

THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History

Spring 2014

SS Red Oak Victory Ship

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS ARE BACK

The first *Pancake Breakfast* of the year is Sunday, April 13th -- the view, the balmy weather on a lazy Sunday morning, meeting with family and friends -- and on top of all that, a great breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, 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.

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 the following Sundays:

Apr 13
May 11 Mother's Day
Jun 15 Father's Day
Aug 10
Sep 14
Oct 12 Fleet Week

MOVIES OF THE '40s NOW ALL YEAR

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. Spring movies are April 17 -- "*The Sea Chase*," 1955, starring John Wayne and Lana Turner, and May 15 -- "*Swing Shift*," 1984, starring Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell.

During the summer months, movies are the 2nd and 4th Thursdays -- June 12 and 26, July 10 and 24, August 14 and 28.

And in the Fall, we're back to the 3rd Thursdays on September 18, October 16, November 20 and December 18.

MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT HOME FRONT QUILTS

Thirty artists from Northern California met the WWII Home Front Quilts Project's 2014 Challenge, creating captivating quilts and stories inspired by civilian experiences across the U.S. during the Home Front period of 1941 – 1945. The quilts debuted in a special exhibit in "*Voices in Cloth 2014: Extraordinary Quilts by the Bay*," the biennial quilt show presented by East Bay Heritage Quilters in March.



News From Home by Cindi Cossen

The Challenge jurors looked for original design, personal expression, overall excellence and compelling stories. We are proud and excited to exhibit the quilts and their stories at the Richmond Museum of History from April 5 thru June 6, including a presentation by Mary Mashuta on Sunday, May 18th, at 2 p.m. Mashuta is a famous quilter from Berkeley who (literally) wrote the book about story quilts. The presentation is free of charge (donations gratefully accepted).

A special fee of \$3.00 will be added to the usual Museum admission fees for this exhibit: adults will be \$5.00, seniors \$4.00, kids free.



A Salute to the Richmond Shipyard Workers: Leon Chooey by Jeanie Low

Please join the Richmond Museum Association as we celebrate the artists and the quilts at a free Reception for the opening of the exhibition on Saturday, April 5, 2:00 p.m., at the Museum, at 400 Nevin Ave.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MY FIRST YEAR: GROWTH AND GOALS

by John Ziesenhene, President of the Board

To begin with, "Thank You" to the volunteers at the Richmond Museum of History and the *Red Oak Victory* for all your many dedicated volunteer hours, thanks to the staff —Melinda McCrary and Evelyn Santos — for your professional efforts to enhance the Museum, and thank you to the very dedicated Board of Directors.

2013 was packed full of accomplishments starting with a brand-new board of directors and officers who have a lot of energy and want to see the Richmond Museum of History and the *Red Oak Victory* be the best of their kind in the country!

The plans for 2013 were to increase membership, recruit more volunteers at the Museum and *Red Oak*, begin the planning to get the engines running on the *Red Oak*, and raise awareness of the Museum and *Red Oak* not only in our community, but across this great country of ours. There are only five historic WWII vessels in the United States and the Richmond Museum owns one of them! How fantastic is that?! We have been successful in our goals of 2013 but still need more volunteers and we plan on expanding our public hours at the *Red Oak*.

Having partnerships with the National Park Service and the City of Richmond is very valuable to the Museum as we work together on a daily basis to promote our wonderful Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park here in Richmond, CA. The Kaiser Shipyards helped create the WWII history for Richmond, and the *Red Oak Victory Ship* is the only example that still exists to share with the world and explain the importance of Richmond in the war effort. To get more people onto the Ship, we have increased the number of movie nights and will continue with the very successful and delicious *Pancake Breakfasts* as well as the very entertaining *July 3rd BBQ and Fireworks* fundraiser.

If you missed the Veterans Day event on November 11th sponsored by Chevron, please plan to come this year. The Riggers Loft was filled with more than 300 people, many in uniform, who were entertained listening to WWII era songs, a few speeches by our dignitaries, and most moving -- the laying of the memorial flowers by those who boarded the *Red Oak* for the closing ceremony. This year, all in attendance will receive a very special 70th Anniversary Pin for the *Red Oak Victory Ship*, which was launched in Richmond in November 1944.

The Museum has had interesting exhibits, including one on Semi-Pro Baseball in Richmond. There have been a lot of good athletes who came out of Richmond, and it was fun to see the pictures and the equipment of days gone by. Thanks to the City of Richmond, the interior of the Museum has been painted and the building looks beautiful. The exterior of the former Carnegie Library continues to shine as a landmark in Richmond's Downtown. Increasing membership and attendance at the Museum is

a key for 2014. We already have had a very successful exhibit this year titled "*For the Love of Our Ship*," which was very well attended and this will be followed by a highly desirable quilt show. Please stop by and visit the Museum throughout the year as the exhibits change, and you will always enjoy reviewing our wonderful history in the upstairs gallery.

If you are not a member of the Museum, please think about becoming a member and supporting our history. You will receive discounts at a variety of events, free entrance to the Museum and *Red Oak* and you also have the opportunity to advertise in *The MIRROR* - \$100 for four publications. This is a good way to advertise your business and to support the Museum. Think about doing it soon.

Hope to see you at the Museum or on the *Red Oak* this year and be sure to tell your friends and neighbors to come visit; they will have a great time.

NEW STAFF MEMBER HAPPY TO BE HERE

by Evelyn Santos

I was just a day shy of my sixth birthday when my family and I hauled our first set of boxes to our new house in Richmond. Though it was foreign territory, Richmond had so much to offer that it quickly began to feel more like a home. Now a few months away from turning 23 and still living in Richmond, I can attest that this city continues to grow on me. I have always been very eager to acquire knowledge, particularly to learn about the origins of thoughts, things and people. On my own, I always wondered about the roots of this city and so I searched. The more I learned about our local history, the more I craved. It thus makes sense why being here at the Richmond Museum of History, and serving as a museum technician, is about one of the most exciting things and biggest honors I have ever been graced with. So I thank everyone involved in getting me here.

Last May I graduated with my B.A. in Psychology and Anthropology from Mills College, located in Oakland, CA. As part of my college experience, I participated in collection management at the Mills Museum and there learned the important process of cataloguing and researching archaeological artifacts. Additionally, I was directly involved in a public interest ethnography of Atchison Village right here in Richmond, which furthered the building of my research, interview and teamwork skills useful to creating a product that is both educational and beneficial to the community as a whole. Though I know I have much more to learn, I am happy to be able to do so here among the history that contributed to Richmond, my home.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. IN WEST COUNTY

by Melinda McCrary

The Richmond Museum Association quietly recognized the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s lecture at Contra Costa College (CCC) on Friday, February 14, 1964. The event was held in the college gymnasium at 8:15 PM and was free to those with a student lecture/program pass and \$1 for everyone else. More than two thousand people packed the sold-out gym that evening to hear Dr. King speak.

A news story by Michael Chegwyn in *The Advocate*, CCC's student newspaper, provides insight into the topics addressed in Dr. King's lecture. He began by stating there were three views of race relations in 1964: the optimistic, the pessimistic, and the realistic. The first two views were both rejected by Dr. King as "attitudes which tell us to do nothing." Dr. King recalled the progress made since 1900 toward equality as he addressed the reality of the civil rights situation. "We have seen the walls of segregation crumble," he said, "and the only question that remains is how costly the segregationists (*sic*) will make the funeral." He went further, asserting segregation was not simply a regional issue and nothing short of direct action, legislation and love were needed to resolve inequality.

Dr. King weighed in on several controversial issues of early 1964 including the assassination of John F. Kennedy the previous November and the Rumford Fair Housing Act of 1964. A fitting tribute to the late President Kennedy, said Dr. King, would be to quickly pass the Civil Rights Act (signed into law later that year on July 2, 1964). He lauded the passage of the California Fair Housing Act, outlawing discrimination toward renters or buyers on the basis of race and warned that the repeal of the law would be a regression for the cause of equality. "The Negro has come a long way on the road to equal rights but he has a long way to go," Dr. King declared.

This was not the first visit Dr. King made to West County. In the early months of 1961, he attended a gathering of the Western Christian Leadership Conference (WCLC) at Easter Hill United Methodist Church in Richmond. The WCLC was a branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization staging non-violent protest towards civil rights reform. In 1961, Reverend Booker T. Anderson was both the pastor of Easter Hill UMC and the Public Relations Officer for the WCLC. Dr. King and Reverend Anderson met while attending Boston University in the 1950s. Additionally, Dr. King was the Executive Director of the SCLC in 1961, a position he retained until his tragic and untimely death on April 4, 1968, at age 39. The trip to Richmond for the WCLC in early 1961 was likely Dr. King's first visit to Northern California. *The Richmond Independent* ran a story with the now-iconic photo of Dr. King at Easter Hill UMC.

Special thanks to Gwendolyn Goodbeer of Easter Hill UMC and Mrs. Irma Anderson for providing information related to Dr. King's visit to Richmond in 1961.

Source: Chegwyn, Michael 1964 *Dr. King Draws 2,000, Demands Negro Equality. The Advocate*, Contra Costa College, February 21, 1964, Volume 10, Number 2, page 1.



Gathering of the Western Christian Leadership Conference at Easter Hill United Methodist Church in early 1961. From left: Dr. Maurice Dawkins, Rev. Booker T. Anderson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Reverend L. Sylvester Odom.

HISTORY HELP FOR ATCHISON VILLAGE

by Marie Kochaver

The History Committee of Atchison Village Mutual Homes Corporation is looking for knowledgeable volunteers to help preserve, organize and catalog their precious archives, including many loose rolls of plans and blueprints, binders of early business meeting minutes and correspondence, scrapbooks, audio tape reels and other items. Atchison Village is considered the premier example of mutual housing on the West Coast and it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Corporation Board of Directors has established a website and newsletter at www.atchisonvillage.org. Take a look at the historical background and History Corner there. Anyone with interest and ability to write grants for archiving, or with time to do it themselves onsite, please contact the office at 510-234-9054 and leave a message for the History Committee, and we will get back to you. Thank you.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Mildred Dornan (10/9/13)

Five Photographs

- Grant School, ca. 1925-6
- (2) Richmond Union High School, ca. 1936/7
- Richmond Builders Exchange Dedication, ca. 1923
- First United Methodist Church Centennial

Mrs. Myrtle M. Silva (11/01/2013)

Eight photo collages of VFW Past Commanders and Ladies Auxiliary (ca. 1923-2008)

Susan McCloskey (12/7/2013)

Newspapers marking JFK Assassination

- *SF Examiner*, 12-1-1963
- *SF Examiner*, 11-25-1963
- *SF Chronicle*, 11-25-1963
- *Oakland Tribune*, 11-25-1963
- *Richmond Independent*, 11-22-1963

Laverna Hubbard (12/11/13)

Front page of *Richmond Independent*, November 22, 1963
Richmond Hi-Nus, A Tribute to President Kennedy (November 27, 1963)

Jesus Gutierrez (12/18/13)

Objects related to the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Richmond Aerie #354

- *Holy Bible*
- Book of Testament and Psalms
- Name tags of Past Presidents

Charles Moore (12/18/2013)

High-quality reproductions of scrapbooks
Joshua Hendy Iron Works "*The War Years*, vol. 1-5"

Dick and Muriel Bruno (1/8/2014)

Shirt Box from Princeton Knitting Mills in Richmond California

Herbert Miles (2/9/2014)

M/S (USS) Blount Official Souvenir Launching Book

Helen Christensen and Tim McLaughlin (1/29/2014)

- Three Felt Letters "R" from Richmond High School and felt circle "26"
- Event Program honoring I.W. Hill (1920-30)
- Mechanics Bank Postcard
- Varsity Letter Sweater, class of 1957
- Richmond Union High School Diploma
- Letter from J. Waldie to F. McLaughlin (1969), City of Richmond
- Photos of Pt. Richmond School and Cal Physics Club

Carol Bledsoe (1/31/2014)

Uniform (slacks, jacket, pins), Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy (1942-1945)

Karen and Glenn Stephenson (2/2014)

AAA Safety Patrol Handbook: How to Organize and Supervise a School Safety Patrol (1950)

Jan Brown for Donald Hardison (2/2014)

Jamie Voorhies Collection of *Fore 'n Aft* newsletters from the Kaiser Richmond Shipyard (1942-1946)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR MEMORIES?

Do you have memorabilia from your past? From Richmond's past? If so, now is the time to talk to the staff of the Richmond Museum Association about preserving your memorabilia and your memories forever by donating it to the place that will honor it, care for it and incorporate it into the story of Richmond.

Memorabilia can be photos, clothing (uniforms?), paper items, toys, almost anything.

Call Melinda McCrary, Executive Director, at (510) 235-7385 or send her a note at info@richmondmuseumofhistory.org.

Do it now.

ITEMS NOT ON DISPLAY

THE GAMEWELL FIRE ALARM TELEGRAPH SYSTEM

by Lynn Maack

Previously I highlighted fundraising and firefighting equipment in the early Richmond Fire Department. Following the firefighting theme, here is a rare item not on display but which relates to another rare item which is on display in the Museum's



Main Gallery. The topic is fire alarms. The item not on display is a critical part of the early fire alarm system in Richmond; it is a 1928-type, triangle punch fire alarm register made by the Gamewell Co.

Here's how the register fit into the picture at the time it was used. The fire alarm system consisted of four parts: 1) the fire alarm box, which was located on the street; 2) the automatic alarm repeater, which was located at the main fire house or central fire alarm office; 3) a fire alarm register, which was located at each fire station, and 4) a fire alarm bell at each fire station.

Alarm boxes were placed on buildings or posts throughout the city. Every alarm box had a number, which was embossed or otherwise placed on the box. Every fire station kept a card file with the number and location of all alarm boxes in the city. To trigger an alarm, one opened the box and pulled a lever. Inside the box were gears and wheels, much like clock works. One gear wheel had teeth spaced in groups according to the box number.



For example, Box 25's gear wheel has two teeth together, then a space without teeth, then a group of five teeth, a longer space, and then the two teeth again. When the alarm lever was pulled, the gear wheel turned, and the teeth were tracked by a spring-loaded lever on the end of which was an angled pointer that rose and fell with each tooth. Each time the lever rose, it sent a signal to the repeater, which boosted the signal and forwarded it to the punch registers at each station. The sequence of signals was the code indicating which alarm box originated the alarm. The register continuously recorded the alarm code by punching a roll-fed paper tape in the code sequence, and then sent the coded signal to fire station alarm bells. The bells rang one time at each signal, such as two rings, pause, five



rings, pause, and then two rings again, then five. The sequence was repeated until the alarm was disengaged. By looking up the code in the card file, each station knew the exact location of the engaged fire alarm box; all stations were on alert, and the nearest

station responded.

John Gamewell of North Carolina was a marketer of fire alarm equipment beginning in 1855, three years after the invention of electric telegraph fire alarms. Over the years, Gamewell acquired the patents to the designs and equipment, and in 1879 formed the Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraph Co. in Newton Upper Falls, MA, establishing the company trademark fist holding lightning bolts. By 1910, Gamewell held 95% of the telegraph fire alarm equipment market. After acquisitions and mergers over the years, Gamewell is now owned by Honeywell as Gamewell-FCI (Fire Control Instruments) and produces state-of-the-art, wired and broadband electronic fire alarm equipment.

The Museum's fire alarm register punches triangle-shaped holes (see closeup of label) along a one-inch-wide paper strip. The unit measures 10-3/16" wide,



5-7/8" deep and 11-3/8" to the top of the paper reel. Affixed to the base is a black tag displaying the name "The Gamewell Co., Newton, Mass.," and the trademark fist holding lightning bolts. Inside, a series of gears, wheels and levers make it work. The reel on the register is the take-up reel; in use, there would have been another, free-standing reel unit supplying the tape.

On display in the Main Gallery are a red alarm box and a repeater unit. The alarm box, Number 24, is a typical example and has instructions embossed on the door for sending an alarm. Standing about six feet tall, the repeater unit is a rarity of early vintage and bears the name "The Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraph Co." on a prominent and decorative brass structural member. It has connections for 10 incoming and outgoing circuits. In the large, steel base are a bicycle-type chain and a cast-iron weight, which somehow activate the unit's mechanical parts. Eight numbered paddles are prominent at the front of the top unit. When an alarm signal comes in, it trips a circuit that then moves one of eight numbered paddles, indicating the fire station area where the alarm box is located. As described earlier, the repeater relays the signal to the stations and the exact box location is determined.



Visit the Museum and marvel at this intricate and beautiful example of Richmond's early fire alarm equipment.

THE *RED OAK VICTORY* PASSES KEY USCG TESTS

by Cliff Warren, Deck Dept. Supervisor

As a part of bringing the Ship back to life, Deck Department Supervisor Cliff Warren is pleased to report that another milestone has been reached regarding the Coast Guard-required Certificates of Inspection (COIs). On March 6, 2014, the Coast Guard inspected and approved water flow and pressure testing of all 19 fire stations located in various areas of the Ship. This testing is to be done every five years.

The Deck Crew has been working with the U.S. Coast Guard since last fall to assemble and test all of the equipment needed for the Ship's Certificate of Inspection. The work included the Coast Guard inspecting each of the 19 stations to verify that all equipment called out on the Ship's fire plan was in place, and then having the Deck Dept. conduct water flow tests at each station to verify all valves operated per USCG regulations. Once the flow tests were completed, the Deck had to pull all fire hoses from their station racks and assemble them for a 100-lb. pressure test to verify the hoses did not have any leaks. You should know that most of our hoses were last tested in 1993, so we were not surprised when three of the 19 hoses tested failed the test. Accordingly, we ordered three new 1-1/2-inch fire hoses to satisfy USCG safety regulations.

We also had to correctly number all stations for the USCG to inspect. Orlo Mellon installed the last hose on Thursday, February 27, for the Coast Guard sign-off on the fire stations for the Ship's COI. In addition to Cliff Warren and Orlo Mellon, the Deck Crew members are Thomas Richardson, Jerry Souza, Robert Hammond and Charlie Stevens.

The Ship's crew continues to work on other Coast Guard-required COIs.



Deck Crew member Orlo Mellon installing the last of 19 hoses needed to equip the Ship's fire stations. Orlo was a Merchant Marine in WWII and a Marine during the Korean conflict.

RED OAK WISH LIST

"If people are downsizing, cleaning out a garage or trying to find a new home for tools, etc., they might become our 'donors' and it could be mutually beneficial," say crew members of the *Red Oak Victory Ship*. "We are excited about the *ROV Wish List* and that it will appear in *The MIRROR*. This has the potential of supplying the *Red Oak* with some needed items."

"Donors can call the Purser on the *Red Oak Victory* at 510-237-2933. If the donor wants to visit the Ship with an item, that would be great. If not, we would arrange to have it picked up."

TOOLS / EQUIPMENT:

- Ladders (4 ft.; 6 ft.; 8 ft.)
- Commercial-grade extension cords
- Garden hose
- Working machinist, mechanic, carpenter or electrician's tools
- Small wood-working lathe
- Painting tools; brushes, drop cloths, roller skins, poles

ITEMS ALWAYS NEEDED:

- 100-watt light bulbs
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Garbage bags / black 55-gallon
- Rags (or clean, worn-out linens or clothing that can be cut up into rags)

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

by Karen Stephenson, Membership Chair

As everyone is aware, all costs are up: office supplies, postage, even nuts 'n' bolts. But with your support, we will forge into the future with positive results being evident at the Richmond Museum of History as well as on the *Red Oak Victory Ship*. Effective April 2014, our membership dues will increase. You will notice that we have the same levels of membership but with new titles: Rheem Ave., Potrero Ave. and more.

Recently, we reached out to more than 600 past members with a request for them to return to our "family." We were gratified by the response. But that is only the beginning.

So, the question is, how can you help? Did you bring a friend or neighbor to a *Pancake Breakfast* aboard the Ship? Did they have a great time? But they are not a member? You could purchase a gift membership for them or forward your *e-MIRROR* so they can complete the membership form. This could also lead to a new volunteer; you know we are always looking for volunteers at both the Museum and the Ship. Just have a couple of hours a month? No problem, we would love to have you. This organization could not have accomplished so many hurdles without the dedication of our steadfast volunteers. Come down to the Museum and see the current exhibit: *For the Love of OUR Ship* — a tribute to our volunteers.

In this issue you can read about the movies aboard the *ROV* as well as pancake breakfasts that offer good food and fantastic views of the San Francisco skyline. I hope to see you at the Museum or aboard the *Red Oak Victory*. Soon.

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And Receive These Benefits:

- ★ Free admission
- ★ Quarterly e-mail newsletter
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- ★ And more:

- ___ \$35 **Rheem Ave** --
Individuals 62 & over and students
- ___ \$50 **Potrero Ave** --
Individuals
- ___ \$100 **Cutting Blvd** --
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**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

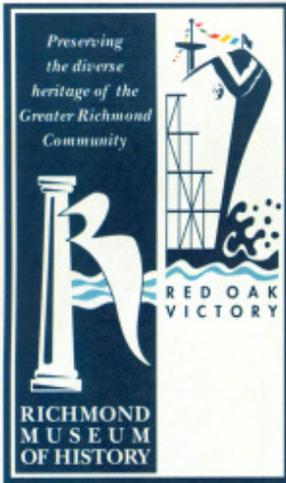
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You are invited
to the
Historic Preservation Awards
Monday, May 12th at 5:30 p.m.
in the City Council Chambers
followed by a Reception at the
Richmond Art Center
This celebration is free and open to all

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

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The MIRROR

Lynn Maack, Editor

Contributors

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

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
redoakvictory.com

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
(510) 235-7387 for information and Tour Appointments
Richmondmuseumofhistory.org