

## OAKLAND-ALAMEDA ESTUARY



JANE TYSKA/STAFF

A body lies on the dock of a private marina at Jack London Square in Oakland on Saturday.

## Kayaker discovers body in the water

By Daniel M. Jimenez  
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OAKLAND — A kayaker discovered a body Saturday morning in the Oakland-Alameda Estuary, police said. The kayaker at first thought the body was a log but later realized it was a person.

The kayaker pulled the body onto the kayak and

took it to a private marina next to Estuary Park, on Embarcadero West.

The body appears to be a white male in his 50s or 60s and was fully clothed, police said.

The cause of death has not been determined.

Staff writer Harry Harris contributed to this report.

## WALNUT CREEK

## Vigil held for hairdresser

22-year-old man shot to death by police last week

By Aaron Kinney  
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WALNUT CREEK — Anthony Banta Jr. took some time Christmas Day to write down his goals for the year, his grandfather said. But he never had a chance to accomplish them.

Just two days later, the 22-year-old hairdresser was shot dead by police during a confrontation in his apartment at 1450 Creekside Drive.

At a candlelight vigil Saturday night outside the Newell Avenue salon where the young man had worked, a tearful Marvin Banta expressed bewilderment about his grandson's death, saying police have not shared any information with the family about what led to

the shooting.

"We're pretty much in the dark," he said. "We just don't understand how someone could have taken his life."

Family members — including Banta's father and twin brother — and co-workers were among several dozen people who gathered outside Salonamour Hair Salon for a tearful remembrance. They described Banta as kind, responsible and driven to succeed.

No one understood how Banta could have threatened officers to such a degree that they were forced to gun him down inside his residence.

"I don't think he'd ever been in a fight in his life," said Marvin Banta.

Banta's other grandfather, Brett Grainger, said Thursday that police responded to a 911 call from Diablo Pointe Apartments and found Banta armed with a knife. Grainger said the girlfriend of Banta's

roommate had called 911 and told dispatchers that Banta was assaulting her boyfriend.

Police have not released any details of the shooting, other than Banta was armed and officers were forced to shoot.

Grainger said a medical crisis or mental breakdown may have precipitated the confrontation with the roommate. But Marvin Banta was not so sure.

"I don't know what happened," he said. "I have no clue."

The owner of Salonamour, Michael Falcon, said he organized the vigil to start the healing process for Banta's friends and co-workers. He hoped it would help the family as well.

"We're hoping they'll be able to get a glimpse of the life their son had led," Falcon said.

Contact Aaron Kinney at 650-348-4357.

## Obituaries & In Memoriam

**Obituaries Deadline**  
Please submit obituary notices by 12 noon Monday ~ Friday for the next day's editions; and by 12 noon Friday for Saturday, Sunday

ARMSTRONG, Robert  
BRANNEN, Ann Pruet  
BURNS, John  
COOK, Dennis  
EIS, Ruth  
GALINDO, Amparo  
HELM, Franklyn  
PADRNOS,  
Phyllis & Valerian  
SHILLCOCK-  
GONZALES, Tara  
TSE, Hubert  
VIGNALE, Antonio

This index may not reflect all obituaries published. Obituaries may not appear in alphabetical order

New Years Day  
Holiday  
Obituary Deadlines

The Obituary Department will be CLOSED on TUESDAY JANUARY 1ST in observance of the NEW YEAR'S DAY HOLIDAY

The deadline for placing a notice to appear in the TUESDAY JAN. 1st AND WEDNESDAY JAN. 2nd EDITIONS

is before 12 noon on MONDAY DEC. 31st

All Text and photos must be received before 12 noon.

Have a safe holiday. Thank you.

## OAKLAND VOICES



Officer-involved shootings, like the one involving Alan Blueford on May 6, have left many in the city angry and frustrated with the Oakland Police Department.

EDWARD CERVANTES

## Getting a re-education on the Black Panthers

Stigma of group started in Oakland obstructs the facts

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from Edward Cervantes' "My Black Panther Re-education" post. To read the full version, visit [www.oaklandvoices.us](http://www.oaklandvoices.us).

By Edward Cervantes  
Oakland Voices

Recently, posters were plastered on an electrical box in front of the liquor store at Fifth Avenue and Foothill Boulevard that demanded "vengeance for Alan Blueford" and called for a "war on the OPD." The sentiment struck me as a bit severe, frightening even.

Blueford was shot and killed by police in the early morning hours of May 6 after a foot chase. Blueford's family and supporters have held several rallies since the 18-year-old was killed, including a raucous gathering at a City Council meeting that disrupted proceedings. A federal wrongful death lawsuit has also been filed by the family, even though the shooting was ruled justifiable by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Regardless of what may have happened May 6, inciting further violence seemed counterproductive. And vengeance isn't justice.

The day after first seeing the poster, I attended a rally celebrating the 46th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party here in Oakland.

As part of Black Panther Party History Month in October, former members of the controversial political organization gathered at Frank Ogawa Plaza for speeches, awards and performances that highlighted the Panthers' good work in this city and other communities.

The event later moved down the street to Geoffrey's Inner Circle for a meet and greet with influential early members and recognition of current volunteers who carry on the Panthers' legacy of promoting economic and social justice.

I couldn't stop thinking about the poster. I wondered if, with the passing of

time, members of the Black Panther Party had changed their views on guns and violence.

I pulled up a picture of the poster on my phone and showed it to a former member, assuming he would tell me that the Black Panther Party wouldn't condone violence these days.

My ignorance of Panther politics must have been immediately apparent.

He got silent, leaned back in his chair and, like a frustrated professor, sent me away to do further research.

I was instructed to look into Robert F. Williams' "Negroes With Guns." After that, I could contact him if I still had questions. Leaning toward the more radical end of liberal politics, I've always assumed support for the Black Panthers.

But in doing the suggested research, I realized that I had a one-dimensional understanding of the party's politics and ideology.

It could just be a blind spot in my knowledge. Or maybe it would have been different had I not grown up in a mostly white suburb.

But I see it now: The Panthers have a complicated history that has been mischaracterized and unfairly stigmatized.

"Black Panthers" for many conjures images of armed black militants. At best, the Black Power movement invokes Tommie Smith and John Carlos — the two Olympic medalists who were banned for life from the games after raising their fists during their medal ceremony in 1968.

I did not associate the Black Panthers with projects like the Lil' Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign. Named after the party's first recruit — a 16-year old who was later shot to death by Oakland police. The campaign is entirely volunteer-run and aims to cut Oakland's high illiteracy rate.

Coordinated by Eseiobio Halliday and Melvin Dickson, the campaign struggles to secure grants for its work because funders are wary of its association with the Black Panthers. But they do what they can where they can.

So what would the Panthers think about the call for a "war on the OPD?" The group's original full name points to an answer: the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

In "Negroes with Guns," Robert F. Williams — who heavily influenced the party's founders — did not incite unnecessary violence. He believed that black communities should protect themselves from violent racism "by any means necessary."

In this vein, the Panthers organized "police patrols" to monitor the Oakland Police Department's behavior in black neighborhoods. The model was replicated in cities and towns around the country.

Today, mainstream media often depicts a Panther demise into pimping, drug-dealing and gang-banging, but that history is questioned and should not be the dominate narrative of the party's legacy.

In 1968, the police were the soldiers of a racist system and acted with impunity. The Panthers offered black communities much-needed protection and, through good works like teaching and feeding children, empowered and mobilized people to stand up against racial violence and rampant police brutality.

That history continues to dog OPD, as it has spent the past 10 years trying to reform itself and continues to teeter on the edge of federal receivership.

It is easy for those of us who are not regularly harassed by the police to condemn the unattributed "War on the OPD" posters, but peace and nonviolence don't block batons or bullets. Most of us would defend ourselves "by any means necessary."

When asked if the Panther ideology had a role to play in 2012, Dickson immediately said, "It's up to young people to create the change we need," before going on to explain that it's the responsibility of elders "to share the knowledge and experience they've gained."

Oakland Voices correspondent Edward Cervantes lives in Oakland with his partner, Jim.



Mourners in Newtown, Conn., embrace early Christmas morning as they stand near memorials by the Newtown firehouse.

CRAIG RUTTLE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Guns in class not the answer

Teaching how to defuse violence is the better way

By Debora Gordon  
Oakland Voices

Since the Newtown, Conn., school shootings, there has been talk among some, such as John Lott, author of "More Guns, Less Crime," calling for teachers and other school staff to carry guns. Their perspective is that, as National Rifle Association Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre put it, "The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

As a 25-year veteran of the classroom, mostly in Oakland, I respond to this with an emphatic, no! That is not the only way, nor even the best way. And it is certainly not the way most educators would choose, or even consider. Not once during the many school shootings that have taken place before and since I first stepped into a classroom, have I ever thought, "What teachers need are guns."

Logistics aside — whether I would be able to access a firearm quickly in case of a threat on campus, or whether teacher professional development would now include target practice — it is simply not an effective solution. It really is a disaster waiting to happen. It is not that difficult to envision the gun being used against the teacher and students, or the teacher wounding or killing a student by accident, as well as other potential calamities.

One of the great challenges educators always face is how to fix the problems of the now while creating solutions for the long-term.

As shocking as the Newtown shootings have been, I remain unshaken

in my absolute conviction that the only way to stop all shooters is through love, education, understanding and compassion.

I know that some will dismiss this as unrealistic, but it seems to me no less realistic than continuing to build up an armed society, to the point where everyone is prepared to shoot and every misunderstanding becomes potentially explosive.

In the schools, we need to present a structured, articulated course of conflict resolution, nonviolent communication and anger management.

Students need instruction on the impact on society, families, victims and perpetrators when lives are lost.

The massacre in Newtown happened to take place on one day. But there has been no less of a massacre in Oakland, where, as of this writing, there have been 130 homicides this year alone.

Despite having been spread out over time, this is no less tragic, no less hurtful or destructive of the communities than the violence in Newtown. Oakland does not get the same outpouring of grief and support, but needs it no less.

As teachers, our job is to educate — not just in the core curriculum, but how to be contributing parts of the society. That — not more guns — is the only way to stop violence. The pen, the word and the lesson — in the long run, these are still mightier than the gun.

Oakland Voices correspondent Debora Gordon is a writer, artist, educator and nonviolence activist. She has been living in Oakland since 1991, moving here to become a teacher in the Oakland Unified School District.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Oakland Voices is a nine-month program that trains East Bay residents to tell the stories of their neighborhoods. The 2012 project focuses on East Oakland, where 10 applicants were chosen to be correspondents. They were trained in digital media storytelling — writing blogs and online pieces, taking photos, shooting video, and using social media to discuss issues that matter most in their communities. Oakland Voices is run in partnership with the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education and funded in part by a grant from The California Endowment.



Robert R. Armstrong

May 14, 1940 ~ Dec. 22, 2012  
Resident of Oakland

My dearest husband Bob died unexpectedly at home just a few days before Christmas. Born in Minnesota, but raised in Ohio, Bob had a fascinating childhood as the youngest of 10 children. His one living sibling, Patricia Quenneville, lives in Michigan. He entered OSU at 16 and left at 18 to join the Air Force where he became a pilot-navigator and flew B52's with SAC. Upon completion of military service he finished his university degree at USF and then attended Stanford Univ. earning an MBA.

Bob's career was in finance. First as CFO of Barclays of California in San Francisco, then CFO of Dalziel Supply Company in San Francisco, and lastly as a personal financial consultant for his own company, Armstrong Consulting Group.

His son Anthony and wife Valerie and our two grandchildren, Noah and Monique, live in Texas and were treasures in his life. He could not have been prouder of them. Between his family and mine he had 34 nieces and nephews, countless great-nieces and nephews and he knew virtually every one of them.

We enjoyed sailing for many years and Bob loved playing golf; he loved sports in general. Over the years he had been a member of the Presidio Golf Club, Merchants Exchange Club, World Trade Club and at the time of his death he was an active member of the Family Club and St Francis Yacht Club.

Bob was a voracious reader and had an undying passion for his dogs. During our marriage we had a glorious succession of Irish Wolfhounds and yellow Labs.

Bob moved heaven and earth for me. He was the center of my world. Bob, I will miss your humor, your wisdom, your intelligence, your touch and your love. Until we meet again, goodbye from your adoring wife, Jean.