

THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History & Culture

Winter 2020-21

SS Red Oak Victory

MEMBERS INVITED

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The Richmond Museum Association (RMA) will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 28, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. online via Zoom.

The Annual Meeting is for members of the RMA and their guests. On the agenda will be reports on the 2020 activities of the Richmond Museum of History and Culture and our Ship, SS *Red Oak Victory*, and the election of Directors to the RMA Board. In addition to business, Melinda McCrary, Museum Executive Director, will highlight the Museum's Listening Project, which began last year. Non-members may join the RMA on that day (or before) and be included in voting activity.

On the slate of board candidates recommended by the board are returning incumbents Rich Chivers, Steve Gilford and Lydia Stewart. The board highly recommends a yes vote on all three candidates.

We hope to see you there.

In This Issue:

- RMA Annual Meeting p. 1
- Lois Boyle - In Memoriam p. 1
- President's Message p. 2
- Lorraine Regier - In Memoriam p. 2
- Director's Message p. 3
- Wish Lists p. 3
- Black History Month - Segregation in Richmond p. 4
- From SS *Red Oak Victory* p. 5
- Current Events p. 6
- Recent Acquisitions p. 6

In Memoriam

LOIS BOYLE

1933 - 2020

We at the Richmond Museum Association mourn the passing of Lois Boyle and share our condolences with her family and close friends. Lois was instrumental in shepherding and sustaining the Richmond Museum of History for many years.



The following are edited excerpts from an obituary written by one of her grandsons, Robert Amacker:

Lois Helen Seabolt Boyle was the tenth of 12 children born to Alfred Lafayette Seabolt and Beulah Cornelia Seabolt (nee Shackelford). She was born in Muldrow, Oklahoma, on August 11, 1933, and died at the age of 87 with kidney and heart problems, complications of old age, in Richmond, California, December 24, 2020. She was happy and content with her family by her side the entire way.

Among her many accomplishments and duties, Lois Boyle was president of the Richmond Museum Association for 30 years, from 1983 – 2013, and Museum director for most of those years. In addition to running things, she brought all her grandkids to the museum to run around and explore at times. The kids particularly liked all the exhibits and hide-and-go-seek, when not open of course, and the two-level elevator rides, much slower than the stairs, but way more fun. They never wanted to go down to the spooky basement and the shelves of storage. Eventually, she opened Captain's Cottage Tea Parlor & Gift Shop in Pinole, where she would serve tea and crumpets and regale patrons with fanciful stories she created. Lois had countless other involvements, including serving multiple terms as PTA president at the schools her children attended. She was tireless.

One of her proudest accomplishments was salvaging a major piece of Richmond's history. Lois successfully lobbied Congress

(Continued on p. 6)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Lynn Maack

Out with the old, in with the new. The year 2020 is finally over, and we hope 2021 ushers in a better time for us all.

For most of the year, both of our venues—the Museum and SS *Red Oak Victory*—have been closed due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. However, both are still going, conducting limited business online and looking forward to a better year and a time when we can get back to normal.

Two sad notes, however, have marred the start of the new year: the passing of former long-time RMA board president and Museum director **Lois Boyle** in late December and the passing this February of long-time RMA board member and stalwart volunteer on *Red Oak Victory* **Lorraine Regier**. Both served the organization with great dedication for many years, and we mourn their passing.

The RMA Annual Meeting is coming up on February 28th. For the business part of the Annual Meeting, we will provide an update on activities at the Museum and on *Red Oak Victory*, as well as an overview of the RMA financial picture. The last order of business will be the election of board members. This year there are three incumbent board members on the reelection slate: Rich Chivers, Steve Gilford and Lydia Stewart. The board seeks and strongly recommends your yes vote to re-elect all three candidates to the board. Also on the agenda, Museum Executive Director Melinda McCrary will present a taste of the Museum's Listening Session for the Museum's Community Engagement project, which began last year and continues this year.

The Arnautoff mural project is (nearly) completed! The long-awaited restoration and hanging of the mural were finished in November, and the framing of the mural was done in January. A special lighting system is in the works. I say the project is "nearly" completed because all that remains is opening our doors so the public can view this magnificent work of art! When we are able once again to host the public inside the Museum, we will let you know. Marvin Collins, former board member, was instrumental in getting the mural restored. Marvin left the board late last year for personal reasons, and we thank him for his hard work and wish him well in his future endeavors.

At *Red Oak Victory*, we were unable to host our pancake breakfasts or our "3rd of July" fireworks event, all of which help keep the Ship solvent. However, we launched several GoFundMe campaigns for specific Ship needs. Huge thanks to our volunteers and crew, and to our generous donors!

We were able to hold one in-person event on *Red Oak Victory* when the COVID-19 restrictions briefly allowed outdoor activities. In October, the Ship hosted a toast to "Operation Magic Carpet," which was a huge transportation effort that brought U.S. troops home from all over the world after WWII. The event was a bring-your-own lunch affair with information booths from USS *Hornet*

in Alameda, the Richmond Museum of History and Culture and the Rosie the Riveter Trust, as well as the Ship's Store set up on deck. Also featured were several military vehicles and vintage cars on the dock.

We're looking forward to 2021. With the continued support of our faithful and often tireless volunteers, our members, our donors and the community, it will be a good year.



"Richmond Industrial City" before restoration. We can't wait to show you the finished product!

Lorraine Regier

The Board and staff of the Richmond Museum Association, the crew of the *Red Oak Victory* and the membership all mourn the loss of Lorraine Regier. Lorraine was a member of the RMA Board of Directors and was a mainstay on SS *Red Oak Victory* for many years, running the Ship's Store, ordering and preparing food in the Ship's Galley and much more.

Lorraine was a native Chicagoan who came to Richmond in 1963. At the time, she was a homemaker who then went to work at Hinks in Berkeley. After that she was employed by Richmond Unified School District and then Container Care, Ltd. She raised four children in her Richmond house, passing away in that same house on February 17th. After retirement she never stopped working. Being an avid volunteer, she gave many hours to the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Richmond Museum, *Red Oak Victory* Ship and the Pinole Senior Center. She worked closely with her neighbors, being a board member of the Fairmede Neighborhood Council. She lived by the motto, "Service to others over self." She will be deeply missed by all who knew her. She is survived by her 4 children, 4 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandson.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Happy New Year! I'm sure you share the sentiment that we are so happy to see 2020 come to a close. The Richmond Museum of History & Culture has been closed since March 16—the longest closure since the Carnegie Library was remodeled in the late 1970s. The staff has remained busy with virtual educational programs and wrapping up the Arnautoff mural restoration project.

Richmond Industrial City Mural

In 2015, Museum staff located the Richmond Industrial City mural by Victor Arnautoff that once hung in the main Post Office on Nevin Ave. We are so excited to announce that after five long years and a great deal of work, the mural was installed at the Museum in early November 2020. The Museum remains closed due to Covid 19-related restrictions as of February 2021 but we are planning a community celebration once it is again safe to gather.

Friday Drop-In Programs

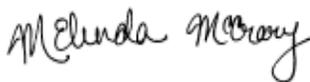
Join Tatiana every Friday from 11:00AM - 1:00 PM for drop in enrichment programs about local history, art and culture! The programs are free, family friendly and designed to use everyday materials commonly found around the home. Drop-in programs will be held now through June 2021. No registration needed. The link for the programs is:

<https://richmondmuseum.org/education-school-tours/>

Although the Museum remains closed due to Covid 19-related restrictions, we continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation closely and will reopen as soon as the Contra Costa Health Services Department deems it safe for the public to again visit museums and galleries.

Let's all collectively wish for a more positive 2021.

With gratitude,



Melinda McCrary

Did You Know?

Ship names are like people names. Consequently, when writing or speaking the name of a ship, you should not place "the" before the name. For the same reason you would not say or write, "the Larry," you should not say or write "the *Red Oak Victory*." --Courtesy of the Historic Naval Ships Association.

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:

Wooden clothes hangers
Compost
Legal writing pads
Unbleached muslin fabric
Quilt batting

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

Thank you for your help and support!

RED OAK WISH LIST:

SS Red Oak Victory needs a lot of attention. We hope you can help. We appreciate all donations, large and small, monetary and otherwise. Here is a partial list of physical things the Ship needs; some of them are very specific—please email us at info@redoakvictory.us to get details:

Face masks (new, unopened)
Starboard-side steel hull plate replacement (to donate, email us at info@redoakvictory.us to make arrangements)
Restore the insulation (lagging) on our high-pressure turbine
Repair Main condenser Isolation valve
Clean and re-hang the curtains in the Lois Boyle Theater
Improved lighting for Hold 5
Replica light shades to replace those lost or broken throughout the Ship
New hatch-cover canvas for Holds 1, 3 and 5
New canvas covers for the two port lifeboats
New canvas covers for the guns and miscellaneous deck fixtures
New Ship's Name Boards Port, Starboard and Aft
New 12-volt car battery for the portable lighting generator
Emergency locker with lid, 3' x 4'
AA batteries
Seat cushions for the Theater seats
Safety cones
Paint, paint, and more paint!

To make a donation by credit card or PayPal, go to www.redoakvictory.us and click on the DONATE button at the top of the home page. To make a donation by check or other means, email us at info@redoakvictory.us. You can also use this email address to request more information about any of the items on our wishlist and to inquire about volunteering to become a crew member.

Thank you for your help and support!

Highlighting Black History Month

HOW AFRICAN AMERICANS IN RICHMOND CAME TO BE SEGREGATED AND IMPOVERISHED

Black History Month is a time to reflect on the contributions of African Americans in our society. And the contributions are many, in all fields of endeavor. Even more impressive than the contributions and the successes of African Americans is their overcoming the trials and tribulations they have endured in the process. In that positive context, we bring to light some of those trials and tribulations—institutionalized obstacles—things that white society didn't have to think about, but for black society were everyday facts of life.

In his book, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*, Richard Rothstein argues with exacting precision and fascinating insight how segregation in America—the incessant kind that continues to dog our major cities and has contributed to so much recent social strife—is the byproduct of explicit government policies at the local, state, and federal level.

A former columnist for the New York Times, a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute, a Senior Fellow, Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy, University of California (Berkeley) School of Law, as well as a Fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Rothstein has spent years documenting the evidence that government not merely ignored discriminatory practices in the residential sphere, but promoted them. The impact has been devastating for generations of African-Americans who were denied the right to live where they wanted to live, and raise and school their children where they thought best. (*From the website of the Glendale Library Arts and Culture; "Be the Change" program series, <https://www.eglendalelac.org/bethechange>*).

The following is a summary of Rothstein's research brief that led to his book. The brief documents government-sponsored and –protected racial discrimination specifically in Richmond, California, beginning in World War II and continuing until the present day.

“January 27, 2015

“Richmond, California's African American community became segregated and impoverished as the result of explicit and racially conscious policies of the federal, state, and city governments, designed to force African American migrants to Richmond into an economically subordinate lower class. When

large numbers of African Americans arrived in Richmond during World War II to seek employment in the shipbuilding and other defense industries, employers—with the support and approval of their unions and of the federal government—assigned them to the lowest paying jobs with inferior benefit levels. After the war, when white workers from defense plants found well-paying jobs in a booming economy, the California state employment service refused to refer black workers to similar jobs. The City of Richmond and federal government together created housing for war workers, but the housing for African Americans was inferior and placed in worse environments than the housing for white workers. When a suburban housing boom followed the war, the federal government financed builders to create large subdivisions for white workers and returning veterans, but required these builders to refuse sales to African Americans. One result was that black workers in Richmond could not move to suburban locations where good industrial jobs relocated in the post-war years.

“As a result of these and similar policies, African Americans in Richmond, who had skills and military service records that were similar to whites, were unable to participate fully in the post-war economic boom that, for three decades after the war, gradually and consistently raised the living standards of white working families in Richmond and the East Bay area. Because of this pervasive public and private discrimination, neighborhoods where African Americans in Richmond resided deteriorated, justifying slum clearance policies that further depressed their economic conditions, and forced some of them to seek homes [in] segregated neighborhoods elsewhere.

“In the 1960s, a series of national civil rights laws prohibited racial discrimination. But simply prohibiting future discrimination could not undo the lasting structures of second class status that had been created in Richmond over previous decades. For example, suburban housing that was affordable to working and middle class families of all races in the 1950s and 1960s, but from which Richmond's African Americans were excluded, is now affordable only to the affluent. Although African Americans now have the right to purchase homes in these suburbs, decades of discriminatory public policy resulted in their now having little ability to make such purchases. There are other ongoing consequences of this discrimination. One is that the wealth that Richmond's working and lower-middle class whites gained from the equity appreciation of their suburban homes contributed to higher rates of college attendance for their children and grandchildren, while the educational attainment of otherwise similar African Americans remains low.

“Non-discrimination laws are no longer sufficient to undo the damage created by the federal, state, and local governments' twentieth century race policies. For African Americans in Richmond to gain equal status, positive action is now required.”

For the full text of Rothstein's research brief on discrimination in Richmond, visit the Museum website at <https://richmondmuseum.org>.

FROM RED OAK VICTORY

By Kim Abbott, ROV Executive Committee Chair
and Fred Klink, ROV Marketing Director

Gun Updates

Thanks to the efforts of the Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout project last year and the hard work of ROV crew this year the 3-inch/50-caliber forward gun is now completely restored, and all moving parts operate. There are plans in 2021 to improve public access to the 3-inch gun and with Coast Guard approval include the gun in the docent-led tours.

The 5-inch gun that we obtained from the Treasure Island Development Authority is now in its proper place in the aft gun tub on ROV. With generous support of Maggiora & Ghilotti Construction, Inc., and Bragg Crane Services, and the efforts of our crew, we were able to remove the 5-inch gun from an elevated mount on TI, where it is was



used as a training gun, transport the gun to ROV, and then lift it in place in the aft gun tub. The day the gun was placed in the gun tub was a huge “lift” day for ROV. Not only was the 5-inch gun placed in the gun tub, but we also: removed and replaced 16 strongbacks; lifted out two 3-inch guns and a the 5-inch surface gun mount from lower hold 4 and one 5-inch surface gun from lower hold 5; and lifted and placed a spare ship’s prop on the dock. The 5-inch gun on ROV needs lots of restoration work and we hope to complete the work this year. It is accessible to the public, but for now it’s only on display. Someday it, too, will have all of its moving parts operating.

The Ship Prepares to Reopen

Contra Costa Health Services has determined that indoor and outdoor museums must remain closed, subject to certain conditions. Consequently, Red Oak Victory is closed for business. If the COVID curve flattens sufficiently to allow the Ship to reopen for visitors, we plan to hold our usual schedule of five Pancake Breakfasts and three additional events, including our July 3 Independence Day Fireworks. Keep an eye on our website at www.redoakvictory.us and on our Facebook and Twitter pages for updates to our schedule

Engine Room Update

For a period of time in November, the Ship’s engine room circulated salt water through the condenser piping. The ship requires massive amounts of salt water to cool the steam after powering the turbines. Keeping the condensers and pumps in proper condition is critical for preparations to get the Ship underway in the future.

After inspecting the main and auxiliary condensers where

excess amount of rust on inlet water sides was found, the tubes were blown out with air, rust vacuumed out, inspection plates reinstalled and the pumps turned on.

Red Oak Volunteers Play Key Role in Wreaths Across America

An annual memorial is held throughout the U.S. in December to honor our fallen warriors from all conflicts. The event, called “Wreaths Across America,” involves a ceremonial laying of wreaths on headstones at national cemeteries. In the Bay Area, the largest ceremony is traditionally held at the San Francisco National Cemetery at the Presidio.

Held on December 18, 2020, this year’s ceremony at the Presidio had to be drastically reduced due to COVID-19 restrictions. The event was limited to a total of 25 invited guests and no public attendees. Representatives of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine each placed a single wreath to honor the fallen of their branch. A ceremonial detail fired the traditional three rifle volleys that are fired over the grave of a fallen service member.



ROV Chief Engineer Greg Blasquez places a wreath at “Wreaths Across America.” Looking on is Ashley Elieff, ROV Marketing Dept. and event MC. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

SS Red Oak Victory was proud to have a number of our volunteers support this ceremony. Chief Engineer Greg Blasquez placed a wreath in memory of the Merchant Marine sailors lost at sea during our country’s wars. Social Media Coordinator Ashley Elieff performed the Master of Ceremonies duties and Marketing Director Fred Klink led the ceremonial firing detail. The detail also included ROV volunteers John Fornbacher, George May and Robert Corpus. Our webmaster Dori Luzbetak was the official event photographer.

Marketing and Fundraising

Overcoming the nearly year-long COVID-19 shutdown was a major challenge. The Ship was closed, but expenses continued. The cost of maintaining the Ship is estimated at \$250 per day. To meet this challenge, we started a fundraising campaign entitled

(Continued on p. 6)

Lois Boyle (Continued from p. 1)

to save the SS Red Oak Victory, a ship constructed in Richmond during World War II and the last ship remaining from the 747 built in the Kaiser Shipyard. Lois, with the help of California Congressman George Miller, saved the ship from the mothball fleet in Suisun Bay where it was destined to be scrapped. She used government grants and many volunteers, several of whom were family at times, to refurbish the SS Red Oak Victory, which is now berthed at historic Shipyard No. 3 in Richmond as a floating museum. The theater onboard Red Oak Victory is named in her honor. She believed history's primary importance is informing people about the present. 'History has always been a tangential love.' - Lois"

Lois' passing marks the end of an era. She is now part of the very history that she preserved and brought to the public for much of her life. Job well-done; rest in peace, Lois Boyle.



A view of the Lois Boyle Theater and Snack Bar on SS Red Oak Victory. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Rosemary Corbin

Collection from Richmond's Sister City Shimada Japan--kimono and photo albums.

David Weinstein

Materials collected while reporting or editing for the West County Times in the 1980s and '90s and other publications since.

Jerry Powers

Richmond Flag, 1955, flown at City's 50th Anniversary celebration.

CURRENT MUSEUM EVENTS

Friday Drop-In Programs

Join Tatiana every Friday from 11:00AM - 1:00 PM for drop-in enrichment programs about local history, art and culture! The programs are free, family friendly and designed to use everyday materials commonly found around the home. Drop-in programs will be held through June 2021. No registration needed. The link for the programs is on the Museum website at:

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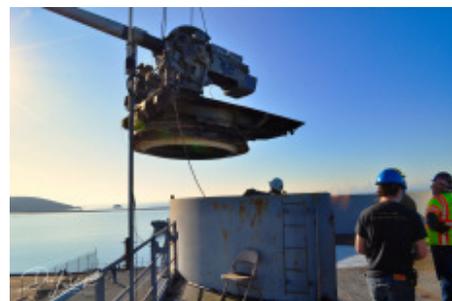
From Red Oak Victory (continued from p. 5)

"Fund the Ship For a Day." We asked our donors to contribute to keep the Ship open for a day, but we also had a half-day donation of \$125, or a full week for \$1000. Our donors stunned us with their generosity; from April through the end of August, the campaign raised over \$12,000. By year's end, the donations reached \$15,180. That deserves an exclamation point!

But the financial challenges never cease. Next was the U.S. Coast Guard-required inspection of our fire extinguishers. We have three types of fire extinguishers on *Red Oak Victory*: fixed systems, semi-portable systems, and hand-portables. Inspection showed the need for refurbishment, refilling or replacement of many extinguishers, with an estimated price tag of \$4,000 to \$5,000. Once again, we turned to our supporters for help with this vital project. From the second week in July to the first week of August, donors sent us \$4,622 which was just enough to cover the cost of the inspections. Another exclamation point!

Those of you who have visited *Red Oak Victory* have no doubt spent some time in the Ship's Store in Hold No. 4. And hopefully, you purchased some *ROV* swag. But if you didn't, now's your chance, even during the pandemic shutdown. In 2019, we set a goal of putting the Ship's Store online. The 2020 shutdown gave us time to complete that task. Crew members Mandy Torres, Ashley Elieff and Dori Luzbetak soft-launched the online store in August. Over the ensuing months we added more products and broadened our publicity efforts. The store has been performing well, bringing in \$200 per month in sorely-needed funds. Visit our store at shop.redoakvictory.us.

The most visible *Red Oak Victory* success of 2020 weighs 30,000 pounds and spans a length of over 18 feet. When the Ship re-opens, you will have the opportunity to view our latest artifact: a 5-inch/38-caliber deck gun. The addition of this gun to the Ship brings our complement of armament up to a representative example of each type of gun used on USS *Red Oak Victory* during World War II: a single 3-inch/50-caliber deck gun, two 20mm anti-aircraft machine guns (the ship carried eight in WW II), and the new 5-inch gun.



Lifting the 5-inch gun into the aft gun tub. Photo by Dori Luzbetak.

Looking back, we certainly don't want to go through another 2020. However, thanks to the devoted crew of *Red Oak Victory*, we were able to make the most out of a bad situation. Still, we look forward to returning to some form of "normal" in 2021 and greeting all of you once again on *Red Oak Victory's* quarterdeck.

Finally, huge thanks to our crew and generous donors!!

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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

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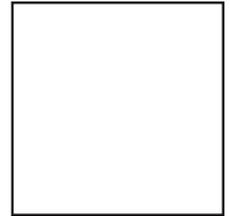
Date: _____

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 Culture 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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Rich Chivers
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Demnlus Johnson
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Lydia Stewart
Jeffrey Wright

The MIRROR

Lynn Maack, Editor
Contributors:
Kim Abbott
Fred Klink
Dori Luzbetak
Melinda McCrary

SS *Red Oak Victory* Ship

Not currently open; await further notice

1337 Canal Blvd.
Richmond CA 94804
Mail: P.O. Box 1267
Richmond CA 94802
(510) 237-2933 for information and Tour Appointments

Richmond Museum of History & Culture

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Mail: P.O. Box 1267
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