

# THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History

Summer 2014

SS Red Oak Victory Ship

## RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 60 YEARS!

by Evelyn Santos and Melinda McCrary

The year 2014 marks a very special anniversary — the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Richmond Museum Association! The year was 1952 when Mrs. Rolla Eubanks, member of the Richmond Women's City Club, brought an intriguing idea to the members: forming a museum in Richmond about local history. Assuming the position of chairman of the committee, for many years Eubanks led the club on a campaign to advocate for a museum. Gaining the support of the Mayor, John J. Sheridan, and the city was an important first step and later that year it was agreed that City Manager Wayne E. Thompson would help the Richmond Women's City Club find a room where they could display historically significant artifacts. The City Hall, Municipal Natatorium, Richmond Auditorium and Nevin Branch Library were all put forth as possible suggestions. Two years later, in 1954, the Richmond Museum Association (RMA) was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization by local Judge Homer Patterson and Attorney Joseph Genser. The following year, the City granted the Association use of two rooms, one for storage and one for exhibits, on the lower level of the Nevin Branch Library. An official open house for the basement Museum was held on October 13, 1956.

seum of History\* at 400 Nevin Avenue was reopened on May 3, 1981, and remains today a cultural cornerstone of the Iron Triangle neighborhood.



As a non-profit organization, we have relied so thankfully on this amazing community. Your support has been expressed in various ways such as volunteer work, memberships, donation of artifacts, and simply spreading the word about our events and programs. So for that, we want to thank YOU.

As a token of our appreciation the Museum is now distributing complimentary 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary pins to all our members (see photograph). We can only mail pins to members beyond the San Francisco Bay Area, so make sure

to ask for yours next time you are at the Museum or on the *SS Red Oak Victory* ship. Not yet a member? Don't fret! It's not too late. Become a member and you, too, can have your very own pin. As is customary, a copy of our membership form is included in this very newsletter. Don't be shy, join the crew!



\*The name of the Museum was the Richmond Museum until the 1990s when it was changed to the *Richmond Museum of History* to reflect our mission and differentiate it from other local institutions.

*The photo shows early Trustees of the fledging Museum. Back row from left: Dr. C.L. Abbott, Paul Darrell, Doris Rasmussen, George Halon and Dr. Walter Helms. In the front row, left to right, are Fern Miles, Mrs. C.L. Abbott, Dorothy Johnson-Sanford, Christine Roed, Esther Miles, Penny Atteberry and Tony Papadakis. Christine Roed is still an active member of the Richmond Museum Association and often comes to Museum events. From the Richmond Museum of History Collection.*

In 1963, the literary needs of the city outgrew the tiny brick building at 4<sup>th</sup> and Nevin and the branch library closed. The Richmond Museum Association took that opportunity to persuade the City of Richmond to allow them to use the main floor for the Museum. The following several years were hard for the Museum with a failed bond measure in 1968, a severe fire in May, 1971, and moving the collection to a vacant firehouse at 3510 Cutting Blvd so the library building could be remodeled and renovated. The renovation project added more than 2600 square feet to the building, including a hall for temporary exhibits – now called the Seaver Gallery — and provided a handicapped-accessible entrance. The Richmond Mu-

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# NEXT STEPS FOR THE *RED OAK*

by John Ziesenhenn, *President of the Board*

The spring has been very busy at the Museum and on the *Red Oak Victory*. The quilt show was a beautiful show and brought many new visitors to the museum who were not only impressed with the show but also with our great Museum of history.

There continues to be a lot of work being done in the archives of the Museum. The *Richmond Independent* collection is being worked on and placed in special high-quality archival boxes for better safekeeping. This will continue throughout the year. The Digital Home Front collaboration project with the National Park Service and Kaiser Permanente Heritage is moving ahead with the first round of materials already at the lab for digitization. The launching programs from the shipyards and the paintings in the children's art collection are in this first round.

The volunteers on the ship continue to do a great job on a daily basis as they work towards meeting the goals of the Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection, some of which are job descriptions, stowage arrangements of any flammable liquids, pollution prevention, all decks, ladders, and rails inspected and repaired, emergency lighting for areas below decks and escape routes, making sure all lights are working for night operations, a working public address system, means of retrieval of persons from the water, the addition of a second gangway, and the list goes on as we move forward to Coast Guard approval.

The next step will be to test the engines on the *Red Oak* once approval is given by the City of Richmond and the Coast Guard. It will be exciting to see, hear and feel the engines move for the first time since 1968 when she was shut down and stored in the mothball fleet in the Delta. Every hour of work by Chief Greg and his engine room crew gets us that much closer to firing up those engines. It will be a great day in the history of the *Red Oak* when that is accomplished.

Please plan on attending our July 3rd Fireworks night — an annual event and an important fundraiser for the *Red Oak*. Call Museum Director Melinda McCrary at 510-235-7387 to check for available space.

As I close out my column for this issue, I would be remiss not to mention the passing of longtime volunteer and pipe fitter on the *Red Oak*, member of the Board of Directors, ombudsman, great coffee pourer at the pancake breakfasts, a wonderful welcoming smile and most of all -- a gentleman -- Ray Sitton. He will be greatly missed by the crew and by the Board of Directors.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

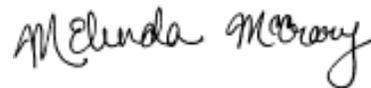
# FUN OUTDOOR EVENTS IN THE SUMMER

Dear Friends:

Temperatures are heating up and the school year is over, which can only mean one thing: summer is finally here! Summer-time for the Richmond Museum Association (RMA) means gearing up for all the fun outdoor events that take place during warm weather, including Pancake Breakfasts and the annual Independence Day BBQ aboard the *SS Red Oak Victory* on July 3rd. Staff at the Museum is looking forward to the summer and participating in the Iron Triangle picnic on Saturday, July 26, 2014! Our friends at the National Park Service are marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Port Chicago disaster in the Rigger's Loft at Shipyard #3 (across from the *SS Red Oak Victory*) on Saturday, July 19, 2014. We hope to see you at one or all of these great events.

Wonderful things are happening behind the scenes at the Museum and Ship as well. Staff and volunteers have been working diligently with Nerd Crossing to develop the new RMA website, a project funded by a capacity-building grant from the Richmond Community Foundation. We hope to roll out the new RMA website in mid-summer. Stay tuned as we will be making a big announcement when the new site goes live! We are very excited to jumpstart an updated RMA marketing campaign with new brochures later this summer, another project funded with a capacity-building grant from the Richmond Community Foundation.

Finally, it is with a heavy heart that I remember long-time *SS Red Oak Victory* volunteer and RMA Board Member Ray Sitton, who passed away in April 2014. I met Ray in the summer of 2012, so I knew him only for a short period of time, but he made a real impression upon me in that time. It was Ray's dedication to the organization that I found so inspiring. Ray had a quiet determination about him from which we all drew strength and resolve on good and bad days. He will always be remembered and missed. Thank you, Ray, for everything.



Melinda McCrary

# THE *RED OAK* WELCOMES NEW SHIP KEEPER

by *Oscill Maloney*

As a novice maritime history enthusiast, I am honored to be selected by the Ship Steering Committee and the Richmond Museum Association to serve as Ship Keeper aboard the *S.S. Red Oak Victory*. I have always loved the sea, ships and all things related to naval and maritime history. The Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond produced ships in record time with enormous contributions made by so many people.

It is inspiring to collaborate with the many dedicated volunteers working so hard to breathe life back into this magnificent ship. From the Docents who take visitors on informative tours to events such as the Pancake Breakfasts and movie nights, the *S.S. Red Oak Victory* has something for everyone.

I am looking forward to participating in her upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November. I am also very excited about getting to work on the vessel and learn the ropes from seasoned pros. I have worked for many years at UC Berkeley, at the Richmond Field Station off Regatta Boulevard at the Bituminous Materials and Soil Mechanics Laboratory. I am the Equipment and Materials Coordinator for the Pavement Research Center, a construction highway-testing materials (asphalt & concrete) research laboratory. I am grateful for this opportunity to offer my engineering and logistics skills towards helping to preserve an enduring legacy for future generations.

Do drop by and say hello the next time you are aboard! I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Oscill Maloney  
*S. S. Red Oak Victory*, Ship Keeper

## SUMMER 2014

### ROV WISH LIST

Donate wish-list items or send a monetary contribution toward any of these things:

- 6-foot ladder (straight or step-ladder)
- Fluorescent light fixtures
- 6 – 48” fluorescent shop lights
- Strings of Christmas lights
- Large, electric griddle – commercial size
- Stand-alone convection oven – commercial, single
- Haze-gray marine paint (approx. \$50/gal.)  
(Hempel Coating Co.)
- Hydraulic oil for steering gear (approx. \$67/5-gal pail)

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

# JULY 3<sup>RD</sup> BBQ & FIREWORKS

Tickets for the BBQ and Fireworks aboard the *SS Red Oak Victory* on July 3rd are ON SALE NOW! And they are still only \$25.

Boarding is at 6:00 p.m., followed by the BBQ and karaoke at 7:00 p.m. and a historic film at 7:30. The event concludes with the best seat in town for the Richmond fireworks display.

Tickets can be purchased at the Museum gift shop at 400 Nevin Avenue or the *Red Oak Victory* gift shop at 1337 Canal Blvd. or by phone at 510-235-7387.

## MOVIES OF THE '40s

### 6TH ANNUAL HOME FRONT FILM FESTIVAL

With the help of National Park Service Ranger Craig Riordan, who picks the movies and introduces them, we will continue showing movies of the WW II era on the *Red Oak* for the sixth year. Ranger Craig tells stories about the stars or about the times and circumstances of the making of each movie, adding to the pleasure of seeing them.

Boarding starts at 6:30 p.m. and the movies begin at 7:00. Popcorn, drinks and other refreshments are available. The movie dates are always Thursdays:

- July 10 -- Casablanca (1942)
- July 24 -- Across the Pacific (1942)
- August 7 -- A Guy Named Joe (1943)
- August 21 -- Harvey (1950)

In the fall, movies are once a month on the 3rd Thursdays: September 18, October 16, November 20 and December 18.

### PANCAKE BREAKFASTS ON THE *RED OAK*

Come to a Pancake Breakfast on the *Red Oak Victory Ship*: pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee and maybe a mimosa. After your meal, if you can drag yourself away from the view, you can take a tour of the Ship, visit the Museum and Gift Shop and, on some special days, tour the Engine Room for an additional donation. And don't forget the balmy weather on a lazy Sunday morning and meeting with family and friends.

Breakfast is served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the Ship is open until 3 p.m. Dates for the 2014 Breakfasts are Sundays: August 10, September 14 and October 12 (Fleet Week).

# RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Sharon Saylor

*San Francisco Examiner* (October 31, 1940)  
*San Francisco Examiner* (November 26, 1963)

John Ziesenhenn

City of Richmond Map, Union 76 Oil Co.  
Photocopy of map of Tewksbury Heights (1909)

Donald Proia

Eight-Day Mantle Clock, New Haven Clock Company  
Wall clock, New Haven Clock Company  
Schatz Miniature 53 Movement Clock  
Cobalt Blue Shirley Temple Pitcher  
Stetson Bowler Hat  
Matchbook, Richmond Hospital Association (1947)

Christine Roed

*Daily Review*, November 23, 1963  
*Oakland Tribune*, November 22, 1963  
*Oakland Tribune*, November 23, 1963  
*Oakland Tribune*, November 24, 1963  
*Oakland Tribune*, November 25, 1963  
*Oakland Tribune*, November 26, 1963  
*San Francisco News*, June 26, 1945  
*The Call Bulletin*, June 26, 1945  
*Time Magazine* (Commemorative Issue), May 14, 1945

Carole Freethy

*Richmond Hi-Nus*, June 1932 – Richmond Union H S  
*Winged R* magazine, December 1927 – Roosevelt  
Junior High School  
*Winged R* magazine, June 1928 - Roosevelt Jr. H S  
*Propeller*, December 1929 - Longfellow Jr. High School  
*Propeller*, June 1930 - Longfellow Junior High School

Vera Dean-Ross

Autograph book, ca. 1940-1950s

Sharon Parmlee

Photograph, employees of California Cap Company,  
Richmond (ca. 1920s)

Darryl Ott

*The Shield* yearbook, January 1953 - Richmond Union  
High School (RUHS)  
*The Shield* yearbook, June 1953 - RUHS  
*The Shield* yearbook, January 1954 - RUHS  
*The Shield* yearbook, June 1954 - RUHS  
*The Shield* yearbook, February 1955- RUHS  
*The Shield* yearbook, June 1955 - RUHS

Pamphlet - Richmond Union High School, 30-year  
reunion, Class of '55

*Richmond Hi-Nus*, Spring Semester 1955 – RUHS  
Senior Supplement, Spring Semester 1955 - RUHS

Betty Burrus-Wright

Program, photographs, handbill, poster for the first City  
of Richmond Human Rights Day Celebration (12-9-2013)

Michael Ilvesta

Canteen, Flag, Scrapbooks, ID bracelet, pin, sunglasses,  
passport, flashlight and various documents (1944)

Harry Wright

Binoculars, photograph and compass (1941-1945)

NEXT UP IN THE SEAVER GALLERY:

## HISTORY OF THE RICHMOND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Visitors will see documents, photographs and objects relating to the Richmond Volunteer Fire Departments of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in addition to learning about early firefighting techniques in the forthcoming exhibit on the Richmond Fire Department (RFD) opening on Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup>. in the Seaver Gallery.

The exhibit will include the story of the development of the professional, full-time firefighting department in Richmond, as well as the RFD in the 1950s, '60s and '70s and will bring together RFD artifacts from personal collections, the Museum's permanent collection and others kept in firehouses across the City of Richmond in order to present an historical overview of firefighting in our great city.

Finally, the show will close with a snapshot of RFD and firefighting technology today. Please join us on Saturday August 9<sup>th</sup> at 2p.m. for the opening reception of the RFD exhibit.

## ITEMS NOT ON DISPLAY

### Bee Careful

by Lynn Maack

Have you ever been stung by a bee? It's not a pleasant experience. Beekeepers face the threat of beestings on a daily basis. How do they minimize that threat? They use smoke, in focused application. They do so by using a device called a bee smoker. In the Museum's basement, we have an example of a bee smoker that was used in Richmond by its donor, the late Lucretia Edwards, indomitable environmental activist and namesake of one of Richmond's city parks.

Smoke has been used to control bee aggressiveness for centuries, but it was as recently as 1875 that Moses Quinby of St. Johnsville, New York, invented the bee smoker in common use today. Quinby's design made the bee smoker economical and practical for commercial use.



Smoke used to calm bees must be non-toxic, so as not to harm or kill the bees, so fuel must be natural, uncontaminated fibers, such as cotton, corrugated cardboard, pine needles and decayed wood. Smoke must also be cool, again to prevent injury or death to the bees. Accordingly, the fuel

must burn slowly, without flame—a smoldering process. It takes very little smoke to produce a calming effect on the bees.

Apparently, as discovered sometime last century, smoke inhibits guard bees' production of alarm pheromones that initiate a danger response, namely attack by stinging, to protect the hive. Once the bees are calmed, the beekeeper can tend to the tasks of hive maintenance and honey harvesting without fear of reprisal.

The Museum's bee smoker consists of a double-can arrangement. The outer can contains a smaller one, which contains the fuel. This double-wall construction prevents burns to the user holding the smoker. A bellows is attached to the outer can for drawing air into the inner, burner can to fan the embers within



and simultaneously expel air and smoke from the spout at the top of the outer can. The Museum's bee smoker is about 8" tall and 6" wide. The cans are galvanized steel or tin, and the bellows is made of wood and vinyl-covered cloth. The cone-shaped lid opens for fuel insertion and lighting. When closed, little oxygen enters, allowing limited combustion and creation of helpful smoke.

## THE RED OAK GETS A NEW GANGWAY

The *Red Oak* will soon have an added access and egress point by way of a newly-acquired gangway. On February 11, C & A Trucking of Cotati delivered the apparatus which is similar to the existing gangway (staircase) by which one currently enters and exits the Ship. The differences between the old and new are that the old has 42 steps, whereas the new has 48, and the new is



*The new gangway on the flatbed before lift-off.*

about a foot wider than the old, making the trips up and down a little easier on the new, especially when more than one person is using it at a time. Like the existing gangway, the new unit is auto-

leveling and articulated, adjusting automatically to changing tides.

The new gangway's potential location and attachment to the ship are being studied by the California Maritime Academy as a class project. The unit will likely ascend from the dock amidships, parallel to the Ship, toward an aft-section access point to be determined.

The unit was the better of two available and came from the 1960's-era cargo ship *The Comet* from the Suisun Reserve Fleet. Deck Department member Tom Richardson shepherded acquisition of the new gangway through Reserve Fleet Command processes. John Rodgers of the Maritime Academy provided lifting equipment to remove the gangway from *The Comet*.

Using the Red Oak's booms and winches, the Deck Crew lifted the gangway from C & A's flatbed trailer and gently set it down on the dock to await installation. On the dock during



the lifting and lowering, under Cliff Warren's supervision, crewmember John Mestas and Jerod Osler from the TAP Program handled the lines necessary to stabilize the gangway while in the air to keep it from swinging and contacting the Ship's hull.

When the gangway is installed, visitors and crew will have two entry and exit routes, creating convenience and additional safety on the Ship. Thanks to all involved for a job well-done!

# THE MYSTERY SHIP

by Charlie Moran, Red Oak Victory ship modelers

My name is Charlie Moran. I'm a volunteer on the *Red Oak Victory (ROV)* at berth 6A in the Port of Richmond. I'm also a member of the Red Oak Victory Ship Modelers, which meets on board every second Saturday of the month.

One day last November, while working in the engine room, Chief Engineer Greg Blasquez asked me to go to the forecabin to check on something. While I was on the main deck, going by the #2 Hold, I noticed the deck crew was putting some equipment into it. I glanced down for a few seconds, being the curious person that I am, and to my amazement I saw what looked like a large model of a ship hull.



As it was found in the tween #2 Hold in Nov. 2013

I stopped and tried to figure out what was something like that doing in a place that no one ever enters. I had to get a closer look at it. The only way to get down in there was to climb a straight ladder for about 25 feet or more. But I didn't care. I had to see it.

It's made entirely of wood. It measures 13.5 feet long by 20.5 inches wide and about 1 foot high. Its proportions appear to be exactly that of a Victory ship. It looks like it was designed and built by professional craftsmen. There's no name plate or writing of any kind on it.

I've been told by a reliable source that an architect by the name of Don Hardison, who worked at the Kaiser shipyards during World War 2 and was an active member of the Richmond Museum Association for many years, donated it to the *ROV* around 1998.

My plan is to complete the model's superstructure above the deck with the exact measurements of a museum-class completed model, making this possibly the largest Victory ship model of its kind in the United States. We're trying to get a space on the *ROV* where we can work on it and also have the public view us as we're working. Of course, money and people supporting us will be the most important factors.

# AN EXHIBIT PLUS A GREAT GUEST

by John Ziesenhenn

The exhibit "For The Love of Our Ship" opened at the Museum on a beautiful Sunday in February; the museum was packed to the rafters with visitors and the show was very good. Beautiful photographs of the Ship and her volunteers lined the walls of the Seaver Gallery along with very interesting displays, while a movie played interviews of our volunteers, which included the late, great Chief Jackson.

The Richmond Museum of History was graced that day with a visit from the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Ms. Susan Hildreth. The IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge, enhance learning and innovation and support professional development.

On January 19, 2011, President Obama appointed Susan Hildreth to be the Director of the IMLS. Ms. Hildreth was previously the Director at the Seattle Public Library, the San Francisco Public Library and the Benicia Public Library and was appointed the California State Librarian by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. In 2006, Ms. Hildreth also served as President of the Public Library Association.

Richmond Museum Director Melinda McCrary took Director Hildreth on a tour of the Museum. Ms. Hildreth was visiting California and worked in her visit to Richmond on her way to Sacramento. "The IMLS awarded over \$2.7 million in grants to California museums in 2013, and we will be working with IMLS and applying for appropriate grants in the future. Now that Ms. Hildreth has visited our museum, I hope to foster this relationship between our two organizations so that the great programs that the RMA has might benefit from the IMLS grant program. Personally, I could not have been more thrilled and excited to meet her, and to have her visit our wonderful Museum and view this very special exhibition, "For the Love of Our Ship,"" stated Ms. McCrary.

It was a rewarding afternoon for our wonderful *Red Oak* volunteers and our Museum members and guests. The RMA looks forward to another visit by the Director when she has time to come aboard the *Red Oak*, perhaps for a pancake breakfast!



As the Mystery Ship appears today in the #5 hold. I built a temporary deckhouse out of cardboard.

# THE GOINGS-ON ON THE RED OAK

Just this year there have been performances, weddings, conferences, classes and celebrations of birthdays and anniversaries on the decks of the *Red Oak Victory Ship* and in the holds below.

What a great place to host your own celebration! Your family and friends will never forget your party and you can make arrangements to include tours of the Ship for your guests.

Call Lorraine or Marjorie on the Ship at (510) 237-2933 to discuss using this unique and amazing venue for your next celebration!

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2 adults/2 youth --Benefits above & invites to member only events
- \_\_\_ \$250 **Garrard Ave** --Benefits above & "Behind the Scenes" tours of museum collection & ship archives
- \_\_\_ \$500 **Barrett Ave** -- Benefits above & exclusive tour & luncheon with museum curator & ship captain
- \_\_\_ \$1000 **Macdonald Ave** --Benefits above & two tickets on The Red Oak "Sail-on-the-Bay"

\_\_\_ **New** \_\_\_ **Renew** \_\_\_ **Gift**

\_\_\_ **I Would like to volunteer**

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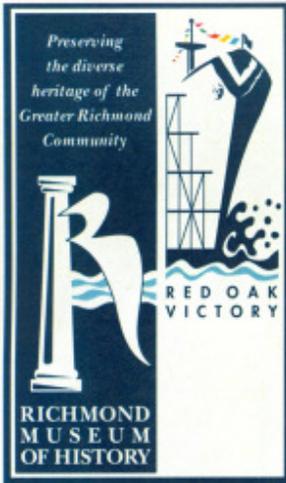
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**The MIRROR**

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**Contributors**

Sandi Genser-Maack  
Melinda McCrary  
Marjorie Hill  
Karen Stephenson  
Cliff Warren  
John Ziesenhenne

**Red Oak Victory Ship**

Open Tues, Thurs, Sat, Sun  
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1337 Canal Blvd.

Richmond CA 94804

Mail: P.O. Box 1267

Richmond CA 94802

(510) 237-2933 for information and Tour Appointments

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**Richmond Museum of History**

Open Wed-Sun, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

400 Nevin Avenue

Mail: P.O. Box 1267

Richmond CA 94802

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