

# THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Summer -- 2012

## MUSEUM RECOGNIZED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*(Taken from the Nomination by the National Park Service to the Richmond Historic Preservation Awards.)*

The National Park Service Home Front Award is given annually to individuals or organizations whose efforts and support have led to the formation of the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park. This year, the NPS has chosen as the recipient the Richmond Museum of History.

The Museum's work in both collecting and exhibiting the history of Richmond and in acquiring and restoring the *SS Red Oak Victory* are not only directly related to the formation of Richmond's National Park, but to the continued growth and evolution of the Park. The *SS Red Oak Victory* is specifically identified in the enabling legislation that created the Park as a contributing property to its significance. The Museum and its volunteers have literally performed magic in restoring this World War II ship that was actually constructed in the Richmond

Shipyards. The Museum even recently scored one of the very last grants to be awarded out of the now-defunct "Save America's Treasures" program. In a time when preservation dollars are hard to come by, "scoring" the grant for a significant amount of money was a truly remarkable feat. This nationally significant, park-related ship would not exist except for the efforts of the Museum.

In addition, the Museum's work in collecting, researching and exhibiting the history of Richmond has literally served as the backbone for creating the interpretive materials for the Park. A large majority of the photographs used in the Park's interpretive programs come from the Museum's vast collection.

Lastly, the Museum has worked diligently with the National Park Service to create and implement interpretive and educational programs, ranging from the Red Oak Camper program for

Richmond middle school kids to the Home Front Film Festival during the summer months. The NPS is indebted to the Richmond Museum of History for its diligent work and for its help in creating and operating Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS 2012

Steve Gilford, Richmond Museum Association Board member and long-time Kaiser

historian, was honored for his book, "Build 'Em by the Mile, Cut 'Em off by the Yard," published by the RMA.

Awards were also presented to two rehabilitations: The Winters Building in downtown Richmond, home of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, and the Maritime Child Development Center by the Rosie the Riveter Trust with several partners and nomi-

nated by the Richmond Community Foundation.

For details on the award given to George Coles, long-time educator and preserver of archeological sites and lately docent and volunteer at the Museum and on the *Red Oak*, please read the article on page 3.

## THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF THE VISITOR EDUCATION CENTER

for the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park. The Visitor Center is at 1414 Harbour Way South, in the historic Oil House just east of the Ford Bldg.

The Center is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Among the many exhibits is one created by Museum Curator Inna Soiguine on the Richmond sites and sights that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

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**CELEBRATE RICHMOND'S 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup>**

Tuesday, July 3, 2012 is the annual celebration on the *Red Oak Victory*:

- Ship Boarding 6 p.m.
- Barbecue 7 p.m.
- Fireworks at dusk (between 9 and 9:30 p.m.)
- \$25/person - reservations required.
- Make check payable to:  
*Red Oak Victory* and mail to:  
608 - 40th Street, Richmond, CA 94805
- Entertainment: Karaoke on Deck and World War II cartoons and a movie in the #3 Hold.
- Lots of Free Parking

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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF AND NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

by *Clare Fischer*

Lois Boyle, Chair of the RMA Board, reminded a gathering of celebrants at the annual volunteer recognition event on April 21<sup>st</sup> of their respective contribution to the *SS Red Oak Victory Ship*. At this festive occasion on board the Ship, thirty volunteers were recognized and applauded for their respective accomplishments in assuring continuing restoration and public access to the ship.

Presently, a diverse array of tasks are undertaken by more than fifty committed *Red Oak* volunteers who routinely apply their skills to foster public appreciation of this historic emblem of Richmond's Second World War shipbuilding effort. However, the need for additional volunteers continues. A host of positions need to be filled, including greeters and docents who educate visitors to the *Red Oak*.

The work of greeting is critical in welcoming guests, collecting boarding fees and arranging for tours with the docents. The "greeter" is the guest's first contact on board the Ship and is responsible for initiating a positive experience. Docents conduct tours around the Ship. Existing docents and crew train new docents, providing information about features of the Ship and its history, which the docents pass along to guests during tours. We ask our docents to make a commitment to a weekly schedule, if possible.

In addition to being a docent, *Red Oak* volunteers are always welcome to join the "crew" in several skilled departments for specialized work. A general Ship orientation is provided and followed by on-going training within the particular department to which the volunteer is assigned. Boyle notes that "some departments have well-defined skill requirements while others are learn-on-the-job positions."

The Richmond Museum of History also needs people willing to assume responsibility for tours and activities there.

Recent studies report that people benefit both physically and socially from their volunteer efforts. The *Red Oak* and the Museum are great sites to offer time and energy and enjoy the satisfactions of volunteer activity.

## WANTED! DOCENTS, GREETERS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Want adventure on the high seas without actually sailing anywhere? Want a job with great hours, no pay, good company, and lots of fresh air? Try sharing your talents on the *Red Oak* as a weekend docent or greeting visitors.

No experience necessary, standing in line at a union hall not required, and training provided.

Intrigued? Call the Ship at (510) 237-2933. You'll get a vest, a badge, a flashlight, a whistle, and a laser pointer! You'll love it. Call today!

To volunteer at the Museum, call Inna at (510) 235-7387. All the benefits, no wind in your hair.

## SUMMER CALENDAR

July 3 -- Fireworks and BBQ, *Red Oak*, 6 p.m. (see p. 1)

July 12 - NPS Movie, *Red Oak*, 6:30 p.m. *Desperate Journey* with Errol Flynn and Ronald Reagan

July 26 -- NPS Movie, *Red Oak*, 6:30 p.m. *Watch on the Rhine* with Bette Davis and Paul Lukas

Aug. 7 -- Exhibit Opening Reception, Museum, 2 p.m. (see p. 3)

Aug. 9 -- NPS Movie, *Red Oak*, 6:30 p.m. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* with Spencer Tracy and Van Johnson

Aug. 12 -- Pancake Breakfast, *Red Oak*, 9 a.m. -- 1 p.m.

Aug. 23 -- NPS Movie, *Red Oak*, 6:30 p.m. *The Clock* with Judy Garland and Robert Walker

Sept. 9 -- Pancake Breakfast, *Red Oak*, 9 a.m. -- 1 p.m.

Oct. 14th -- Pancake Breakfast, *Red Oak*, 9 a.m. -- 1 p.m.

The National Park Service presents the 4th Annual Summer Film Series on the *Red Oak Victory Ship* on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of July and August. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with film showings at 7:00. There is a boarding fee of \$5/person. Popcorn and other refreshments are available for \$1 each. The movies are from the World War II era.

The Pancake Breakfasts on the *Red Oak Victory Ship* have become a tradition for many in the greater Bay Area — fresh coffee, orange juice, sausage, bacon, eggs and fluffy pancakes — all for just \$7 per person. (Mimosas extra.)

Children under five are free and reservations are not required.

After a leisurely meal, take a tour of the Ship for only \$5, or hit the #4 Hold for World War II-era cartoons. And visit the small museum and Gift Shop.

## SUCCESS FOR SALE

There has been an ongoing sale of used books on the *Red Oak Victory Ship* for several months which is bringing a steady income for the Ship and Museum.

To shop the sale, visit the *Red Oak* on open days, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To donate books for the sale, bring them to the Museum on open days, Wednesday through Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m. or call 510-235-7387.

The Richmond Museum Association is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and donations of books or funds are tax deductible.

# GEORGE COLES, PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF RICHMOND

by Jean Knox

George Coles' work as a preservationist of Richmond's history has spanned more than five decades and is ongoing. It all began at Contra Costa College in 1958 when George, then teaching psychology and serving as an academic counselor, was asked to take over the Introduction to Anthropology course usually taught by a professor who was going on sabbatical.

Anthropology had been George's minor at San Jose State. Conscientious scholar that he is, George spent an intense summer preparing to take over the course and in that first semester initiated, with his students, the now-famous project, the archaeological digs of the Indian mounds on Brooks Island. When the professor returned from sabbatical, he conceded that George should carry on in his new field. In subsequent semesters over the next 25 years, the hands-on experience which became a regular part of George's courses gave his students not only an understanding of anthropology and archaeology in general, as any introductory course must do, but also a keen appreciation of the Indian cultures which flourished in the East Bay, in their very own communities, before Richmond was a name on a map. George and his students, many of them volunteers who carried on with the work of the Archaeological Field Program after leaving the college, maintained a museum at Contra Costa which, upon his retirement, became part of the collections held by San Francisco State. The success of his pedagogy is demonstrated by the fact that at one time 50% of the Anthropology majors at UC Berkeley were graduates of George's classes at Contra Costa College. Many of his students went on to academic careers. Two became chairmen of anthropology departments at California State Universities, one is a professor at UCLA, and another is part of the State of New Mexico Anthropology Film Program. Scores of his students recall their days on Brooks Island as the highlight of their undergraduate years.

It was perhaps inevitable that George's work on Brooks Island would lead him to other preservationist work, notably his service of many years on the Richmond Museum Board and recently his hands-on devotion to the restoration of the *Red Oak Victory Ship*, emblem of Richmond's historic role in World War II. George carries on as a prime mover of the *Red Oak* work in progress, doing everything from sweeping the deck, to serving at benefit breakfasts, to being the on-board docent for tours of the Ship. His off-shore duties include recruiting new docents as he gives talks about the *Red Oak* for neighborhood councils and other community groups, such as Sons in Retirement (SIRS). On almost any day, especially on weekends, George can be found on the Ship.

George is deserving of recognition as a preserver of Richmond's distant and not-so-distant past.



## “OTHER DAYS, OTHER WAYS: A REFINERY SAGA”

A new exhibit dedicated to the 110th Anniversary of the Richmond Refinery

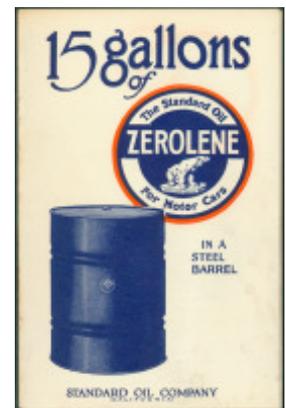
### Opening Reception

Tuesday, August 7, 2012 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
at the Richmond Museum of History  
4th & Nevin

The Opening Reception will be a great event! Representatives from Chevron and the City of Richmond will open the program and other important members of our community will be in attendance, including, we hope, you.

The event is FREE and open to the public. Music and light refreshments will be provided.

The exhibit runs through October.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . .

by Lois Boyle

The little museum that for a long time was considered the area's *Best Kept Secret* can no longer claim that title. The Richmond Museum of History is well in the forefront of activity, and public participation is at an all-time high. Activities at both sites, including tours at the Museum and events on the *Red Oak*, are attracting record crowds.

In this issue of *The MIRROR* we are featuring a collage of photographs to showcase recent events ranging from student tours to pancake breakfasts, from the *USS Iowa* farewell to dedication of a beautiful Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker in tribute to our armed forces; from movies and cartoons to classic car club shows: a fantastic Spring. Thanks to all of you for such tremendous support, and we look forward to seeing you at our summer events.



*SS Jeremiah O'Brien and USS Potomac sail past the Red Oak Victory*



*The USS Potomac, FDR's "Floating White House"*



*The USS Iowa moves astern of the Red Oak Victory*



*Carpenters Ed Collins and Dick Dickerson create a cover frame for 1942 Shipyard 3 fire truck.*



*The USS Iowa sits at anchor near the Red Oak Victory (at right)*



*The USS Iowa at anchor on the Red Oak's port side before its voyage to Southern California*



*The Red Oak bids farewell to the battleship USS Iowa.*



*Lois Boyle and Jeff Wright prepare behind the scenes*



*Uniformed RMA Board Member George Coles presenting colors*

*Memorial Day at the Red Oak - Honoring military veterans and installing a Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker in our "garden" specially created for the purpose. Attending and addressing the audience: Richmond City Councilmember Tom Butt, County Supervisor John Gioia, Rosie the Riveter Park Superintendent Tom Leatherman, El Cerrito Mayor William Jones, Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, Superior Court Judge Christopher Bowen, RMA Board Member Jeff Wright, RMA President Lois Boyle and El Cerrito Garden Club member Esther Sergeant.*



*Flags posted for all military branches including the Merchant Marines*



*Mayor Gayle McLaughlin*

*Mayor Bill Jones*

*Councilmember Tom Butt*

*Esther Sergeant*



*Students aboard the Red Oak for docent tours and lunch*



*The Thunderbird Car Club stages a car show at the Red Oak*



# RECENT DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

**Gary and Collien Sams.** 03.08.12  
Aerial photo of Richmond c. 1950

**Cynthia L. Thorin and Edythe Cervenks Esser.** 03.10.12  
Richmond Union High School songs and Library card from  
Richmond Public Library, 1935.

**Betty Chrisman.** 03.14.12  
Blueprints, letters, and other documents from the Kaiser  
Shipyards.

**Diane Boyer.** 03.20.12  
Blueprint of VC2-S-AP5 and letters to shipyard employees.

**Jim Waite.** 03.30.12  
Two photos of Jim Waite, ages 17 and 83, and two photos of  
Standard No. 2 boat.

**Nancy Anderson.** 04.04.12  
Plate with image of the *ROV* painted in center.

**Don Deadenderfer.** 04.08.12  
Four badges from Shipyard No. 1 and other documents from  
the Shipyards.

**Michael Corbett.** 04.16.12  
Chevron Refinery, Historic Resource Evaluation, Standard Oil  
Administration Building.

**Anonymous.** 04.25.12  
Cookbook from Soroptimist International  
Longfellow Junior High newsletter, 1933  
National Police Week announcement, 1969

**Ed Hegarty.** 04.29.12  
Newspaper clipping from October 1, 1986 about Vernon  
Minniweather.

**P.W. Murphy.** 05.07.12  
Richmond Union High School yearbook, January, 1942 and  
football program, 1939.

**Red Oak Victory.** 05.17.12  
3 nautical charts of the SF Bay Area.

**Jeremy Bonelle.** 05.19.12  
Two photos of the *ROV* taken from the *USS Iowa*.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

### Privileges:

- ◆ Reduced admission to events
- ◆ Discounts on services, books, and gift items
- ◆ Quarterly newsletter, "*The MIRROR*"
- ◆ Advance notice of tours and events
- ◆ Free entrance to Museum and Ship

*Yes, I want to become a member*

*Enclosed is my check for*

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (payable to RMA)

### Categories of Membership

\$25	Senior/Student
\$35	Individual
\$50	Family/Organization
\$65	Contributing
\$100	Sustaining
\$500	Patron
\$1000	Benefactor/Corporate

\_\_\_ **New** \_\_\_ **Renew** \_\_\_ **Gift**  
\_\_\_ **I Would like to volunteer**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_

**State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **I would like my newsletter sent by e-mail**  
(saves money & trees).

Mail to:

**Richmond Museum of History  
PO Box 1267  
Richmond, CA 94802**

## ITEMS NOT ON DISPLAY

# CALIFORNIA ART TILES

by Lynn Maack

RMA Board member Joe Fischer recently donated a few items that have yet to be displayed. These items are examples of the work of a prominent Richmond business from the early to middle part of the 20th century. The items are decorative tiles and the business was the California Art Tile Company. CalArt, as it is sometimes called, began as the Clay Glow Tile Company when James White Hislop and his son founded the company in 1922. The



next year, Hislop incorporated under the new name, California Art Tile, which would remain in business until 1956, when it closed its doors permanently.

Both the Clay Glow Tile Company and California Art Tile were located at S. 27th Street and Maine Avenue. The company was listed as California Art Tile in directories of the time, and the name was molded into the backs of most of its tiles. Not all pieces were so marked, but the distinctive style, clay color, designs and finishes of CalArtTile's decorative pieces is usually sufficient to identify them even when unmarked.



California Art Tiles came in many sizes and designs, usually in relief, with glaze finishes from nearly none to matte to satin to high gloss. Some tiles are monochromatic, while others are multi-colored. The Museum's tiles show that variation; the wheat field tile is nearly devoid of glaze, showing a rough surface with only a hint of color in spots; the



ferry crossing toward Marin County exhibits a high-gloss, more-or-less monochromatic glaze finish; and two of the three others have a satin-type, tri-color finish. All of CalArt's decorative tiles are thick and heavy. The tiles pictured are about 3/4-inch thick. The two largest are 5-3/4" square, and the three others are 3-3/4" square. All are in beautiful condition and bear the company name on the back.



California Art Tile is highly regarded even now in the world of art pottery. Installations of the company's tiles can still be

found in homes and businesses in the area and around the country. Six beautiful, large examples were installed above drinking fountains in El Cerrito High School's main building when it was built in 1939. When the school was torn down and rebuilt, the tiles were preserved and installed in the new school. Four can be seen above drinking fountains in the administration building and the gym. Two remaining tiles are on display on a shelf in the school's very own museum in the admin building.



Also in the Museum's collection is this photo of employees of California Art Tile Company in 1931.

## UPDATE ON LAST MONTH'S INOD ARTICLE:

An alert and interested MIRROR reader contacted me about the article in the Spring issue about the Fire Chief's Helmet with valuable input regarding Fire Chief Cooper. In my article, I speculated that the chief may have been a member of the Richmond Fire Department prior to his becoming chief in 1924. Well, Richmond resident and genealogist Pam Miller did some genealogical research and discovered that Chief Cooper actually lived in Portland, Oregon, in 1920 and was a fireman for the city. We don't know exactly when he came to Richmond, nor whether he served on the RFD prior to becoming chief. Thanks, Pam, for the information!



**Richmond Museum Association, Inc.**

Museum open Wed-Sun, 1-4 p.m.  
400 Nevin Ave., P.O. Box 1267  
Richmond CA 94802  
(510) 235-7387

[Richmondmuseumofhistory.org](http://Richmondmuseumofhistory.org)

**Officers**

Lois Boyle, President  
John Ziesenhenn, Vice President  
William Rochester, Treasurer  
Sandi Genser-Maack, Recording Secty  
Marjorie Roque Hill, Corresponding Secty  
Lorraine Regier, Financial Secty

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Jim Becker  
Rich Chivers  
George Coles  
Phyllis Doering  
Joe Fischer  
Steve Gilford  
Robert Moore  
Ray Sitton  
Karen Stephenson  
Jeffrey Wright

**Board Member Emeritus**

Donald Hardison

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

Ship open Tues, Thurs, Sat, Sun  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
1337 Canal Blvd.  
Richmond CA 94804  
(510) 237-2933  
[redoakvictory.com](http://redoakvictory.com)

**Appointed Chairs**

Leona Derheim, *Red Oak Tree*  
Lorraine Regier, *Membership*

**Museum Staff**

Inna Soiguine, Curator  
Matt Walker, Office Clerk

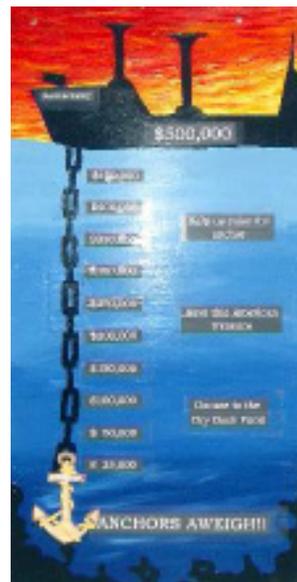
**The MIRROR Staff**

Lynn Maack, Editor  
Lois Boyle  
Clare Fischer  
Sandi Genser-Maack

# HELP RAISE THE ANCHOR!

## CERTIFICATES OF INVESTMENT

We have launched a *Red Oak Campaign*. Savings Certificates, redeemable for passage on the Ship's first cruise, are now being sold at \$20 each. The first cruise requires six (6) certificates, which will have an appreciated value of \$150 -- the fee for that cruise. Certificates are available in the Ship's Gift Shop or by calling the Ship's office at (510) 237-2933.



**Admission Museum:**

Members: Free  
Seniors/Students: \$1.00  
General: \$2.00  
Children: Free w/adult

**Red Oak Boarding Fee:** \$5

Children under 5: \$2

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Richmond, CA  
Permit No. 78

The Museum is open Wednesday thru Sunday, 1-4 p.m.  
Call (510) 235-7387 for information and tour appointments.  
Visit us online at: [RICHMONDMUSEUMOFHISTORY.ORG](http://RICHMONDMUSEUMOFHISTORY.ORG)

Return Service Requested

Richmond Museum Assoc., Inc.  
P.O. Box 1267  
Richmond, CA 94802