

THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Richmond Museum of History & Culture

Winter 2021 - 22

SS Red Oak Victory

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING VIA ZOOM

The Richmond Museum Association's Annual Meeting will be held February 27, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom. We have decided, out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19 variants looming large in our society, to hold this year's meeting online, rather than in-person. Members please plan to attend and hear about the past year and what the future holds for the Museum and our Ship, *SS Red Oak Victory*.

We will begin with the business portion of the meeting by describing activities during the past year and our plans for the coming year and beyond, followed by a presentation of the RMA's financial picture. An important item of business will be the presentation of a slate of candidates for RMA Board seats for consideration. We will hold an election that will, we hope, fill five open seats on the board. The candidates are Jeff Butler, Andrew Butt, Oscill Maloney, Maria Veri, Mimi Vitetta. The candidates' brief bios are on page 2.

After the business meeting, Board Secretary Karen Buchanan and RMA member Daniel Butt will present a slideshow of early Richmond maps and place names. If you have seen one of Karen's history presentations, you know they're worth sticking around for. Be ready to be entertained and probably learn something you didn't know about Richmond's history.

We will send a meeting invitation to all members two weeks before the meeting. The notice will contain an agenda and the link to the online Zoom meeting. We hope to "see" you there.

IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month. The RMA acknowledges and honors African Americans as instrumental in the evolution and development of our country. As a small token of our acknowledgment, we present a story of a black man and the contribution that few people even realize came from an African American. Please see the story on page 2, provided courtesy of Tamara Shiloh, owner of the **Children's Multicultural Bookstore** in Richmond.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MELINDA MCCRARY BIDS FAREWELL

The Board of Directors would like to thank Melinda McCrary for her nine years as Executive Director of the Richmond Museum Association. Melinda has decided to move on to a full-time position with another museum, which is great for her as the Richmond Museum was a part-time position. Her last day was December 31, 2021.

Over the past nine years, Melinda has helped lead the transition from a former volunteer Executive Director position, held by Lois Boyle, to a paid staff position that we hope will eventually be a full-time position with the Museum being open for more hours each week for visitors to enjoy and learn about our rich history.

In addition to the day-to-day overseeing of 400 Nevin Ave., Melinda organized significant annual fundraisers for the RMA at the Richmond Country Club, the Galileo Club and Rockefeller Lodge to raise money for the *Red Oak Victory* ship and the Museum and generated a lot of interest and support for the organization. She also worked with the West County School District to get more grammar-school children visiting the Museum and learning about Richmond and West County's history. Involving the neighborhood was also important for the success of the Museum, and one event in particular—Day of the Dead—was an annual event that had the neighborhood children creating beautiful art that was put on display.

Melinda also curated the Seaver Gallery Exhibits which were engaging, educational and entertaining. Some of the subjects in the temporary exhibitions, to name a few, were: History of the Richmond Fire Department, Richmond Baseball Teams, Jews in Richmond, Richmond's Chinese Shrimpers and their shoreline camps, the Black Panthers, and an excellent exhibit that was cut short by COVID in March of 2020, the Laotian traveling exhibit, "Between Two Worlds" (which we hope to rerun in the future). The attendance for all of these exhibits was fantastic, and more people were made aware of the Richmond Museum in the beautiful former Carnegie Library.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Lynn Maack

With the New Year bringing everyone hope for a better year than the last two, in the wake of Melinda McCrary's departure, the Museum has new energy in the air with its Interim Executive Director Desiree Heveroh. If that name sounds familiar, it's because Desiree is a Richmond-grown native. The Board of Directors is excited to have a fresh perspective from a Richmond local. There are some challenges to be sure; with Covid and its variants taking the world on its rollercoaster, the Museum has been open to the public only a handful of times. Aside from the obvious financial impact this has, Desiree thinks it's such a shame that people haven't been able to come to see what history we have to offer—especially the exciting addition to the collection—“Richmond Industrial City,” the mural by Victor Arnautoff!

Ever hopeful that we can “teach an Old institution New tricks,” Desiree has plans for bringing some virtual interaction to the city that she loves so much. We are hopeful to re-open to the public in March, but she has some fun ideas for Social Media in the meantime, so like us on Facebook, renew your memberships, sign up to volunteer and make sure to stop by to say hello. 2022 offers new chances for new ideas, people and outreach!

And don't forget, the Ship, SS *Red Oak Victory*, is open on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We need volunteers now more than ever, especially painters! Chipping, sanding, priming and painting are the orders of the day. We'd appreciate your help.

Thank you to all who have supported us these past two challenging years; we couldn't have made it without you.

Melinda McCrary (Continued from p. 1)

Probably Melinda's most significant contribution to the Museum and the citizens of Richmond was finding the Victor Arnautoff mural “Richmond Industrial City” that hung at the Richmond Post Office from 1940-1976 and was found in the basement of the Post Office rolled-up in storage. She negotiated a 25-year loan with the U.S. Postal Service, and the Museum took possession in September 2015. Significant restoration work was required in order to display the historical mural with the work being done by FACL (Fine Art Conservation Laboratories, Inc.) in Santa Barbara. With Melinda's supervision, the work is now completed and on display in all its beauty. However, with COVID restrictions, the Museum was not able to celebrate it properly. Stay tuned, because when the time is right, there will be a celebration to unveil this extraordinary mural.

As we move forward into 2022, we thank Melinda McCrary for her contributions to the Richmond Museum Association, the Richmond Museum of History and Culture and the Citizens of Richmond.

For Black History Month

DR. GEORGE GRANT TEEING UP FOR GOLF

By Tamara Shiloh

We have great memories when we think of golf. The young Tiger Woods coming on the scene as the youngest and only Black golfer to break most of golf's recorded victories. And, Charlie Sifford, the first African American pro golfer to play in the PGA.

However, one of the most notable accomplishments in golf for an African American is the golf tee created by African American, Dr. George Franklin Grant.

Imagine having to carry around dirt so that before you hit the ball you had to prepare a small mound of dirt to elevate it. Not a pleasing thought. You can thank Dr. Grant for that innovative idea.

George Franklin Grant was born in in Oswego, New York in 1847. After a dispute with his father, he left home. However, this would prove to be the move that would catapult his life towards success. His dental career began in his hometown, working for a dentist as an assistant and running errands. Wanting more in life, Grant chose Boston as his next destination. At age 21 he enrolled in Harvard Dental School, the first university-based dental program in the nation. Grant graduated with honors in 1870, making him the second African American to earn a degree in dentistry.

He was hired by the Harvard Dental School, and this would be where his innovative skills would evolve. He received international acclaim for the development of inserts for patients with cleft palates. His next move was opening his own dental practice.

Grant loved to play golf and his daughter Frances would caddie for him at times. He lived and played in the Boston suburb of Arlington Heights, where he built a meadow course next to his country home. As much as he loved playing golf, he hated the messy and unsanitary process of teeing up the ball by pinching moist sand to make a tee. Doing that 18 times every time he played was annoying enough for him to come up with an invention that would forever have an impact on the game.

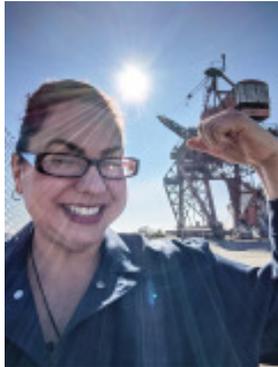
On Dec. 12, 1899, Dr. Grant received a U.S. patent, No. 638,920, the world's first patent for a golf tee – a wooden spike with a flexible rubber peg for the ball. Because his invention only reached a small audience, it would be decades before he was recognized for it. In 1991, nearly a century after his patent, the United States Golf Association finally gave Grant recognition for his contribution to the game of golf.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Desiree Heveroh

I'm a Keeper ... no really! Prior to the pandemic, I ran Visit Richmond for several years, often dressed as Rosie the Riveter when staffing a booth to tell groups of people why they should "Visit Richmond" and its deep history. I loved being a spokesperson for my city.

The last few years, my city has really shown its love for me. Within two weeks of Visit Richmond closing due to the pandemic, I moved on to East Brother Light Station to serve 14 months as the Light Station Keeper. Two days after I left the Island, I started my new position as Ship Keeper aboard SS *Red Oak Victory*. Sitting in my cabin, I remembered eight years previous, sitting in that very same room meeting that year's new Ship Keeper, Oscill Maloney, thinking to myself how amazing it was that she got to have this kind of adventure, only to be sitting in that very position, in that very room, starting my own.



Desiree Heveroh, Interim Executive Director, RMHC

A few months later, I got a call to see if I would be interested in being Interim Executive Director of the Museum. I had served on the Board for four years once upon a time ago, so I was very familiar with both the Ship and the Museum. I gave it genuine thought because I didn't want to let the Museum down if I couldn't handle it. I take these responsibilities very seriously. The word "Interim" made me feel safe enough to give it my best shot, and the rest, as they say, was History! (great pun intended).

It seems Richmond truly loves this native girl because it has been so generous with trusting me as the Keeper of its Historic Places. No situation has been "perfect"; the Island lost power for two months and the challenges involved were many. The Ship gets cold and leaky in the rains, so many buckets get emptied. The Museum needs a lot of catching up to the virtual world that has been taking over since the pandemic. A concept I embraced at the Light Station when the power was out is that the "bad stuff" IS the good stuff. Those are the stories you tell and can laugh about when they are behind you. I'm in those times, and with each accomplished goal I am more grateful to Richmond for believing in me enough to present so many unique opportunities. I hope to always be worthy of them.

Looking forward, the Museum plans to reopen in early March, so stay tuned for word of the actual date. I hope to see you soon.

MEET THE RMA BOARD CANDIDATES

Here are the candidates for RMA Board membership to be presented for election at the Annual Meeting on February 27, 2022.

Jeff Butler

Jeff Butler is a Senior Vice President and Commercial Banker at City National Bank in Walnut Creek. City National Bank is a \$100B national Bank headquartered in Los Angeles with local offices in Walnut Creek, San Francisco, Palo Alto and San Jose and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) in Toronto. In this position he is responsible for managing a portfolio of commercial banking clients (across most industries) as well as for growing the portfolio by partnering with middle market (\$50MM-\$500MM revenues) companies in northern California.

Jeff lives in Richmond with his wife, Rose, a retired Executive Secretary with the State of California and Boston Terrier, Milo, a five-year-old rescue dog from Berkeley Animal Care Services, an organization that Jeff and Rose continue to support. Whenever possible he enjoys swimming at the Richmond Plunge and having lunch or dinner at one of Point Richmond's many fine restaurants. Prior to living in Richmond he lived in Berkeley for three years and in San Francisco for 15 years before that. Over these years he worked for leading companies in commercial banking, commercial finance and financial investments. A native of the Philadelphia area, Jeff is a graduate of Cornell University (MBA) and Colby College (BA). He currently serves on the Board of the Richmond Promise and is excited to be on the Board of the Richmond Museum Association contributing as one of its five new Board Members.

Andrew Butt

Andrew Butt is a licensed architect and Managing Principal at Interactive Resources, a Richmond-based design firm specializing in public sector work with an emphasis on sustainable and environmentally-sensitive design. He has served on a number of local non-profit boards, and is a founding member and President of Point Richmond Music, and current board president of Richmond-based Early Childhood Mental Health Program. Andrew served on the El Cerrito Planning Commission for 4 years, and the Richmond Planning Commission for 8 years, serving as chair and vice-chair, respectively.

Andrew grew up in Point Richmond, attending local public schools, and has a deep appreciation for history, and in particular Richmond history. He was the architect of record for several local award-winning historic preservation projects including Nystrom Elementary School (now part of the Rosie the Riveter WWII National Historical Park), Alten Construction, Historic Bank of Richmond, and his own home in Point Richmond.

(Continued on p. 6)

FROM *RED OAK VICTORY*

By Fred Klink, Chairman, Ship's Executive Committee

These articles usually talk about interesting events, musical performances, and special guests who make *Red Oak Victory's* public programs such a success in the active months of the year. On the other hand, the winter months may seem like a dormant time for the Ship, as if we've gone into hibernation. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, our crew works hard all year 'round, but the winter gives us an opportunity to do major repairs, inspections and upgrades since we have fewer visitors. In this article, I will describe some of that work and, more importantly, some of the vital members of the crew who continue to work through the cold and rain of the winter months.

Makeover time:

In the last couple months, a great deal has been done to improve the appearance of the Ship. We've scraped away some rusted areas, then primed and painted with a new, fresh coat of haze-gray paint. And have you taken a look at the wooden doors? Our new carpenter, Michael Curran, has repaired some of the door frames, and Richard Gugelmann and Robert Wright have sanded and revarnished the doors so they now look like the day they left the shipyard 77 years ago!



Port-side of the wheelhouse with refinished door, freshly painted bulkhead, and new threshold. (Photo by Fred Klink)

Winter brings rain and rain brings surprising new leaks that intrude into some of the cabins. On a ship, the leaks don't come from directly overhead. That would be too easy! Water may leak in at one point and travel quite a distance before finding a way to drip down to the next deck and then find another path to go

down even further. Backtracking these leaks is no easy task but our crew, led by Deck Department Head Kim Abbott, has been hard at work tracing them back to the source and repairing the damage. If you are a frequent visitor to the Ship, you have probably noticed some areas that are roped-off because of through-and-through rust on the deck surface. Good news—those areas have been repaired by our welding crew and given a new coat of paint.



Chief Electrician Sonny Hanson (foreground), and Paul Laput run new cable in Hold No. 5. (Photo by Fred Klink)

A ship like *Red Oak Victory* has thousands of yards of electrical wiring. The next time you're on board, just look over your head in any of the corridors in the deckhouse to see some of that cabling supported from the overhead. Navy veteran Sonny Hanson and his team of electricians are tasked with maintaining all of that wiring plus other electrical fixtures and lighting on the Ship. They've been busy over these winter months with new wiring in Hold No. 5, aft steering, the engine room and the deck house, plus emergency lighting upgrades and charging of the batteries.

As you know if you are a loyal *Red Oak Victory* follower, our goal is to have the Ship underway and taking passengers on the Bay. Chief Engineer Greg Blasquez and his engineering staff work diligently many hours per week toward this goal. In recent months they have repaired and upgraded critical pumps, fuel tanks, condensers and generators related to the engine and other functions of the Ship. In addition to heading up the Engineering

(Continued on p. 5)

Red Oak Victory (Continued from p. 4)

Department, Greg is one of our best ambassadors, as shown by his recent hosting of Richmond Mayor Tom Butt and a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard officials for a behind-the-scenes tour of *Red Oak Victory*.

Greg's team is also essential in keeping our Ship in compliance with regulatory agencies (see the next section).

Staying in Compliance:

The Ship has to maintain compliance with many government regulatory agencies in order to continue our operations and to entertain passengers on board. This is a very complex series of regulations, permits and inspections which are invisible to the average visitor but essential for your safety and enjoyment of the Ship while you're on board. All of this is very capably overseen by our Compliance Officer, Dee Davison.

The U.S. Coast Guard recently conducted inspections of the Ship's functions, including emergency equipment. This inspection resulted in renewal of our annual Certificate of Inspection (COI), which is the critical document that allows us to bring visitors on board the Ship. The Vessel General Permit (VGP), the Certificate of Financial Responsibility (COFR), and the Notice of Intent in regard to the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act were all completed toward the end of 2021. We are now looking at upgrades to the Vessel Security Plan (VSP), by which we hope to gain approval for overnight stays by guests on the Ship. Betcha didn't know how much paperwork and man-hours are needed just to stay in compliance with government regulations!

Volunteers Needed!

COVID has had a significant impact on our volunteer staffing. A total of 8,772 volunteer hours were contributed to maintaining and operating the Ship during 2021. The good news is that this is up slightly from 8,311 volunteer hours in 2020. But it is well below our historical, pre-COVID levels of volunteer time, which were almost double these values, or nearly 16,000 hours per year.

Our Volunteer Coordinator Mandy Torres has done a fine job of reaching out to the community and recruiting many new volunteers for the Ship's crew. ***We need your help to bring our volunteer crew back up to full staffing levels!*** We don't require any maritime experience, nor do we need you to have trade skills. As mentioned above, scraping, sanding and painting are some of our biggest and most important tasks. All materials, safety equipment and training will be provided if you want to help out your favorite Victory ship with these important tasks.

Of course, if you do have trade skills, such as welding, electrical work, plumbing, sheet metal fabrication, etc., you will be more than welcome on our crew as well. And don't forget that we also need marketing, commercial artwork, web content development, recruiting and event planning!

If you want to be a member of our crew in any capacity, please email mandy@redoakvictory.us and tell us what you'd like to contribute.

So What about 2022?

In the next few weeks, we'll be announcing another Matching Funds Donation Program. Many of you contributed to our matching funds campaign last year and helped us raise over \$10,000 in just a few short weeks. That was such a success that we're going to do it again! Watch our website, social media pages and marketing emails for details. (If you are not on our mailing list, please drop us a line at info@redoakvictory.us, provide your name and email address, and we'll add you to the list.)

For 2022, we plan a full program of events on the Ship. The following is our tentative schedule; again, keep an eye on our website, social media and emails for details as they become available:

Pancake Breakfasts:

- o May 8 (Mothers Day)
- o June 19 (Fathers Day)
- o August 14
- o September 11 (Grandparents Day)
- o October 9 (Fleet Week).

Plus our Spring Swing Dance: June 4

July 3 Fireworks

Fall Music Fundraiser: October 22

We hope to see you at one or all of our events. Come on down; you'll be glad you did.



Lying down on the job! Red Oak Victory welders Mike Nagamoto (left), and Stanley Buck repair areas of the bridge deck that have rusted through. (Photo by Fred Klink)

Board Candidates *(Continued from p. 3)*

Oscill Maloney

Oscill Maloney is currently an active volunteer onboard SS *Red Oak Victory* as one of the Ship Keepers and also as a member of the Engine Room crew. In November of 2017, Oscill obtained her U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). She has been working and training with the Chief Engineer and other Engine Room crew members in performing repairs, overhauls and maintenance of various equipment and steam turbine engineering plant systems. She is proud to have been part of the crew who went to the California Maritime Academy in Vallejo in July of 2018 and lit-off SS *Red Oak Victory's* steam plant for the first time in 50 years! Oscill has lived in Richmond and the San Francisco Bay Area for over 20 years. She attended Humboldt State University, earning a degree in Business Administration. She has also worked for many years in the field of Civil Engineering, specifically in highway construction roadway materials research at U.C. Berkeley and U.C. Davis. She is excited to serve on the RMA Board and be part of a great team to preserve and interpret our valuable history. She looks forward to continuing to move ahead on the RMA's goal to get the last surviving ship built right here in Richmond, operational once again. Steady as she goes.

Maria Veri

Maria Veri is a Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at San Francisco State University, where she has taught courses on culture, history, and social justice in sport for twenty years. She also serves on the Governing Board of the Center for Sport & Social Justice at Cal State East Bay. She lives in the North & East neighborhood of Richmond with her partner, Xochitl, a labor lawyer, and has been a Bay Area resident since 1999. She originally hails from Syracuse, NY. Her interests include cooking, movies, music, and sports.

Mimi Vitetta

Mimi Vitetta lives in Richmond, California, where she works as a freelance archivist and librarian. She is currently a Library Commissioner for the City of Richmond. She has an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute with a specialty in photographic media, and is in her last semester at SJSU, where she is finishing her Master's in Library and Information Science. She has volunteered at the Richmond Museum of History and Culture as a cataloguer as well as held a position as Museum Educator coordinating and hosting history tours for various schools in the surrounding areas. She is particularly enthusiastic about the collection of historic photos at the Museum and she looks forward to discovering more in that realm. With regard to information science, she is deeply interested in how our museums and libraries tell each person's story through a collection of memories, and then how we can build those individual memories into a collection that speaks about the identity of our community. Her focus is grass-roots archives—she is currently working with Atchison Village to help them build their corporate archive. She is looking forward to working on the Board and helping the Richmond Museum of History and Culture develop even more amazing programs for our community.

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 (N95 only, 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 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
- Paint, paint, and more paint!

To donate these items, contribute to their purchase, request more information about them, or volunteer to become a crew member, email us at info@redoakvictory.us.

Thank you for your help and support!

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 continue sprucing up our garden area:

- New or gently-used hand tools for the garden including shovels, spades, hoes, claws, clippers.
- Clean garden work gloves
- Wheelbarrow
- Clean buckets
- Ceramic flowerpots and/or garden decorations
- Unopened bags of compost and mulch

If you can donate these items, contribute to their purchase or volunteer, please call the Museum at (510) 235-7387, or email Interim Museum Director Desiree Heveroh at desiree@richmondmuseum.org.

Thank you for your help and support!

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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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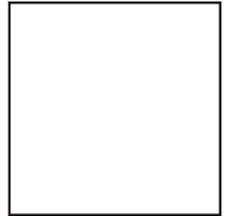
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Join at www.richmondmuseum.org or mail a check to RMA at:

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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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Karen Buchanan, Secretary

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