership Levels:

- ___ \$35 Family/Household
- ___ \$25 Individual
- ___ \$15 Senior (65+)/Student

Contributions are tax deductible (Tax ID #94-2553734)
Make your Credit Card donation online at www.fopl.org
Call (510) 238-6932 for membership information.