

# THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Summer 2013

## THE *RED OAK* VICTORY SAILS

The *SS Red Oak Victory Ship* will set sail for a Bay cruise on Monday, November 11, Veterans Day. There is a lot of excitement on the Ship and the dock as volunteers continue the work necessary to prepare for the Ship's first sail. And you are invited to come along!

While the cost of a ticket is \$150/person, until July 30<sup>th</sup> you can buy discounted sailing certificates. The sail requires a total of six certificates, purchased at \$20 each, for a total of \$120; a savings of \$30 from the \$150 required after July 30<sup>th</sup>. So get your tickets early. Save money and reserve your space. Call the Ship at (510) 237-2933; cash, checks and credit cards accepted.

## PANCAKE BREAKFASTS ARE BACK ON THE *RED OAK*

The view of San Francisco and Oakland, the usually balmy weather on a lazy Sunday morning, meeting with family and friends -- and on top of all that, a great breakfast for only \$7.00!!!

Breakfast includes pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee and, for a bit extra, mimosas. Children under five are free. After your meal, if you can drag yourself away from the view, you can take a guided tour of the Ship for only \$5.00 more.

Plan to come to every breakfast and bring friends: June 16 (Father's Day), August 11, September 8 (Grandparent's Day), and October 13 (Fleet Week). All are Sundays, and breakfast is served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Ship is open until 3 p.m.



The winners of the 2013 Richmond Historic Preservation Awards, from left to right: Bob Connolly, Mechanics Bank (Award given in 2008 for rehabilitating the Santa Fe Train Master's Bldg. into the Pt. Richmond bank branch), Nancy Strauch for Boat Ramp Street, Lois Boyle, Tom Leatherman, Superintendent of the Rosie National Park, Donna Powers receiving the Home Front Award, Susan Imboden and Nancy Kaiser, East Bay Regional Parks, for the Alvarado Park study, Andre Thierry and Marcy Wong, Architect, for transforming the Oil House into the Visitor Center. See the article on page 3 for details on the awards.

Photo by Ellen Gailing Photography.

## ON THE *RED OAK*: WW II IN THE MOVIES

### 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOME FRONT FILM FESTIVAL

The National Park Service presents the 5th Annual Home Front Film Festival, showing movies of the WW II era on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. This year there is new sound equipment, a new screen and "new" theater-style seats.

The movies are free; there is only a \$5 boarding fee. Popcorn and drinks are \$1.

Thursday, June 13 -- "*In Which We Serve*": Noel Coward and John Mills, 1941

Thursday, June 27 -- "*The Wolf Man*": Claude Rains, Warren William and Lon Chaney, 1941

Thursday, July 11 -- "*Casablanca*": Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, 1942\*

Thursday, July 25 -- "*Lifeboat*": Tallulah Bankhead and John Hodiak, 1944\*

Thursday, August 8 -- "*The Story of G.I. Joe*": Burgess Meredith and Robert Mitchum, 1945

Thursday, August 22 -- "*Dear Ruth*": Joan Caulfield and William Holden, 1946

\*Viewer's choice -- July is viewer's choice month to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the film festival. These were the two films from previous festivals that festival-goers said they most wanted to see.



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS 2013

by Clare Fischer

Once again the Richmond Museum of History was honored on the occasion of the annual ceremony celebrating Richmond's commitment to historic preservation. **Lois Boyle**, Past President of the Richmond Museum Association Board, was recognized for her impressive contribution that has spanned three decades of volunteer activity.

Each recipient received the now-iconic blue "R." This year marks the sixth, and, as with each preceding year, the selection of awardees demonstrates the importance of the diverse ways Richmond's history is remembered. Guests were treated to a festive reception at the Richmond Art Center that included the lively music of Zydeco Magic, the Cajun band of **Andre Thierry**, the first musician to be a recipient of the city's award for preserving the Creole traditions brought to Richmond by his parents when they came to work in the shipyards.

Other awards were given to **Nancy Strauch & Bruce Brubaker** for restoring access to Boat Ramp Street; **Orton Development, Inc. & Marcy Wong, Architect**, for rehabilitating the Oil House for the Rosie the Riveter Visitor Center; the **National Park Service & Signature Communications** for the film "Home Front Heroes," and **Susan Imboden & the East Bay Regional Park District** (Nancy Kaiser accepting) for the Alvarado Park Oral History Project. This year's "Home Front Award" recipient was **Donna Powers** for establishing the Rosie the Riveter Memorial, which was a catalyst for the creation of the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

It is noteworthy that this year's recognition of Lois Boyle's commitment to Richmond's historic preservation represents one more honor for the Museum and the *Red Oak Victory*. Among the recipients of previous awards, several have written books (available for purchase at the gift shops at the Museum and on

the *Red Oak*): Donald Bastin authored an Arcadia book on Richmond's history, Joe Fischer wrote on the Museum's unique collection of World War II children's art, Steve Gilford published a study of Henry Kaiser and home-front workers, and Tom Bottomley wrote an account of the *Red Oak Victory*



Lois Boyle accepting her award. Photo by Ellen Gailing Photography.

in its early years as the "lone survivor." (A second volume by Bottomley is near completion and sale is anticipated in November at the time of the Ship's "sail.")

Other past recipients of the Historic Preservation Awards include George Coles for his preservation of Richmond Native American archeological artifacts; architect Don Hardison (now deceased) was honored for his professional vision in building Richmond's "urbanscape" as well as his pioneer efforts in the restoration of the *Red Oak Victory*. Last but not least, the "Home Front Award" was presented to the Museum last year by the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park for collecting and preserving Richmond's history. It seems that the volunteers at the Museum and on the Ship have earned "bragging rights" for work well done.

See the award ceremony on the City's TV station KCRT (Ch. 28) or online at <http://www.kcrt.com/series/historical-preservation-awards.html>.

Dear Melinda,

Thank you for giving us a tour of the museum. I really liked the obsidian daggers. You were a good leader. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Micah Chen

## 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 docent or greeter.

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 Melinda at (510) 235-7387. All the benefits, no wind in your hair.

# WHAT IS A MUSEUM? WHY BE A MEMBER?

by Karen Stephenson, Membership Chair

Basically, a museum is a building which collects items of significance for conservation and display. Museums have experienced an evolution in how collections are displayed and who has access to those displays. Private collections of wealthy individuals comprised the first museums, such as Ennigaldi Nanna's Museum dating from c. 530 BC. This type of museum did not allow the general public access. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the Age of Enlightenment, the cultural movement of intellectuals led to many museums being established. Probably the most notable of these is the Louvre Museum in Paris. A former royal palace, it opened to the public in 1793. Another outstanding museum, the British Museum in London, opened in 1779. The latter was formed to preserve and maintain collections just as we do today.

As one can see, museums have been in existence for more than 2500 years. The Richmond Museum Association (RMA) was established in 1952 to preserve and maintain collections. Although not in existence for hundreds of years, and smaller in size than the previously mentioned museums, the Richmond Museum of History makes up for size in its varied collection from children's art created during WWII and photographs of Richmond from its earliest days before 1905 to Richmond's rich history before and after the war. This is a good time to mention the *SS Red Oak Victory*, the restored Victory ship that was launched on November 10, 1944, in the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards where

she is currently berthed.

In order for the RMA to continue its tradition of exhibits and educational venues, your support is needed. At this time we are reaching out to each of you to share your support of the Richmond Museum of History with family, friends and co-workers. Would they be interested in supporting us by becoming a member? Have they ever visited the Museum? What about the *Red Oak Victory Ship*? When was the last time you came to the Museum?

Come to the Ship and celebrate our independence. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Red Oak* will have BBQ, karaoke and a view that cannot be surpassed: the San Francisco skyline. And, if that isn't enough, the sky will be ablaze with a first-class fireworks show. You can experience all this for one price of \$25.00.

How else can you support the Museum? The RMA is currently selling sailing certificates for the first sail of the restored *SS Red Oak Victory*. November 11, 2013 has been set as the sail date. Certificates are on sale at the Richmond Museum of History as well as the *Red Oak*.

Every exhibit both on the Ship and at the Museum is possible because of our members and volunteers. Thank you for your continued membership; we couldn't do it without you!

## KAISER RICHMOND SHIPYARDS WIN AT CALIFORNIA HISTORY DAY

by Melinda McCrary

The Richmond Museum Association wants to give hearty congratulations to Ms. Pratyusha Vemuri and Ms. Anusha Vemuri of Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, who were honored at the National History Day California contest for their exhibit: *Richmond Kaiser Shipyards (1941-1946) A New Frontier in Shipbuilding*.

Pratyusha and Anusha visited the Museum in Fall 2012 and spent two days gathering information and photocopying materials for their topic. The young ladies created a tri-fold poster board with the materials detailing the history of the Richmond shipyards and the pivotal role of the shipyards in the greater societal changes that took place after the war.

Pratyusha and Anusha participated in the first stage of competition at the Oakland Museum of California in February. The judges were so impressed with their project that it was advanced to the State-level competition that took place in April in Sacramento. The project was honored with the prestigious California Historic Places Award and was the only selection in the Senior

Exhibit category.

Congratulations to Pratyusha and Anusha on your award and job well done on your exhibit! Thank you also for helping to teach the public the story of the Richmond shipyards.



# RECENT ACQUISITIONS

by Melinda McCrary

Bette Hosinger (February 2013)

Newsletter from Brookside Hospital, "Shield" yearbooks from Richmond Union High School, Dec. '39, June '40 and June '41.

Barbara Keller Mahon (March 2013)

Collection of 87 pieces of TEPCO China (Technical Porcelain and Chinaware Company). Ms. Mahon's father was the artistic director at TEPCO.

Kris Gordon (April 2013)

Three candid photographs of early Richmond, two class photos from Mira Vista School, one wooden puzzle, two Richmond Police Department patches and various newspaper clippings.

Leo Garfield, Richmond Police Chief, Retired (April 2013)

Ten oversized (16"x20") black-and-white photographs of early Richmond including at least one image that was not previously included in the Museum permanent collection.

John Tysell (May 2013)

One blue and gold polyester jacket with "Richmond Exchange Club" from the 1950s.

Chris Wimmer (May 2013)

Pullman Streamliner (1946), Pullman Streamliner (Christmas edition-date unknown).

Officer Anderson (April 2013)

Documents from bomb shelter at Point Molate Naval Fuel Depot, including Department of the Navy publications for civil defense and safety documents.

George Coles (May 2013)

Collection of formal tools from archaeological site CA-CCO-290 on Brooks Island.

Dan Pinto (May 2013)

62 photographs (both black & white and color) of semi-pro baseball in the City of Richmond including El Cortez, the Winter Berkeley League and of the Richmond High Oilers.

El Cerrito Natural Grocery via Tom Panas (May 2013)

One oversized street sign from Amerio Drugs, which was at the SW corner of San Pablo and Panama.

Susan M. Kaiser (May 2013)

One whistle used by Mrs. H.J. Kaiser on July 1, 1944, at the Richmond shipyards, to signal the unveiling of a replica Statue of Liberty at the launch of the last Liberty Ship on the west coast, the *SS Benjamin Warner*. One Shipyard ID badge identifying Edgar F. Kaiser, Sr., as employee #1 at the Todd-California Shipbuilding Corporation, California.

Barbara Pardis, Shelby Baker and Nancy Martin-Baker (May 2013)

One "Flying L" newsletter published on June 13, 1944, at Longfellow Jr. High School.

Michael Mejia (May 2013)

Large collection of ephemera, business advertisements, and personal letters from 1918-1920 associated with Dr. H. Belgum, who operated the Grand Vista Sanitarium in Wildcat Canyon.

Mary Campbell Whaley (May 2013)

Large collection of documents related to Richmond in the 1950s. Several issues of the "Hi-Nus" (Richmond Union High School student newspaper), RUHS Commencement program, RUHS Drama Club show program, ephemera from Harry Ells Jr. High, and two autographed programs from musicals at Richmond Auditorium (Oklahoma and South Pacific).



## ITEMS NOT ON DISPLAY

# THE MCVITTIE SCALE

by Lynn Maack

Another interesting item from the Museum's collection is something most of us probably have in our homes—a bathroom scale. This one was made by Detecto Scale Company. Detecto was started in 1900 as the Jacobs Brothers Scale Company by three immigrant brothers who were in the butcher-supply business in New York City. After a few years, the brothers changed the company name to Detecto, and, for many years, the company produced several types of scales for commercial, industrial and medical use. The product line included baker's dough scales, portion scales, hanging scales, butchers' scales and physician scales. Eventually included in the mix was the common bathroom scale for personal body weighing.



Detecto became well-known and respected for its reliable and accurate scales. In 1981, the Cardinal Scale Manufacturing Company of Webb City, Missouri, acquired Detecto to expand and diversify Cardinal's product line. Cardinal now produces large-capacity scales—heavy-duty truck scales, railroad scales, livestock scales and floor scales, among others—in capacities of 5,000 pounds and over, and Detecto rounds out the line to cover capacities of less than 5,000 pounds.

Scales are known to have been in existence for more than 4,000 years, facilitating commercial transactions from ancient times to today. For most of that time, various types of balance scales were used. The first spring-type scale was attributed to spring-maker Richard Salter of Bilston, England, in 1760. It was just a matter of time before spring-type scales were used for body-weight measurement. By around 1940, technological advancements brought affordable, personal bathroom scales into common use in homes around the world. Now, with further advancements in the digital age, some bathroom scales use electronic sensors and mechanical means other than springs to detect weight. The scale in the Museum's collection is of the spring type and dates probably to the 1940s.

Bathroom scales—so named for the typical location of

# CALIFORNIA HERITAGE COUNCIL AWARD FOR THE RED OAK

The Richmond Museum of History was nominated by William Palmer for an Award of Recognition by the California Heritage Council for the preservation and ongoing restoration of the *SS Red Oak Victory*, Victory Ship VCS-AP2.

The California Heritage Council is a non-profit, educational organization, incorporated in 1959. Its purpose is to call public and professional attention to sites in need of preservation, and to recognize important historical sites and the people instrumental in their preservation by bestowing annual awards. This includes Maritime History.

Their missions are: to educate; to preserve the many significant historic sites which have given quality and distinction to the cultural life of California and which may also be endangered by deterioration or threat of destruction, and to honor those historic buildings whose owners have significantly enhanced the historic values of their properties by appropriate preservation, restoration, or re-use.

Visit their website at [www.californiaheritagecouncil.org](http://www.californiaheritagecouncil.org) to learn more about their organization and view a list of previous awards they have given over the years, several of which relate to maritime history.

personal, home-use scales—sit on the floor and are generally small and low, with room for a person's feet and a measurement dial, which is usually placed between or in front of the feet. The Museum's scale is made of heavy-gauge steel and weighs approximately ten pounds. It has a corrugated rubber mat to stand on and a teardrop-shaped, raised dome between the feet. On top of the dome is a clear plastic window that allows a view of the rotating pounds-measurement dial, which has a capacity of 250 pounds.



The scale was donated by Mary McVittie, life-long Richmond resident and Museum Association member, among other things. Mary's father, James McVittie, was Richmond City Manager in the 1940s. The McVittie Annex U.S. Post Office on Bissell Avenue bears the family name.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Melinda McCrary

I am delighted to report that our museum has been bustling with activity over the past few months! The Richmond Museum of History is delighted to welcome Plinio Hernandez to the team as our newest staff member. (Meet Plinio on page 2.) We are also happy to report that we have welcomed Kris and Grace Beck on board to help us maintain our wonderful facilities. The RMA Board of Directors also created an Executive Director position as we undertake the process of professionalization. We have several new local people who are volunteering their time at the Museum, which is good because we have a newly-relocated gift shop and visitor services welcome station that needs to be staffed during open hours.

The gift shop is now selling used books and accepting donations of gently-used books and periodicals for resale. Have you considered culling some books from your personal library? Have your kids grown up and you still have their children's or young adult books? Then please consider donating them to our gift shop as an additional way of supporting your local museum. We are particularly interested in reselling books with historical themes. The area in the upstairs gallery that was the former theater/gift shop area is now in the planning stages of becoming a kids' corner with interactive exhibits that teach about local history.

Most recently, the Museum was visited by a group of 28 fourth-graders from nearby Ford Elementary School. The young scholars were very excited to visit the galleries and were particularly interested in the temporary exhibit that tells the story of semi-pro baseball in Richmond. Their teacher had worked hard to prepare the students for the visit and the students were very excited to tell me the difference between a fossil and an artifact. We will endeavor to dramatically increase the number of school groups visiting the museum during the 2013-2014 school year.

Finally, the volunteers and staff at the Museum are already planning the exhibit schedule for 2014 and we want to know what you think! Do you have an idea for an exhibit that you would like to see at the Museum? If so, please contact us at info@richmondmuseumofhistory.org because we are really interested in what our members and community have to say.

*Fossil: preserved from a past geologic age*  
*Artifact: something created by humans usually for a practical purpose; an object remaining from a particular period*  
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

# BECOME A MEMBER OF THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

## Privileges:

- ◆ 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

**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**

Ship open Tues, Thurs, Sat, Sun  
10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
1337 Canal Blvd.  
Richmond CA 94804  
(510) 237-2933  
**redoakvictory.com**

**Officers**

John Ziesenhenn, President  
Jeffrey Wright, Vice President  
Marsha Tomassi, Treasurer  
Susan McCloskey, Recording Secty  
Sandi Genser-Maack, Corresponding Secty  
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Leona Derheim, *Red Oak Tree*  
Karen Stephenson, Membership

**Museum Staff**

Melinda McCrary, Director  
Plinio Hernandez, Museum Assistant

**The MIRROR Staff**

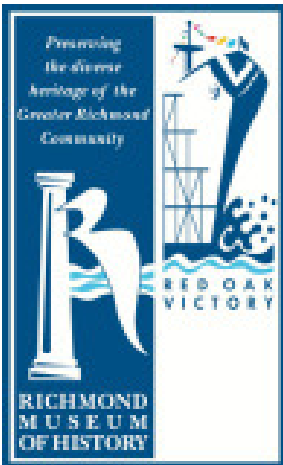
Lynn Maack, Editor  
Sandi Genser-Maack  
Clare Fischer

*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.*

# HELP RAISE THE ANCHOR!

## CERTIFICATES OF INVESTMENT

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. Deadline to buy certificates is July 30, 2013.



**Museum Admission:**

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

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

Children under 5: \$2  
Members: Free

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

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

The Museum is open Wednesday thru Sunday, 1-4 p.m.  
Call (510) 235-7387 for information and tour appointments.  
The Red Oak is open Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Call (510) 237-2933 for information and tour appointments.

Visit us online at: **RICHMONDMUSEUMOFHISTORY.ORG**  
and **REDOAKVICTORY.COM**

Return Service Requested