

THIS POINT.....in time

NEWSLETTER

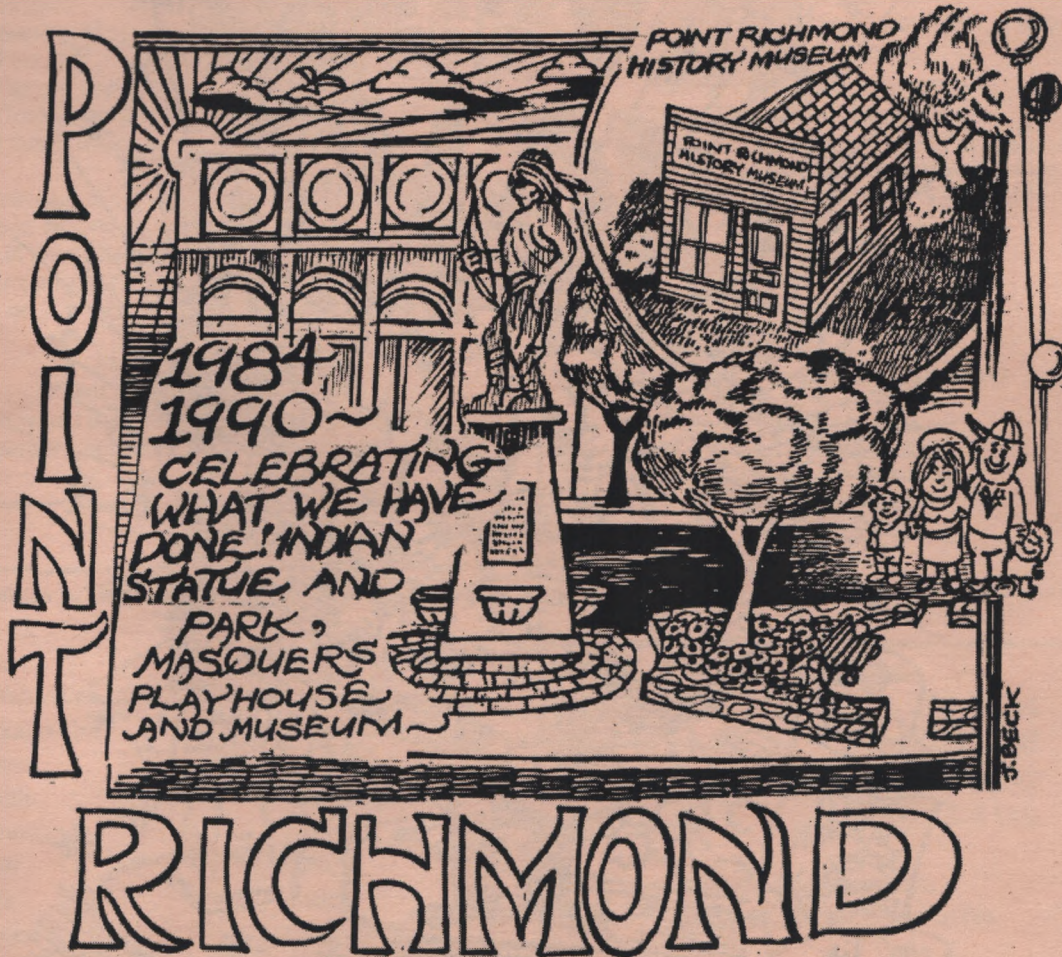
The Point Richmond History Association

www.alkos.com/prha

Vol. XVIII No. 3

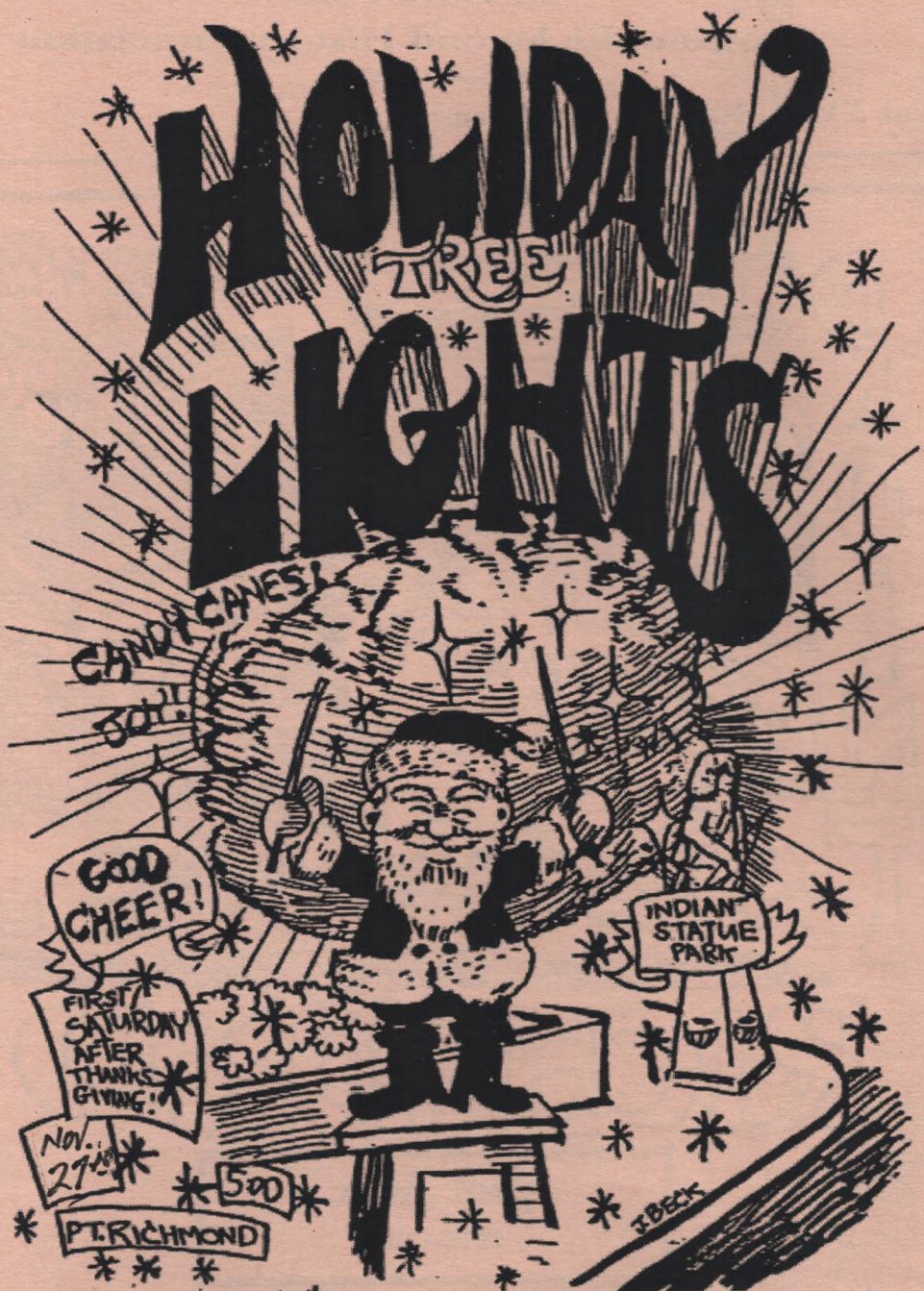
November, 1999

\$1.50



Joel Beck

1943-1999



Above Artwork by the late Joel Beck done in 1995, touched up for 1999

From The President

Mid Dornan

Inquires often come in from people interested in early Richmond. I use this means to jog some of your memories.

A reader wants to know what year or time period Golden Gate Avenue was separated making it an upper and lower street at Contra Costa to Clarence Street. Or, was it originally built as a divided street?

Also, a bottle has been found inscribed 'Richmond Soda Works, Point Richmond'. Does anyone recall where this was located? The inquirer has a bottle from the Wonder Bottling Company, thought to have been located around 42nd Street.

What information or pictures does anyone have on the house at 222 Tunnel? Built in 1901, owned at one time by Elizabeth Gnaga, the house is being remodeled by new owners who would like more information.

How grateful we are to Donna Roselius for recording Point Richmond History in her illustrated books.

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Thank you to the following members
who have renewed their memberships:

June Minor
John T. Knox
Pat Dornan
Mike & Marilyn Chartock
Mr. & Mrs. J.S. Byers
Jerry & Theresa Daniel
Marian Hawkins
Marion Voigt
Beatrice (Beesley) Casey
Alyce K. Williamson
Don Amantite
Lucile Meyer
Otto R. Barni
Fred Beesley
Evelyn Neville Macdonald
Barbara & Jeff Ward
Jan & Bob Burdick
Richard Dowell
Jim & Florence Wilson
Velma Healy
James Foulds
Thomas Mercer Hursh
Spiro Cakos
Ann Hanzlik

And a warm welcome to the following
new members:

Margaret Colburn
Paula H. Wolper

*Museum Staff Coordinator Betty
Dornan thanks these volunteers
who staffed the History Building
during September and October:*

Lyle Fisher
Dody Perry
Anita Christiansen
Mid Dornan
Bruce Bartram
Virginia Cherniack
Chano Forner
Avis Blanchette

Thank You!
Santa Fe Market
and
Point Richmond Market
for their donated distribution of
"THIS POINT....in time

If you can help staff our History Building
(2½ hours per month) call museum Staff
Coordinator Betty Dornan at 232-4317.

Museum Hours:

Thursday	11:30am - 2:00pm
Saturday	11:30 - 2:00pm

Gary's Column

Gary Shows

Here is the November issue of TPIT, the only one month issue. We do this to begin coverage of the busy holiday season.

Special thanks to Harold Shawl for a wonderful memory article, and to Dennis Scheaffer for a delightful contemporary article. These are the things that "make" this newsletter. And of course we all appreciate the work of our regulars, thanks! Thank you to David Vincent for the Joel Beck cartoons.

Sadly, you will find a memorial to Royce Ong's cat 'Happy Boy'. This animal meant the world to Royce. 'Happy' was killed by a dog being walked by its owner. This is the third such incidence that has happened in my neighborhood. Please folks, when you walk your dog use a leash, there are a lot of cats in Point Richmond.

Special welcome to new Point Richmond residents Aaron Stephenson and Bradley Burghardt. They come to the Point from Michigan, Aaron is an employee at my Berkeley office supply business.

Have a great Thanksgiving, and look forward to seeing you at the Tree Lighting.

The deadline for the December/January issue is Friday November 26th with an anticipated date of assembly of December 9th.

Thanks to the September/October issue assembly crew:

Pam Wilson
Mid Dornan
Jerry Cerkowicz
Gary Shows
Betty Dornan
Liz McDonald
Sonja Darling
Mary Highfill
Mary Rudolph

*Thanks to Spiro Cakos
for a Exxon Cultural
Matching Gift Program
donation and thank you to
Exxon for matching it!*

The Cover:
**"Point Richmond" cartoon drawing
by the recently passed Joel Beck.**



A-Mid TRIVIA

-Mid Dornan (510-234-5334)

Question: SPAM is a food many veterans returning from WWII never wanted to eat again. It is an acronym from what words? Answer at end of Trivia.

What do you get if you divide the circumference of your pumpkin by its diameter? You get Pumpkin In.

The Community Thanksgiving Feast will again be given at the Point Methodist Church on Thanksgiving Day. If you live alone, are here without family, are homeless or needy or just want someone to share the day, this day is for you. Food is donated by church members and local merchants and friends and the 18 plus turkeys are cooked by Chuck Wise at the Baltic. It is a community event and everyone is invited to worship briefly at 11:30 before the noon meal. If you would like to contribute or help or want more information, contact Claudia LeGue at (510) 215-1813.



Looking for Carla's Point Richmond Travel office? They have relocated to 147 West Richmond Avenue, Suite "C".

Grand Opening of Point Richmond Travel and Dewitt Gallery will be Thursday, November 11th, 4 - 8 p.m. Stop by and register for prizes and refreshments.

Do you belong to the Point Neighborhood Council? For only \$5 you can be a member. The dedicated officers and members are interested watchdogs who spend many hours protecting and refining what is acceptable to preserve the neighborhood you chose to live in.

Anger is only one letter short of danger.

Time flies? Ten years since the Loma Prieta earthquake? And eight since the Oakland hills fire storm!! Horror memories for many.

It was a special 80th birthday for Mary Forbes who celebrated it in Maui, Hawaii (a present from daughter Cyndy). Accompanying her to Hawaii were her daughters Debbi and husband, Ron and granddaughter Caitlin; Cyndy and husband Bill; Kathi and granddaughter Marianne and grandson Jimmy. Also, long time friend Brenda McKinley. "A wonderful time was had by all," beamed birthday celebrant, Mary, who sported a pale blue sweatshirt imprinted with her birthday and included all the family names.

THANK YOU BETTY MARSHALL for the framed picture which included two Point Richmond scenes along with our History

Museum photo. Can be seen in the history building.

If you ask precocious, almost-two-year-old Hailea where her daddy is, she says, "Bosnia". Ask her what he does and she answers, "Keeping Peace!"

Hailea and her mother Kerrie Boykin from Fort Riley, Kansas, are visiting Mary and Vic Highfill, who are Grandma and Grandpa as well as Great-grandma and Great-grandpa.

The 100 block on West Richmond Avenue is blossoming into a fascinating shopping area. There is *Guillermina* with its Asian Art and Antiques, Petra's *Hydranga Flowers and Gifts* with hundreds of goodies displayed along with her garden of flowers. Now add *The DeWitt Gallery* with Jim's unique commissioned paintings of boats, cards, mugs, shirts and ties etc., then end up at the *Santa Fe Market* with their homey couch, surrounded by flower boxes, to sit and enjoy the atmosphere.

The Ivy wall of the Freeway on Tewksbury is resplendent in fall colors.

Overheard, "You know you are older if all your house plants are alive!"

The Blue Angels added a touch to the already perfect day in a spectacular setting at Tom and Shannon McGowan's Point Beach and Rowing Club party given to honor recently wed Dan and Eileen Damon. The Methodist Church guests felt this was pretty close to heaven!

He who laughs, lasts.

Don't overlook the Red and White Ferry service from Richmond to San Francisco daily.

Follow freeway directions and enjoy a leisurely trip on the Bay!

Those Roosevelt Junior High students who remember Counselor Fred Fogg should know he is still involved in "good deeds" giving unselfishly of his time, talents and finances and has formed his own small nonprofit organization - Aid to Others, or AIDO. He distributes over \$4000 a year, (mostly his own money) and mostly to west Contra Costa's poorest schools. He takes no salary and spends little time fund-raising. He gives out of his heart with no strings attached, just the JOY of giving!

Replacing the annual Messiah, the Methodist Joyful Noise Choir and Orchestra will present the Christmas Oratorio on Saturday, December 11th at 7:00 P.M. This is their gift to the community as a thank you for all the support during the year.

KEEP BILLBOARDS OFF THE NEW RICHMOND PARKWAY!!



Choir Director Virginia Cherniak has had more than her share of "down" time being ill. Hopefully, this is IT for the season as the church choir prepares for the Christmas season.

Edna Hathaway is finally home in Hanford slowly recuperating after by-pass heart surgery. She had to miss the Annual Country Faire at the Methodist Church!!

Washington School now has 400 students with a waiting list! And Tom McGowan has been successful securing the 70 needed classroom sponsors. (Was there ever a doubt?)

CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING IN THE SPIRIT IT WAS FOUNDED

ANSWER: SPICED HAM



Local Election—November 2

By the time this goes to print, the local Council and West Contra Costa Unified School District election will be over and candidates elected. Because of the predicted small turnout, only one precinct in the Point was at Washington School. For future reference, the following were candidates:

CITY COUNCIL *(Twelve candidates, ten men two women. Five to be elected, one vacancy with Councilwoman Donna Powers choosing not to run, having moved to Martinez.)* Joe Brown, Tom Butt * **, Ellie Strauss **, Gary Bell, Nat Bates *, Alex Evans *, Jim Rogers, Mindell Penn, Dale Paulson, Courtland Corky Booze, Steve Harvey (youngest in the race and who actually went door-to-door in the Point), and Karen Ortega.

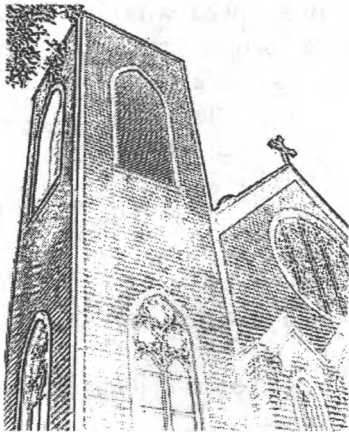
At a candidates forum, Councilman Tom Butt noted there were five in the race with the last name beginning with the letter 'B' commenting 'could politics be in the genes of B's!' Councilman Alex Evans began his talk referring to them as the "Killer B's"

** lives in the Point * incumbent

SCHOOL BOARD OF WCCUSC *(two to be elected)* Patricia Player, John Cruger-Hansen, Bob Dabney, Ronald C. Bolden. Sr., Martin S. Gottlieb, K. Henning, George A. Harris III, Adrienne Harris-Pitts *

* incumbent

Church News



Our Lady of Mercy

Dee Rosier
232-1387

As Mr. Rogers used to say, "it was a beautiful day in the neighborhood," for our annual BBQ on September 5th. The day started off with a late Mass. Choir member, Claudia, and her friends set the tone for the day with a concert of hymns that shook the rafters. Chano Forner and John Gerk cooked the steaks to perfection. The usual trimmings complimented the meal. Many new faces were present as well as the regulars, which led to a day of pleasant chatter and renewal of acquaintances. Pt. Richmond businesses were very generous in supporting the day with extraordinary gifts. It was a lucky day for Rita Esquivel who held many of the winning tickets. A great hand of gratitude to all who helped make it a successful

day. A dinner of appreciation for the helping hands will be held at the Hotel Mac, with the date yet to be set. The day brought in a profit of \$4,200 after bills.

We mourn the unexpected death of Father Pascual Ramirez who died in an automobile accident on September 9. Father Pascual was associate pastor at St. Cornelius from 1994-1997 when he then became pastor of Santa Paula Church in Fremont. He was 42 and he had a faithful following. Nearly 1500 attended his funeral mass at St. Cornelius. He was an accomplished guitarist and singer. He had also composed several songs that have become part of the repertory at St. Cornelius and St. Marks. Translated from Spanish, his favorite saying was, "It's not about getting there first, it's how you get there." Remember him in your prayers.

Our newest parish member is Patrick Neal Meagher, who was baptized on September 26. Patrick is the son of Dai and Susan Meagher and is a regular attendee at Sunday Mass. We all look forward to his friendly smiles.

Every group has several core people who are always there to lend a helping hand. Our parish assemblies have been taken care of by Amelia Drake, Angie Kirkpatrick and Shirley Gerk. They see to the coffee, goodies, table decorations, as well as cleanup. They have decided to retire and a new set of ladies will try to fill their shoes, which will not be an easy task. Their last parish assembly was Sunday, October 17 at which time each was presented with a commemorative certificate and a big hand of applause. Thank you for being there for us. We will miss your organized assemblies.

If you want to know about National Parks, ask Amelia Drake. She and her daughter, Barbara started in Yellowstone and took in seven of them.

Cynthia Young will become a Grandmother for the second time. Her

daughter, Dawn will present her with either a brother or sister to accompany her grandson, Sean.

Rauly Esquivel and his sons assist Father Cliff on the altar at each Sunday mass. This

past Sunday, Rauly was not present, and his sons did an outstanding job. It was a sight to behold. Good work - Timothy and Jeremy.

Get well prayers for Phyl Feyder who is at home recuperating after a hospital stay. Bernadette Bisio is a patient at Brookside. Barry Meneghelli, son of our benefactor, Theresa Meneghelli, undergoes surgery soon. We wish them all a speedy recovery. Also remember all of our other parishioners who are unable to attend mass on a regular basis.

When Father Cliff was 16, Al Capone was released from prison and returned home to Miami Beach dying. A Priest was summoned and went to his home to give a church blessing. His body was returned to Chicago where he was denied a public Catholic funeral mass. He had a funeral procession and was then buried. It caused quite a controversy among Chicago Catholics and the Chicago Tribune carried headlines on it for several days. What Al Capone never said was, "I'm sorry."

See you in church!



Point Richmond Methodist

Jean Reynolds

235-2988

A memorial service for Joel Beck was held on September 23 at the church. The sanctuary overflowed with Joel's friends and family. Many people shared their memories of Joel. He was a special person, and the only one I know who would have cartoon characters on a cake at his memorial service.

Tom McGowan hosted a beach party on October 9 at his home in Point Richmond to welcome Eileen Johnson, who arrived recently from Chicago after her marriage to Pastor Dan. Tom picked a beautiful day for a party at the beach, and a great reason to celebrate: Eileen already seems like she belongs here and we are happy she came.

Harmony Walk to End Hunger: Several members of our congregation were on hand to walk to show support for agencies in our community that help those who are hungry. G.R.I.P., Greater Richmond Interfaith Program, sponsored this annual event on October 16. Walkers ask for pledges, and the money received goes to the Richmond Souper Center, two local food pantries, and to Church World Service. Congressman George Miller was on hand to speak before the walk. Pat Dornan not only walked to represent our congregation, she organized a group of middle school students from Juan Crespi (where she teaches) who all got contributions and walked with great enthusiasm that day. Pat collected pledges in two envelopes, but we didn't make her walk the route twice.

The church kids, headed up by Linda Brooks, put together some special activities to augment the Women's Country Faire holiday craft bazaar on Saturday, October 23. A haunted house tour in the church basement was

so popular it will be repeated on Sunday, Halloween day, after church. A booth for our more aggressive patrons, called "Baptize the Pastor," featured Pastor Dan's real face as a target for wet sponges. (Did they tell him in seminary it would be like this?) Claudia LeGué painted faces to add to the carnival-like atmosphere.

In September, we had an opportunity to replace our old grand piano with a "new" 1943 Baldwin concert grand piano. The piano sounds fabulous and it has been a great addition to worship and for use by our two choirs. A series of concerts and other fun events will be scheduled in the next few months to help pay the balance owed on the piano.

What's going on behind the Green Doors? Fay Hawkins and Jim Brooks were so inspired by the new main doors Ivar Elle prepared and installed that they replaced or repaired and painted the other church doors to match. The church trustees are patiently getting things in shape so we can celebrate our centennial next October (year 2000) looking spiffy.

ON THE CALENDAR:

On Thursday, November 25, a Thanksgiving dinner served from 12:15 to 2:30 p.m. for the Point Richmond community follows Thanksgiving worship at 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to come for a delicious turkey dinner with all the trimmings provided by the church and many Point Richmond businesses.

December 11, 7:00 p.m., The Joyful Noise Choir and Orchestra, directed by Virginia Cherniak, perform a Christmas Oratorio.

December 24, 7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Jazz Service featuring Pastor Dan's Jazz Trio.

Point Methodist Church History

-Mid Dornan

Church history is rich with contributions of women. One church group in the 1920's was the SOCIAL LEAGUE of the first Methodist Episcopal Church whose history is reflected in their minutes printed below and taken from the canvas covered, red leather cornered notebook which cost \$1.15. The minutes are printed as written. This is the 40th installment.

Jan 5th, 1926

Social League met in the Church Parlor with Mrs. Burdick and Mrs. Brothers as hostesses. Mrs. Brothers presided in the absence of the President Mrs. Dicely.

The meeting was opened by all repeating the Lords Prayer. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Roll call found 17 members present.

Three members were reported as ill. Mrs. Stender, Mrs. Hendrick and Mrs. Elizabeth Jenkins. Flowers were ordered sent to them.

Mrs. Brothers turned in \$7.75 for goods sent to them.

Plans for men's dinner were discussed and motion made and carried that the menu would be meat pie, baked potato, cold slaw, pickled beets and apple cake and coffee. The committee to be made up of following ladies. Mesdames Seymour, Brothers, Schmidt, Schofield, Conn, Jones, Owens and Burdick and Dicely.

Meeting adjourned.

Dorothy Conn
Sec pro tem

silver offering	1.40	
forward	30.38	
	31.78	cash on hand
	7.75	
	\$38.53	cash on hand

Sports Memories

by Allan Smith

World Series baseball is over again. I know of only one Point Richmond native that played in a World Series, and that is Russ Christopher, brother of Loyd of local and Pacific Coast League baseball. Loyd also played in the Big Leagues.

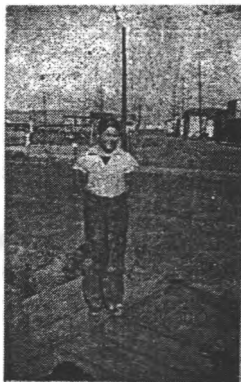
Russ Christopher played in the 1948 World Series for the Cleveland Indians when they defeated the Boston Braves of the National League 4 games to 2. I wonder if his World Series ring is still in the family? Russ died in 1954.

Speaking of World Series rings, go to the Point Richmond Market and ask Mo if you could see the ring he has of a Little World Series contest. It was given to him by his wife Sheba who purchased it from our Incurable Collector who specializes in estate sales. The Little World Series is composed of winning teams of the Triple AAA leagues which are one step below the Big Leagues. The American Association and the International Leagues are part of the Triple

AAA.

Jack Healy of the Point told me that one of his relatives, born in the Point, played in the Big Leagues and that is Jim Cronin who played for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1929. We all knew Jim Cronin because he played in the Standard Oil Twilight League at the First Street ballpark during the thirties and forties. We all were amazed to know of someone who played in the "Bigs" and now played in our own park.

There is a movie currently appearing in the Bay Area called the Hank Greenberg Story. Hank Greenberg was a Jewish player who received some rough verbal treatment during his baseball playing career. He was nicknamed "Homer Hank" and played 12 years in the Big League for the Detroit Tigers of the American League from the years 1930 to 1947. Hank Greenberg also played four years in the World Series. This great player was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1956.



*Answer to last issue's mystery photo
from Tref Ross:*

Robert Dornan

Allan Smith's Point

The Santa Fe Railroad crossing at West Richmond Avenue and the Plunge has been under scrutiny lately. They wanted to dismanle it and put up crossing gates, but the Point community voiced their opinion to leave the "wig wag" alone. There used to be two railroad crossing warnings, the other one was at the Standard and Tewksbury Avenues but was removed when the overpass was built and Santa Fe Railroad used the area for storage.

During World War Two, my late father, Len Smith, was the Block Warden for the streets on the East Richmond side of the Point. It was his duty during an air raid alarm to check all the homes in his area for violation of air raid alarm rules. His first duty was to secure the "wig wags" at the railroad tracks. No lights or warning signals were allowed at the crossings.

There were several air raid alarms in Point Richmond during that war. I was home when the first alarm was sounded in early 1941. The refinery had prepared us for such an emergency. They had modified the oil and gas furnaces in the different plants which had to continue in operation so that so lights could be seen. Plants that could be shut down without operating difficulty were done , such as #8 and # 9 Batteries. The whole refinery complete was without lights and it was a weird thing to witness.

During this recent City Council election one of the candidates placed his placard in the wig wag container. As there are two other people from the Point running for City Council, they should have displayed their placards as well.

1923 Telephone Directory

Marian George Hawkins has donated an August 1923 Contra Costa Bell System Telephone Directory. The 6" x 9", 72 page book includes the entire county from Antioch to Moraga to Clayton and the Mt. Diablo Winery as well as many advertisements. Richmond telephones take up 26 pages.

The Classified Directory (now referred to as the Yellow Pages) lists classifications under Ammunition, Apartment Houses, Blacksmiths, Rooming Houses, Coal, Wood and Grain, Nurses, Ice Storage, Powder companies and Sanitariums.

Of course, you wouldn't find listings for Computers or Refrigeration.

No churches were listed, but Clergymen were. Railroad and Transportation had 35 listings. Of the 36 restaurants with telephones in the entire county, 12 were listed in Richmond, two in the Point which were The Eagle Restaurant, 57 Washington Avenue, phone # Richmond 179 and the Gilt Edge Restaurant, 126 Washington, Richmond 164. Washington School was listed at Montana and Richmond Avenue, phone Richmond 84.

Mid

Random Memories

By Harold Shawl

Harold Shawl grew up in Point Richmond and graduated from Cal in Civil Engineering in 1930, went to Visalia on a "three months job" assisting lawyers in some extensive water litigation (which did not end until 1935) and have been in Tulare and Kings Counties ever since.

He retired from active engineering in 1985, but his family (he and three sons) operate a sizable fruit farming operation which began in a small way in 1940 as a hobby and has grown. They raise olives, oranges, table grapes, nectarines, plums and black figs. They live on the "ranch" about seven miles north of Visalia. Harold has six grandchildren and two great grand children.

We sincerely thank Mr. Shawl for these wonderful Point Richmond memories.

Part One of Two

Random Memories

from Harold Shawl

I observed my 90th birthday last month and thought that, before I become "balmy" I should relate some of my memories that I have of growing up in Point Richmond and Richmond. These thoughts may be of some interest to TPIT readers and perhaps to some old timers. So here goes:

VICTORY GARDENS AND WORLD WAR 1

In 1917 and 1918 students tried to grow

"Victory" gardens in front of Washington School. These gardens consisted of various vegetables and castor beans (for lubricating oil). The gardens were not too successful because of poor quality soil.

As part of the war effort we also learned to knit and succeeded in creating some sweaters and socks, supposedly for our soldiers.

HALLOWEEN PRANKS

One year a wagon or buggy was disassembled and reassembled at the front door of Washington School (second floor). I don't recall anything about the removal.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Each class assembled in the school yard (under the direction of the yard monitor) and marched in by class through the rear entrance and up the stairway, to the music of a John Phillip Souza march, played on a Victrola record. First through fourth grades were on the second floor and fifth through eighth grades were on the third floor. The Manual Training (woodwork), cooking and sewing room, and the auditorium were on the ground floor. The teachers took turns in being yard monitors.

RESIDENCES ON BAY SIDE OF THE HILL

There were not many residences below the crest of the hill. The writer knew practically every foot of the bay shore from the

San Rafael ferry slip to the inner harbor and there were no more than eight or ten residences below the crest of the hill on the bay's edge.

BRICK YARD

This facility, located between the tunnel and the Santa Fe ferry slip, operated during the World War 1 and prior, but didn't operate much during the 1920's.

POPULATION

This varied in total for both Point Richmond and Richmond city during the period I knew it (1916-1930) from 18,000 to 22,000, depending on the economy and employment, primarily at the Standard Oil plant. At that time most upper level Standard Oil people lived in the Mira Vista area overlooking Richmond. The major employers in the Point Richmond-Richmond area at that time were: Standard Oil Company, Santa Fe shops, Pullman shops, American-Standard Sanitary, Rheem Manufacturing, Certain Teed Products, Winehaven Winery (near Pt. San Pablo) and California Cap Works (near Stege).

EARLY DAYS

I was told that there was a world's championship boxing match held at Point Richmond in the early 1900's in the swampy area on the north side of Point Richmond, between the Santa Fe shops and the Standard Oil plant. (There may be some record of it in the old newspapers files). This is the location where we used to play baseball.

TENNIS COURTS

These were built next to the north end of the tunnel, along side the ATSF track, in about 1920, and were very popular among the older youth.

SALOONS

In the pre-prohibition years there were many saloons along Standard Avenue, the route later used for the Freeway. The odor of stale beer in that part of town was very noticeable. After prohibition came into effect (1919) most of the saloons went out of business.

HIGH SCHOOL

Prior to 1926, all "kids" in Point Richmond, Richmond, Giant (El Sobrante), San Pablo, Oleum, Pinole, Hercules and El Cerrito attended the only high school. RUHS, at Twenty-third Street and McDonald Avenue. B. X. Tucker was Principal and Theodore Madsen was Vice-Principal. The new Richmond High, toward San Pablo, was built in 1925-1926, and I think the old campus became a Junior High. Students from Giant, Pinole and Hercules commuted daily by SP train.

ROOSEVELT JUNIOR HIGH BUILDING

This building was built in 1921 and I believe it was opened in 1922, with Frank Shallenberger as Principal. It was Richmond's first junior high and used one building on the RUHS campus.

BARN STORMERS

Following World War I, at times, individual aviators took passengers for open cockpit airplane rides (for a \$5 or \$10 fee) from the pasture area between Richmond and Point Richmond (where shipyard workers were later housed during World War II).

AUTOMOBILE TESTING

Many auto salesmen used to test the

ability of their car for potential customers, in negotiating the steep climb on the street where Mark Gebhart lived (I have forgotten the name of the street). The object of the demonstration was to get a good running start below and try to make it to the top, in high gear. They were frequently not successful.

HILL REMOVAL

During the period I lived in Point Richmond (1916-1930) there was a sizable hill about a block south of Cutting Blvd. Near 23rd Street. This hill was later completely removed and the area used for industrial buildings.

ADDITIONAL INDUSTRY

The Felice-Perelli Cannery was built near Cutting Blvd. In the late 1920's and the Ford automobile plant was built in the 1930's.

HOFFMAN BLVD

This street from the El Cerrito area into Richmond was built later, long after I left the area. Mr Hoffman was City Engineer part of the time that I lived in Point Richmond.

TRANSPORTATION

To go to Albany, Berkeley, Oakland or San Francisco, we rode on the Key System street

cars. The carefare was twenty-one cents and you took either the Key System ferry boat or the of the Southern Pacific the fare was another twenty-one cents. The trip from Point Richmond to San Francisco took at least 1 1/2 hours. The transfer from the street car to the SP train (to the ferry) was made at Albany (Solano Ave., I think) and the transfer to the Key System ferry train was made at 40th and San Pablo Ave.

MEA CULPA

There was a small park alongside the Baptist Church on Washington Ave. In about 1925 the writer unintentionally kicked a football through a window of the residence next to the park. (My Dad replaced the glass and surprised me by not giving me a scolding that I deserved.)

RAILROAD AVE. - POINT RICHMOND

There were some houses of "ill fame" along Railroad Ave., behind the Police station and Firehouse. In the teens and 1920's the younger "kids" wondered who occupied those places! The subject among older kids was always hush-hush, so naturally, it caused us to wonder.

More in the next issue of TPI



SHHH!

By Biblio Tek

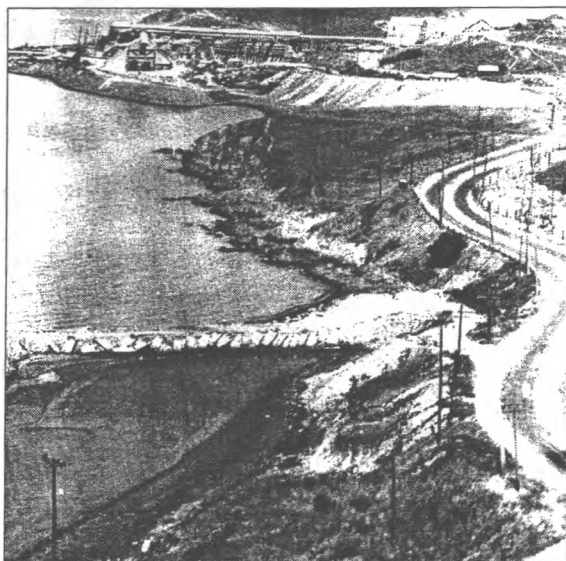
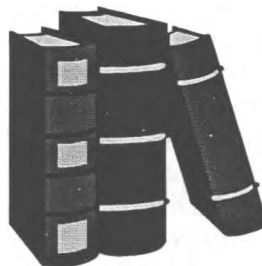
Westside Branch Library News

Coming Soon! A new video display system is being organized for Westside Library. As soon as it is in place, you will see a raft of new videos, including *Men in Black*, *Beloved*, *The Rainmaker*, *Slingblade*, *Patch Adams*, *Elizabeth*, *One True Thing*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Horse Whisperer* and, for old time's sake, *Saturday Night Fever*.

We wrote last time about that phenom Harry Potter with his wizardly adventures. The third book in the series, *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban* has arrived. Lynn the Librarian sat up all night reading and says it's great.

Other new books recently acquired for Westside Branch include:

Monster by J. Kellerman, *Alibi* by S. Brown, *Twisted Root* by Anne Perry, *Great Shame* by I. Keneally and *Eat the Rich* by P.J. O'Rourke.



Early photo of Western Drive

This Tree Grows in Point Richmond

by Dennis Sheaffer

I first saw Point Richmond in December of 1991. I came to visit my future wife, Ellen, who was living on East Richmond Avenue in one of the original Smoky Row four-squares. The 600 square foot cottage hadn't migrated far from its original home along the Santa Fe tracks. I didn't know it then, but I was soon to become a member of this picturesque and quiet community.

I was offered a job in San Francisco not long after that first visit, and by February of 1992 Ellen and I rented a house on Washington Avenue. Though Ellen dearly loved her cottage, we decided that unless I was willing to store my clothes and belongings on the roof, the Smoky Row just wouldn't do. My life's accumulation of books, clothing, and computer gear arrived in Point Richmond from Michigan in February, 1992 in several hundred boxes only a day after Ellen moved to the Washington Avenue house. They were piled neatly in the living-room bay window by the movers, and it took months to sort them all out.

At quiet moments in those first months after I arrived, I realized I'd also brought with me a terrible homesickness. I rambled the woods, felt the rain, saw the dramatic changes of sky, and witnessed the changes of seasons in Michigan for the more than 45 years I lived there. This part of California is very different from my previous home; no Winter snows, barely discernible transitions from Summer to Winter and back to Summer, a monsoon season, and though Californians look upon this fondly, the golden hills looked far too dry for my taste.

My memories still wander in the swampy Michigan forests where tiny cherry trees grow beneath the towering maples. In Autumn, the reds, oranges and golds are breathtaking, and in Spring, the pinks and whites of the deciduous tree-blossoms are SO welcome after the sub-freezing Winters. In the weeks while I packed for the move to Point Richmond, Southeastern Michigan had barely recovered from a 22 inch snowfall!

I missed that following Spring in Michigan. The rigors of a new job, and the excitement of a new home kept me busy, but somewhere deep inside, the ache for my old home was always there. It took me a long time to embrace California. I looked for things with which I could connect. I often walked to the top of Washington Avenue to marvel at the views of San Francisco in fog and rain and moonlight. Along the way I noticed, even in those late Winter months of early 1992, flowers growing in the cracks of sidewalks in February!

The places where I lived in Michigan were never far from a railroad track, and the little toots of the midnight Santa Fe trains when they crossed Richmond Avenue simply reminded me of my homesickness. Here, just as there, I sat for long minutes during my morning commute, counting railroad cars and reading the logos while I waited for the trains to pass. Occasionally, though Michigan and Point Richmond are over 2000 miles apart, I'd recognize this name or that and it made me sigh.

I'm not sure when it was exactly, but surely not long after I arrived here, I realized that I was paying close attention to a tree. The first time I really noticed it was from a distance. A eucalyptus shaped like a mushroom, towering in a place a tree should never survive, it seemed to be visible from everywhere! One Saturday morning, possibly on my first trek to climb to the top of Nicholl Nob, I was walking up Crest from

Washington, and stopped dead in my tracks. There it was again, actually in someone's back yard. My apologies to the homeowner of that property for calling attention to this icon, but from that day forward I cherished that tree. Suddenly it seemed visible from everywhere. I took BART from the Del Norte station into San Francisco on my way to work in the mornings, and on the way home in the early evenings there it was silhouetted against the background of Mount Tamalpais, from as far away as Kennedy High School on Cutting Boulevard.

More than anything else in that first year, the eucalyptus became an image I could latch on to, something concrete to identify me with Point Richmond. I felt as though I'd discovered it, but of course that's not possible. I wondered whether others here had really paid attention to it. At least in my mind, the tree began to take on a life of its own.

I love to walk. During lunch hours in the City, I often walked far from the Financial District. By this time the mushroom-tree was etched in my mind. I knew its geography up close. My lunchtime walks often took me to the high places above San Francisco, like Nob Hill, or Russian Hill. My memory of just which street I was on escapes me, but I came to a dead-end. There was a barricade barring autos from continuing, but walkways continued on down a steep hill on the other side. Realizing that what goes down must come up, I decided to stop before returning to my office. I stood there taking in the magnificent view of the Bay, watching the sailboats, trying to get a sense of just where I was. The Bay Bridge was out of sight on my far right, and I wondered if I could see the Golden Gate on my left. I scanned the horizon trying to make sense of the towns and landmarks on the other side of the Bay. I caught a glimpse of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge

and could just see the holding tanks of the Chevron Refinery. The Chevron Refinery... Point Richmond.... Before I could gather my wits, I was looking right at the magnificent eucalyptus tree, in a dip between Nicholl Nob and the hill on which the storage tanks stand! It was recognizable even at that distance. From that day on, every time I was on one of the San Francisco hills, I looked for the tree.

One of the other walks I occasionally took was up the back steps to Coit Tower. I loved the intimate feeling of being in someone else's garden while I climbed those long steps. Flowers grow on that hillside in uncountable varieties, and since I often had to rest on the way up, I looked closely at the colorful blossoms. It seemed that even in the midst of Winter the flowers were prolific. I couldn't see that in Michigan! I reached the base of the parking lot and walked the spiraling sidewalk to the observation platform. Once again, there it was. I was so excited I stopped some of the out-of-town visitors to point out the tree and say, "I live near the base of that tree!"

In April of 1996, I stopped taking BART into the City and began riding the Larkspur Ferry. The Ferry passes the tree once in each direction, and I delighted not only in seeing it, but in commenting on it to everyone who would listen. I realize now that I'd come to identify my new home with that tree, and it became a precious symbol. At last Point Richmond had become my home.

In the Winter of 1997, I drove across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge on the way to Larkspur Landing. What has sometimes been termed a "hurricane" had blown most of the heads from the light standards on the bridge the night before. The morning ferry rocked in the remnants of the storm, one of the roughest rides I remember. We passed Angel Island, and to my

horror, the trees at the top of the Island had been sheared off! Suddenly it occurred to me that the Point Richmond Tree was terribly unprotected! It was a long day wondering, but on the Ferry ride home that evening, I saw the tree still standing. Some days later I walked up Crest and viewed it more closely. Some of the lower branches had been broken off, but the tree had ruggedly held its own against winds that at times exceeded 60 miles per hour.

The tree bears witness to Point Richmond. At Christmas there's a home bedecked with hundreds of lights that stands just below the tree. When you look at the Christmas decorations, you can't help but notice the silhouette of the tree just above them. If you're in the right place near sunset, the tree glows in the golden light. In the morning, it's one of the first things in the Point to be blessed with sunshine.

Judging by the rapid growth of the black

acacias in our backyard, and knowing that the eucalyptus is a relative of the acacia, both imported from Australia, I don't think the fabled tree could be very old. Perhaps thirty or forty years, it's difficult to tell without scientific study. I can only hope that the residents of Point Richmond never have the opportunity to count its rings in the after cut of a chainsaw.



*It was really scary in Point Richmond
this Halloween!*



CARDS & LETTERS



Gary:

Thank you and the PRHA for your support of the RED OAK VICTORY. A very dedicated group of volunteers are working to restore this ship as a memorial to the citizens of POINT RICHMOND, the CITY of RICHMOND and the greater seafaring community of the United States of America.. It is only through the continued support of groups, businesses and individuals that this project will succeed.

We certainly invite the membership, especially if they have not viewed the ship recently, to tour the ship and see the progress in the restoration.

Jerry SOUZA
SS RED OAK VICTORY
Deck Division

Dear TPIT:

Greetings from Northern Minnesota, 54 degrees and the trees are in their fall splendor, a sight to see.

I am inquiring about the September/October issue, I haven't received it yet, has there been a delay? I think my membership is current. I called my post office and they said that they could not help me. I would miss the newsletter as it keeps me in touch of the past and present. I'd appreciate it if you looked into this.

Here in Bemidji we are getting our homes buttoned up for winter and our gardens cut back, it's a ritual up here. These nice fall days are good to get things done. We do get some 60 and 70 degree days yet, but it is nice to have the seasons, I seem to like them all.

I saw on the weather channel that you are having 70's and warmer. I remember that Sept-Oct days were so nice and warm while growing up in the Point.

As Always,
June (Kunkel) Blackburn
Bemidji, MN

Thanks for writing June, I checked on your membership, it is current and am certain that your Sept/Oct issue was mailed. Must have gotten lost so am sending a copy to you with this issue. Keep Warm!!!

Gary

Dear Pam Wilson:

Enclosed is a check for my dues and a donation and a Cultural Matching Gift. Fill it out and you will get \$50 from the Exxon Corp.

I enjoy "This Point", however, the latest issue that I have received is Summer, 1999.

Also are you interested in "The Sheild" from RUHS from the late 20's to 30's?

My three brothers and 2 sisters all went through the local system. Washington Grammar, Roosevelt Jr., and Richmond High. All have passed away. I am the youngest. We grew up in the Point. Also have some clippings from 1939. Are you interested?

Thank you,
Spiro Cakos
Phoenix

Thank YOU Spiro! We would love to add all of these items to our archives. Will resend the Sept/Oct issue. Something must have happened to our out of state mail.

Gary

In Memory of an Extraordinary Cat 'Happy Boy' (Feb. 22, 1986 - October 21, 1999)

by Royce Ong

My cat, 'Happy Boy' was so badly injured by a dog that should have been on a leash that he had to be put to sleep.

You may have seen him, he was the white cat with a little orange that sat in front of 305 Golden Gate greeting people, he would run towards the ones he saw every day, especially the ladies who would stop to pet him. He was a special cat, when I came home in my car, I would stop at the top of the street, honk my horn and he would run the 150 feet to jump in the car and ride back to the house. I would always reward him with shrimp.

When I went to downtown Point he would walk with me for four blocks to Santa Fe and Richmond Avenues and wait there while I went to the Santa Fe Market to get a newspaper!

For a short while in the early 1990's a black lab dog lived with us. He and Happy Boy got along just fine and we would all go downtown together. Soon I noticed that Happy

started acting like a dog. He would even chase other cats away. He liked to climb on something high, like my shoulders and wrap himself around my neck or he would sit and look up at me and would know that he wanted to pick me up and put him on my neck and start walking.

He knew to snap a loose wood slat on the window to alert me that he wanted in. I followed me around and laid close to me when I worked in the yard and get on the roof and wait when I worked on the car. I don't know why but he loved to watch me take a bath and stayed until I was finished. If I overslept he would pull the bed cover back and touch me with his paw to wake me.

Thanks to my friends Karen and Marguerite who helped me put Happy Boy away. And thanks to Dr. Han and his staff at Richmond Veterinary Hospital for the wonderful care they gave Happy, also to Dr. Martin.

He was my companion and best friend. I will miss him.

From the RICHMOND RECORD, 1901, quote:

"It is a pleasant experience and one frequently enjoyed in Point Richmond to sit under one's own vine and fig tree, in heaven's brightest sunshine and see the fog roll up in great black terraces over the bay in the vicinity of San Francisco and Oakland, hear the course warnings of the fog horn on Goat Island and the submissive response by the ever cautious ferry boats."

for J. A.

Deaths....

Caesar Serge Frozini, age 84, at his home in Smith River on October 1, 1999. Born in the Point, Caesar lived here for 31 years before moving to Smith River. He is survived by a daughter, Diane Diani of El Cerrito, a son, Don Frosini of Smith River, and a brother Al Frosini, Point Richmond, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. His wife Marirose died in 1985.

Ralph Voigt, age 83, on September 18, 1999 at his home in the Point. A California native he lived in Richmond for 25 years and was a member of the Point Richmond History Association, Sons in Retirement, and the Operating Engineers Union Local 63. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Marion, sons, Walter Voigt of Kingsburg and William Voigt of Richmond, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

William Fong, age 51, on October 20, 1999. Before moving to Hercules several years ago, he lived in Atchison Village and was active in Washington School PTA, Cub Scouts and Troop 111 in the Point. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Theresa; daughter, Katheryn Fong; sons, Kevin and Kenneth Fong; sisters, Irene Sue, Eileen Lo and Pauline Ng; brothers, Henry Go, Hiram Fong, and Ting Wai Kwong and two grandchildren.

Peter M Filice, president of Filice & Perrelli Canning Co., formerly in Richmond, died at a San Pablo hospital on October 22, 1999 after a brief illness. He was 84. The Gilroy native lived in West County for 60 years. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Lena B.; daughter, Patricia F. Auld of Canada; sons, Frank A. Filice of Hercules and Peter M. Filice Jr. of Sunnyvale; and seven grandchildren.

Joel Beck, died in his sleep on September 14, 1999, at the age of 56. He was a well know artist who gained fame as an underground comic artist in the 1960's and 1970's. Joel contributed a weekly cartoon to the Berkeley Barb, the underground newspaper of the time. He also published a full length comic book, "Lenny of Laredo" as well as "Marching Marvin" and "The Profit", all are now collectors items. He is survived by his parents, William and Marie Beck of San Rafael; a sister, Claudia Vasquez of Larkspur; and two brothers, David Beck of Nevada and Louis Beck of San Rafael.



November Birthdays

ANN GREINER
LYNN RENDLER
BETTY DORNAN
MARY ANN GASPARD
CHRIS BRADSHAW
CLARE DOHERTY
BO AMANTITE
DENNIS DORNAN
DOROTHY MCCUTCHEON
JOE SAVILE
SHANE THOMAS
HAL MARSHALL
NICOLE VARGO
BETHANY REYNOLDS

MATTHEW BERMAN
MARJ BELLATTI
JAMES CHESHARECK, SR.
JAMES CHESHARECK, JR.
LINDA CHESHARECK
CLAUDIA LAGUE
ALBERT KOHLAR
VIOLA KENNEDY
PAUL CORT
GARY SHOWS
JACK ELLE
SHIRLEY BUTT
CRAIG SEABORG
KENNY PAASCH

LANCE ROTTING
FAY HAWKINS
LIAM THOMPSON
LINDA FEYDER
SPIRO CAKOS
TED BECK
KATHRYN PINKERTON
AUBYN EAKLES
BOBBIES BOZIKI
MAY COTTON
KATRINA MACDIARMID
BERNARD BERNES



Exclusive—Over 90 Club

Welcome this month to :
Kathryn Pinkerton

**Mae Mandl
Ruth Wood
Bernard Bernes**

**William Kollar
Pina Barbieri
Louisa Banks
Willard Speirsch
Louis Shaw
Dorothy Lipp**

Calendar of Events

Alphabetical by Group

MASQUERS PLAYHOUSE

November 5 to December 18

"20" Century Follies (100 Years of Songs and Laughter); \$12. Fri-Sat, 8 P.M., with some Sunday Matinees at 2:30.

December 31

New Years Eve: "Pump Boys and Dinettes", flatly staged production of Broadway hit musical; \$35.00. 8 and 11 P. M., includes Noisemakers, champagne, hors d'oeuvres.

POINT RICHMOND ASSOCIATION OF MOTHERS (PRAM)

First Monday of each month, 12:00, info: Lora Bartlett 237-9959. PEO. Box 70852, Richmond 94807. Newsletter: "Preambulators".

POINT RICHMOND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Meets 2nd Wednesday each month, Hotel Mac Banquet Room, 12-1:30, Lunch Reservations \$11, Contact: Paula Aasmus, O.D. 235-5228. In December, Annual Holiday Party, 2nd Wednesday, Richmond Branch, Mechanics Bank.

POINT RICHMOND COMMUNITY CENTER/FIELD HOUSE & PLUNGE

November and December activities: 233-6881. Plunge seismic retro-fit in December!

POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The deadline for the December/January (Holiday) issue of TPIT is November 26, 1999.

The next general meeting will be January 16, 2000, details will be in the next issue.

POINT RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Meets last Wednesday each month, Pt Richmond Community Center; 7:30 P.M Contact: Rod Satre, President, 232 5059.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Contact: Linda Hutcherson, Principal or Miss Jones, Secretary 232-1436.

School closed December 20 to January 2, 2000.

HIGHLIGHTS: with calendar help from Jan Feagley, FMI, Inc.

Tuesday, November 2, Election Day

Thursday, November 11, Veteran's Day

Thursday, November 25, Thanksgiving Day, with Turkey Shoot & Parade, meet at Plunge at 10 A.M. (Tom McGowan for details: 231-0244); 12:15 to 2:30, dinner at Pt. Richmond Methodist Church (Claudia for details or offers of help, 215-1813).

Saturday, November 27, Annual Holiday Tree Lighting at Indian Statue Park., at 5 P.M., Santa Claus and Pt. Richmond Methodist Church Choir sing-along.

For comments, corrections or additions to the TPIT Calendar of Events contact:

*David Vincent
125 West Richmond
Point Richmond, CA 94801
510-235-4850*



I would like to join the P.R.H.A.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Type of membership (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	\$18.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior (65+)	12.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	History Preserver	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Sponsor	75.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	History Maker	100.00

Membership in the Point Richmond History Association includes a one year subscription to "THIS POINT...in time" newsletter (six issues). Please make your check payable to the Point Richmond History Association and mail it to:

Pam Wilson
521 Western Drive
Point Richmond, CA 94801

If you would like to have birthdays noted in the newsletter, please include names and months.

Articles for each issue are due on or before the deadline printed in the calendar section.
Please mail articles and items of interest to:

Gary Shows
229 Golden Gate Avenue
Point Richmond, CA 94801

or
fax 510-233-0762

or
email: gary@alkos.com

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Point Richmond, CA 94801

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