

The MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History

Summer 2019

SS Red Oak Victory Ship

“RICHMOND IN FOCUS” OPENS AUGUST 10

The forthcoming exhibition, “*Richmond in Focus*,” will open in the Seaver Gallery on August 10 and will feature the Museum’s extensive collection of photographs and photography equipment. The seeds for the exhibit were sown in summer 2018 when the “*California Revealed*” initiative of the California State Library supported a project to catalogue the historical photographs in our collection. The exhibit provides an opportunity to share the results of the project.

Photography is fundamentally a tool to document how life changes. Our goal in this exhibit is to demonstrate how the physical landscape of Richmond has transformed as well as the important social changes that have taken place. The Museum released a call for Richmond-themed original photos and received over 100 images from about 30 living artists. We are excited to have the unique opportunity to pair modern and historical photographs that will showcase Richmond over time.



This photograph, ca. 1915, is an example of what will be on display in “Richmond in Focus.”

The show will also provide an opportunity to display the historical cameras and photographic equipment held in our collection. Objects in the collection, including a Kodak Brownie Camera and a Magic Lantern slide projector, will be on display for the first time along with various types of photography-related ephemera. (See more in *Upcoming Events*, p. 6.)

DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL GALA, SEPTEMBER 12!!

The fall season is always an exciting time for Museum staff because it means we get to party! The staff is hard at work organizing the many details of this year’s Annual Gala Dinner, which will be held at the historic Rockefeller Lodge in San Pablo, California. All who attend can anticipate a night of food, wine, trivia, community and a silent auction with fabulous items! And a good cause to support!

Our Cause: Restoring a Major Piece of Richmond History

In 1976, “*Richmond Industrial City*,” a mural depicting local landmarks, laborers and citizens by painter Victor Arnautoff, was removed from a wall of the Richmond Main Post Office on Nevin Avenue in preparation for remodeling. Professionally rolled and stored out of sight, the mural was lost from the minds and eyes of the Richmond public for four decades when in 2014 a tip from a long-time member put us on a journey to its rediscovery.

Recovered in fair condition, the Richmond Museum secured a 25-year loan of the mural from the United States Postal Service and quickly jumped into fundraising for the monies needed to restore this once-lost piece of art. Among its needed restorations are the consolidation of paint loss and the removal of the toxic, lead-based adhesive originally used to secure the mural to the post office wall. No small venture, we expect the cost to restore the mural so it can be hung again to be around \$75,000. We have raised approximately \$12,000 so far; we have a long way to go.

So now it’s 2019, and we’re asking for your help!

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

The “*Pioneers to Present: Jews of Richmond & Contra Costa County*” exhibit was tremendously successful and it is bittersweet to close such a popular exhibit. The ambitious exhibition schedule will not let us be sad for long because our next show “*Richmond In Focus*” opens August 10! (See pp. 1 and 6.)

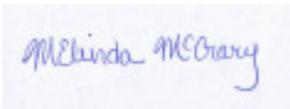
On a business note, the Richmond Museum Association is considering changing the name of the Richmond Museum of History. The City of Richmond has changed since the RMA was formally incorporated in 1954. Demographic shifts over the ensuing decades have changed the cultural makeup of our city, reflecting the overall changes in the San Francisco Bay Area and the United States. The Richmond Museum Association celebrates the vast diversity and multiculturalism in our community. The board and staff are considering changing our name to reflect this value, so we are starting an open conversation regarding updating the name and, to facilitate the change in focus, possibly even the bylaws and mission of the institution that we all love. To begin with, the board and staff want your thoughts and input on updating our name to **Richmond Museum of History & Culture**.

The Museum needs to adapt to a changing Richmond in order to remain relevant. Not everyone feels as if their story is accurately reflected in the discipline of history. Including “culture” in our name will create appeal for a larger audience that is more reflective of Richmond today.

In addition to appealing to a wider audience, expanding our bylaws and name would allow for greater flexibility in educational programming and exhibitions. When the Museum Association was founded in 1954, it was the only place in Richmond dedicated to local history. Today, Richmond is so proud to be home to at least three additional places interpreting local history, including the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park, the SS *Red Oak Victory* and the Point Richmond History Association. The Richmond Museum of History seeks to adapt to the changing needs of our community by expanding the area of our programming.

The announcement that we are considering this change is just the first of many steps. Please consider sharing your thoughts on the change by phone, email or snail mail, attention: Bylaws Committee.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support!



Melinda McCrary

FREE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP PROGRAM

Working directly with the teachers especially in Richmond and North Richmond as well as surrounding areas, the Richmond Museum of History coordinates and conducts school group tours of the Museum that include transportation to the Museum and engaging activities that explain the Museum’s contents, functions and relevance to the community.

Please Pass the Word

Do you know of a teacher in Richmond who would like to bring his or her class to the Richmond Museum of History? If so, please pass along the message that we are offering scholarships for bus transportation to and from the Museum. Interested teachers please contact Melinda at melinda@richmondmuseum.org or (510) 235-7387.

LONG MAY THEY WAVE: “WIG WAGS FOREVER” FESTIVAL, JULY 28, 2019

A community-wide festival celebrating the full restoration and activation of Point Richmond’s historic wig wags is scheduled for July 28th. The event, “*Wig Wags Forever*,” will occur on the premises of the Point Richmond Mechanics Bank from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

In addition to a dedication ceremony, there will be live period entertainment featuring musical and dance performances, some dating back to 1908. A curated art exhibition is another attraction, focusing on railroad crossings of yesteryear and today, as interpreted by national and local artists and shown in both copies and original works. Booths staffed by local community organizations, artisan vendors, wig wag poster sales, and food/beverage enticements are other features of the wig wags inaugural event. All are welcome. Come early and enjoy yourselves at this historic event.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Johannes Hoech

Summer is here, and we're ready for it:

In the Richmond Museum of History, we're busy preparing for the forthcoming exhibition, "**Richmond In Focus**," set to open on August 10, 2019. The exhibit highlights the Museum's extensive photography collection and provides an opportunity for living artists to exhibit their photos. We also hope you can make it to our annual benefit dinner at Rockefeller Lodge on Thursday, September 12, 2019.

Our previous exhibit, "**Pioneers to the Present: Jews in Richmond and Contra Costa County**," closed after attracting hundreds of visitors during its six-month run and many related events. It was likely the most successful Museum exhibit ever. Major kudos to Museum Director Melinda McCrary and our staff, along with numerous volunteers and contributors.

On the *SS Red Oak Victory*, the first pancake breakfasts were great successes; we served over 300 meals on Mother's Day and nearly as many on Father's Day. Another exciting, successful event, our Swing Dance, took place on June 8th. Everyone loves a good swing dance. And then of course the Ship's famous July 3rd celebration was well-attended, as usual; good food, lively entertainment and great fireworks!

Below decks on the Ship, the crew has been replacing pumps and doing other repairs to the engine room in preparation for another light-off at the California Maritime Academy in Vallejo. The light-off will likely occur next year. Meanwhile, we're focusing on needed hull repairs and getting Coast Guard approval for the Ship to sail under her own power.

Beyond that, both the Museum and the Ship continue to attract more volunteers (a stunning 100% of our volunteers now believe that should include you-- hint, hint).

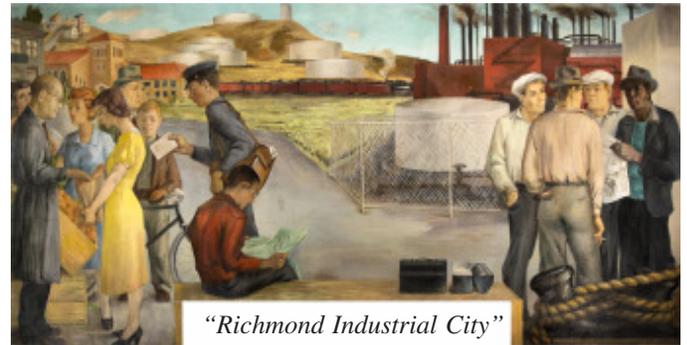
If you want to make a difference and get out of the house, finally having a purpose in life, or you simply want to donate your hard-earned cash to a solid cause, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us online at either <https://richmondmuseum.org/contact> or <http://redoakvictory.us/contact-us>; or call us at 510-235-7387 for the Museum or 510-237-2933 for the Ship; our operators are standing by :)

Onward to a great 2019!

ANNUAL GALA!!

(Continued from p. 1)

Please consider joining us at the gala this year in support of the Museum's goal to have the mural displayed for the enjoyment of the public. The project has taken on a greater sense of urgency and meaning now that Arnautoff's mural at George Washington High School is threatened with removal. We believe our mural is without the type of controversy generated by some of Arnautoff's other works and deserves to be restored and preserved.



"Richmond Industrial City"
by Victor Arnautoff, 1941.

When Arnautoff painted the mural, he was one of the most prominent and influential members of San Francisco's arts community. Between 1932 and 1942, he completed 11 public murals, the best known of which is "*City Life*" (1934) at Coit Tower in San Francisco. "*Richmond Industrial City*" was Arnautoff's last mural of this size and the first time since Coit Tower that he chose to depict a mix of city people going about their daily tasks. His mural presents life in Richmond as of 1941—when war was on the horizon. An image of the mural is above and also on the Museum's website. (The cutout at the bottom of the mural originally framed the top of a door in the Main Post Office lobby.)

As for the gala, Museum Executive Director Melinda McCrary said, "We are looking at this event not only as a way to raise funds to restore the mural but also a celebration of a work of art that was created especially for Richmond. It is an extraordinary honor and we hope the community will help." We hope you will.

To purchase tickets for the gala, go to our website at www.richmondmuseum.org and click Events, or call the Museum at (510) 235-7387.

Can't make it to the gala? You can still support the cause! Consider making an individual online donation on our website with "Arnautoff" in the memo line or sharing this event with your network of friends.

FROM THE *RED OAK VICTORY* SHIP

By Fred Klink, Director of Marketing

In the last issue of *The Mirror* we told you about the creative ways in which we raise money for the on-going restoration of the Ship. To start off this quarter's report we thought you would like to hear about, and see, some specific events that have recently taken place on the *Red Oak Victory*.

Our big effort for the second quarter of the year was the “**Swing on the Ship**” event that took place on June 8. This event brought nearly 100 visitors to the Ship from all over the Bay Area. Attendees enjoyed great classic swing and jazz music by the **Silver Bell Jazz Band** and an excellent meal prepared by our favorite chef, Halihl Guy. We offered swing dance lessons as



The Silver Bell Jazz Band performs at Swing on the Ship aboard the Red Oak Victory. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

well, and many visitors took advantage of them. Interestingly, the Ship as a dance venue attracts an audience that goes beyond the usual swing dance community, even to those who do not ordinarily go out for an evening of dancing but are interested in history or in supporting the Ship's restoration efforts.

One such visitor was Larry Adair and his wife Judy. Larry served as 2nd Engineer on the *Red Oak Victory* while the Ship was operated by American Mail Lines moving supplies to Vietnam during 1966-1967. Interestingly, Larry's twin brother Terry was a 3rd Engineer on the Ship at the same time. Among many interesting stories from Larry, we learned that the Ship was even fired upon once while proceeding up the Saigon River. The attack left a hole in the stack! We took Larry and his friends through the Engine Room, and Larry said that he felt he could still fire her up and sail off. We're hoping that he can join us when we do just that in the not-too-distant future.

On that note, we have decided to complete the engine light-off tests we started last summer in 2020 (vs. this year) to allow us to also complete some minor hull steel work, which we can do at our current location. By completing this steel work and by actually

turning the engines over, we could then be in a position to obtain a limited permit from the U.S. Coast Guard to let the *Red Oak*



Former Red Oak Victory 2nd Engineer Larry Adair explains the intricacies of the main engineering station in the Red Oak Victory's engine room. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

Victory run under her own power. In the meantime, our efforts turn to fundraising for both the completion of the light-off as well as for repairing the Ship's hull - both necessary tasks that will enable the Ship to sail under her own power once the Coast Guard gives us their approval. Exciting times !

We often talk about the educational mission of the *Red Oak Victory*. This is something the crew takes very seriously and we're proud that we have the opportunity to host literally hundreds of students from elementary to high school throughout the year. This June saw an important and exciting event in this program as a group of 80 selected high school students from California's Central Valley visited the Ship. They came as a part of a three-day World War II history program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and hosted by Fresno State University. Two members of our docent team even dressed in authentic 1944 clothing for this event—one as a “Rosie the Riveter” and the other as a World War II sailor. (See photo, p.8.)

This year, our educational programs extended beyond school children into post-graduate studies. University of California at Berkeley chose to bring on board 40 elementary school teachers from all over the country for a continuing education program about the shipyards and the ships produced here during World War II. They turned out to be one of the most interesting and engaging groups of people ever to visit the Ship. Another group of 40 from this same program will be on board in July.

(Continued on p. 8)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS ON THE *RED OAK VICTORY*

Pancake Breakfasts

Our famous Sunday **Pancake Breakfasts** are in full swing. Breakfast is \$12 for adults, \$5.00 for kids and includes pancakes, eggs, bacon, juice, coffee and, for a bit extra, mimosas.

After your meal, if you can drag yourself away from the view, you can take a tour of the Ship. On Pancake Breakfast days, we offer \$5.00 discounts per ship tour—self-guided tours (with booklet) are free; docent-guided tours are 10.00; docent-guided tours including the Engine Room are \$15.00.

Tickets will be available online and via phone; or just pay at the gate. Breakfast hours are 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Here is the schedule:

August 11 - Dress Up Like It's 1944 Day

September 8 - Grandparents' Day

October 13 - Fleet Week

Movies on the Ship

The National Park Service presents its 11th Annual Home Front Film Festival on board the *SS Red Oak Victory*. The movies are shown on Thursday nights and are hosted by Park Ranger Craig Riordan of the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, who provides enlightening, behind-the-scenes tidbits for your entertainment.

The movies begin at 7:00 p.m., with boarding from 6:30. Admission is free, but we suggest a donation of \$10 per person to help preserve and maintain the Ship. Refreshments are available for a small fee. (The Ship is not ADA accessible. Visitors must be able to climb a gangway of about 40 steps, with railings, and steep steps once aboard the Ship.)

Here's the movie schedule:

July 25 – “*Pimpernel Smith*” (1941) – Leslie Howard. Professor Horatio Smith, while seeming very unassuming, rescues victims of Nazi persecution during World War II.

August 8 – “*The Edge of Darkness*” (1943) – Errol Flynn, Ann Sheridan. After two years under German rule, a small Norwegian fishing village rises up and revolts against the occupying Nazis.

August 22 – “*The Fighting Sullivans*” (1944) – Anne Baxter, Thomas Mitchell. The story follows the lives of the five Irish-American Sullivan brothers, who grew up in Iowa during the days of the Great Depression and served together in the United States Navy in the Pacific during World War II. Based on a true story.

TAKE A TOUR OF THE SHIP

The Ship is open for tours during open hours on every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the year:

Summer hours (March - November): 10 am - 4 pm

Winter hours (November - March): 10 am - 3 pm

Admission Price:

Self-guided tour (with souvenir booklet): \$10

Docent-guided tour (entire ship except the lower Engine Room): \$15

Deluxe docent-guided tour (includes the lower Engine Room): \$20

Large Groups:

For groups of ten or more visiting the Ship at one time, please contact us to make arrangements. E-mail us at info@redoakvictory.us or call the Ship's phone (during business hours): (510) 237-2933.

RED OAK WISH LIST:

The *Red Oak Victory* ship needs a lot of attention. We hope you can help. We appreciate all donations, large and small, monetary and otherwise. Here is a list of physical things the Ship needs; some of them are very specific—please call the Ship at the number below to get details:

Media system for Holds 3 and 4 (and on-deck as needed); sound system, mic, modern projector
Heating system for Hold 4 for Winter/Spring events
Replica light shades to replace those broken throughout the Ship
New hatch-cover canvas
Spill kit
Emergency locker with lid, 3' x 4'
Printer ink cartridges
AA batteries
LED penlights/laser pointers
and we really, really need SAFETY CONES

If you have questions about these items or about how to get them to the Ship, please call the Ship at (510) 237-2933.

Easiest of all, go to www.redoakvictory.us and click DONATE to contribute monetarily to the Ship's restoration.

Thank you for your help and support!

A NEW DEAL FOR RICHMOND



A CELEBRATION BENEFITING THE
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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



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Richmond Industrial City, Oil on Canvas, 160" x 78", 1941, © USPS;
Victor Arnautoff Self-Portrait, Oil on orgalite, 43 x 30.5, 1941,
Inv. # JC-744; © Russian State Museum, St. Petersburg.

CURRENT AND UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

Upcoming Exhibit

“Richmond in Focus”

Opening August 10, 2019, in the Seaver Gallery, a new exhibit will celebrate photography in Richmond. The exhibit will present highlights of the Museum’s permanent collection found during the *“California Revealed”* cataloguing project. It also provides an opportunity to highlight the Ellis Myers collection of photographs of African Americans in Richmond during the 1950s. The exhibit provides a vehicle for the Museum to exhibit the many pieces of historical photography equipment held in the permanent collection.

From local living artists, we have requested submissions of original photographs with some relation to Richmond to be included in the exhibit. We have received over one hundred photos, many of which will be on display.

The show is being planned with the partnership of Dana Davis, who is a professor of photography at Contra Costa College, and the goal is to engage students in exhibit design and installation. The exhibit will be accompanied by public programs through December 2019 and is part of the *“Know Your Community”* series.

Upcoming Event

September 12, 2019, the Annual Gala Dinner/Fundraiser at Rockefeller Lodge, 2650 Market Ave. San Pablo, CA. 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. (See flyer, previous page and article, p. 1.)



On the grounds of Rockefeller Lodge. (From rockefellerlodge.com)

WHO’S THIS?

by Lynn Maack

In the last issue, just for fun, we changed the photo identification game. Instead of showing a photo of unidentified people in local, historical photographs in the Museum’s collection and asking our readers to identify the people, we showed a photo of a person whose identity we already know and asked you if you knew. As we said, the woman in the photograph below, circa 1926, is significant in Richmond’s history. Were you able to name her and say why she is notable? The answers were contained in the text of the newsletter. Were you able to find them? Well, here are the answers: Mattie Chandler was the first woman mayor of Richmond. She served twice as mayor: first from 1920-1921 and again during WWII from 1942-1943. Her election in 1920 occurred only three months after passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote.

So now you know.



MUSEUM WISH LIST

The Museum, like all non-profit organizations, always seeks and greatly appreciates donations, monetary and otherwise. Here is a list of things we need to help us put on exhibits and events to bring you history you can enjoy:

- Female dress form (for photographing costumes)
- Glass or ceramic serving platters for food
- Cloth tablecloths for 6-ft. x 4-ft rectangular table
- Serving utensils (please no plastic)
- Yarn
- Extension cords
- Power strip
- Garden hose

If you can donate these items or contribute to their purchase, please call the Museum at (510) 235-7387, or visit our website, www.richmondmuseum.org and click DONATE. Thank you for your support!

FROM THE SHIP *(Continued from p. 4)*

On July 3 we held our traditional Independence Day Party and Fundraiser. The City of Richmond does their fireworks display on July 3 and one of the best viewing spots is on board the *Red Oak*. This year, the event featured not only fireworks but a BBQ dinner and live music by Richmond's own George Cole Trio.



Fresno State University sponsored a day at the Red Oak Victory for selected California high school students who have expressed an interest in World War II history. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

You may be thinking at this point that you've missed out on all the fun on the Red Oak Victory. Do not despair! We still have a lot of the summer season to go and many events that you can attend to support your favorite Victory ship! An exciting and fun day for many in the Bay Area takes place every August at the Craneway Pavilion when the famous "Rosie Rally" takes place. This year the rally will be on August 10, and a shuttle will be provided to take you between the Pavilion and the *Red Oak Victory*. For more information about this event, visit www.rosietheriveter.org/events/rosie-rally.

Our summer series of Pancake Breakfasts continues August 11. The Silver Bell Jazz Band will be on board that day for a return engagement. The theme is "***Dress Like It's 1944***," in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of the *Red Oak Victory*. And if you wear your Rosie the Riveter outfit from the previous day's Rosie Rally, we'll give you a \$2 discount on the breakfast! Tickets for August 11 and for all of the remaining Pancake Breakfasts are available at www.bit.ly/ROVPancake19 or at the door.

Visit the Ship's website at www.redoakvictory.us and follow our Facebook page (SS Red Oak Victory) for the latest news and ticket links for all of our events.

Arrive curious, leave in awe!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION:

Loretta Kyle for Estate of Maxine Kyle
1956 documents related to home purchase in Parchester Village by Rev. Clifford & Maxine Kyle.
Poster, "Elect Clifford Kyle to the School Board"

THE *RED OAK* NEEDS YOU...

...to be a greeter. It's a hard job—you have to smile and welcome visitors to a great adventure. We especially need help on Saturdays and Sundays. Call the Ship at (510) 237-2933 for more information or to volunteer.

EMAIL PLEASE...

Like many organizations, the Richmond Museum Association needs to cut costs where we can. And as much as I personally prefer to hold a newsletter in my hand, that hard copy is expensive to print and mail.

So let us email you your copy of ***The MIRROR***. For those members who do not have email, we will continue to print and mail your newsletter. But many of you have email addresses and we hope you will share them with us. We promise not to sell them or share them with anyone else.

Please email us at melinda@richmondmuseum.org with ***The MIRROR*** in the subject line, and don't forget to tell us your name.

Thank you for helping us keep our costs down. [Ed.]

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___ \$50 **History Enthusiast**—Benefits include one digital file of a photo in the permanent collection for personal use

___ \$100 **History Advocate**—2 adults/2 youth—Benefits above and one hour of staff research time

___ \$250 **History Guardian**—Benefits above and “Behind the Scenes” tour of permanent collection

___ \$500 **History Patron**—Benefits above and one ad in *The MIRROR* newsletter

___ **New** ___ **Renew** ___ **Gift**

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Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____

Join at www.richmondmuseum.org or mail a check to RMA at:

Richmond Museum Association
 P.O. Box 1267
 Richmond CA 94802



P.O. Box 1267
Richmond, CA 94802

Join the Richmond Museum Association on social media! We are on Facebook under Richmond Museum of History and *SS Red Oak Victory* (two separate pages). We are also on twitter @richmondhistory.

The Richmond Museum Association is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit educational organization. Gifts and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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Red Oak Victory Ship

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Visit our website at www.richmondmuseum.org