

THIS POINT.... in time

NEWSLETTER

The Point Richmond History Association

www.PointRichmondHistory.org

Vol. XXVIII No. 2

September/October, 2009

\$3.00

The Ghost of Stiefvater's Department Store



Lives On at 117 West Richmond



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Pat Craig Contra Costa Times.

"Wow! What a Show!"

Charles Jarrett, Rossmore News

"Fascinating piece of history!"

Sally Hogarty, Walnut Creek Journal

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AUG. 28 - SEPT. 27, 2009

FR & SA AT 8 P.M.

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SAT. MATINEES SEPT. 12, 19, 26 AT 3 P.M.

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From the President

By Mid Dornan

Has technology undermined our U.S. Postal System? With the internet, e-mail and on-line bill payments, there is an estimated decrease by volume of 30 BILLION in 2009 forcing the decision to consolidate branches, and our Point station is on the list for possible closure.

I like receiving actual mail, bills excluded!. I like sending cute greeting cards that include my personal, handwritten and penned notes. There is warmth and love in a card someone spent time to pick out or make to personalize it. For 44¢ a card sent via postal service can be enjoyed and messages reread over and over before being recycled.

Business is hurt In a recession when more people go to the Internet and even the postal service has added on-line services.

Where do you buy your stamps? On-line? Grocery Store? A vending machine?

With the volume of "snail mail" shrinking by billions of pieces each year, over 200,000 of those blue ionic mailboxes have been eliminated from city streets, rural routes and suburban neighborhoods and only 175,000 remain.

We need the Point Branch Post Office! with our affable employees.

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Below sign advertising Richmond was on a barge. PRHA photo archive #0133-DC enhanced by Thomas Mercer-Hursh



Thank you members for your renewal:

**Pam Wilson
Gary Shows
Eunice Hursh
June A. Blackburn
Valerie Fregulia
Linda Newton
John A. Thiella**
Jan & Jerry Feagley Family
Wilson Gondola
Transcept Pharmaceuticals**
Henry & Eva Marchitiello Family
Mid Dornan
Marc Bisio
Edwina Murray
Ann Hathaway-Kissling
Tom & Shirley Butt
Edward McGarvey
Velma Healy
Jerry Cerkanowicz, Sr.
Elizabeth McDonald
Ila May Deine Family
Tim & Roberta Montgomery Family
June Albonico
June S. Solosabal
Martha Bielawski
Betty Dornan
Werner & Jeanne Doellstedt
Hannah Edwards
Amelia M Drake
Robert & Linda Drake
Patti, Stephanie, Stephen Kowalski
& Timeworks**
Dale Roberts & Katharine Harps Family
Altha M. Humphrey**

And a warm welcome to these new members

**Gary Darling
Thomas N. Burt, Jr.
Greg Brougham
Burlington Willes
Duncan & Ikue McNiff Family**

* Gift Membership

**Special Member, *Thank You!*

Thank You!
**Santa Fe Market
and
Point Richmond Market**

*For selling
“THIS POINT.....in time”
For us*

*Because of the success of the new
Farmers Market, we have changed our
Museum Hours:
Wednesday 4:30 pm to 7:00pm
Thursday 11:30 am to 2:00 pm*

*Thanks to the Volunteers who open and
close our history museum two days each
week.*

The Cover:

*The cover shows a “mashup” of 0607-DC, Stiefvater’s Department Store,
over the modern 117 West Richmond. The building has had 1, 2, and 3
stories at various times in its life. (Mashup and modern photo by Thomas Mercer-Hursh)*

Editor's Notes

Gary Shows (510-235-1336)

Here is your September/October issue, I think you will like it. Thanks to all of you wonderful contributors.

Don't forget about my search for historical Point photos. We have a great collection and I would like to make it better so give me a call if you have something interesting to loan for scanning.

In our next issue look forward to an article by Michelle Healy. Michelle is preparing a profile of Plunge swimming instructor June Albonico whose first Plunge career was from 1956-2001 and whose second Plunge career will resume the day lessons start again.

The deadline for the next issue of "THIS POINT.....in time" is October 30th.

The Summer issue newsletter assembly crew:

Pam Wilson
Mid Dornan
Bruce Bartram
Ann Bartram
Pat Pearson
Tom Piazza
Margaret Morkowski
Mary Highfill
Sonja Darling
Jerry Cerkowicz
Gary Shows

Get Your Own "I Saved the Plunge" Magnet!

Send a tax deductible donation of \$10.00 or more to:

Save the Richmond Plunge Trust

P.O. Box 70443

Richmond, CA 94807-0443

And we will send your 3" x 5" magnet to you.

Thank You!

Our Special Supporters!

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Kathe Kiehn

Elizabeth M. McDonald

Transcept Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

John A. Thiella & Rosa T. Casazza

Corporate Sponsor

Timeworks Inc. Clock Company

Stephanie, Patti & Stephen Kowalski

First Church of Christ, Scientist

History Preservers:

Royce Ong

Edward J. McGarvey

Gilda Markarian

Kevin, Renee & Griffin Knee

Jean & John Knox

David & Anne Roth

John Helfrich

Sandi Genser-Maack & Lynn Maack

Thomas Mercer-Hursh & Theresa de Valencé

John & Nancy Mengshol

Donna Wilson

Linda Andrew-Marshall

Margaret Morkowski

Patricia Dornan

Paul & Zoe Mukavtz

Bob & Ellie Strauss

A-Mid Trivia

Mid Dornan (510-234-5334)

Q: Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.

.Answer: at end of Trivia

September 9 marks California Admission Day. Remember when school didn't begin until after this date? And, are you aware the California School year, because of the economy, will be shorten by five days?

Nothing disturbs a football coach so much as seeing a six-foot three-inch 235 pound student playing in the band.

City of Richmond officials on Jan 1, 2011 will require multiunit housing to go smoke-free. Richmond now has the strictest secondhand smoking laws in the region. The new ordinance is in addition to regulations created in May that bar smoking in public places such as parks, trails and where parades, farmers markets and other public events are held.

Alia Danielle Smyk will be married in Palm Springs on November 14, 2009 to McLean James Bergeron from New Orleans. Alia is the daughter of James and Kathleen Smyk, was born in Point Richmond, and her parents have been residents of the Point since 1981. Alia and McLean met in college in Southern California and Alia is attending Grad School at Academy of Art College. McLean is CEO of an International Leasing Operation and the couple plan to live in San Francisco.

Have you taken time to write Congressman George Miller to help save our Point Branch Post Office?

During a commercial airline flight, the attendant passed out gum, telling passengers it would relieve the pressure on their ears during landing. After descent, it took one passenger approximately two hours to get the stuff out of his ears.

Fireworks! For several days Point Richmond area residents were treated to impressive fireworks displays. The show emanated from the Ford Craneway Building and was financed by a Japanese company for the entertainment of its 6000 employees who were staying in San Francisco and came to Richmond each evening by boat.

A \$25,00 grant will front the first phase of a historic structure report for Kaiser Shipyard No. 3. one of four Kaiser shipbuilding facilities opened on the Richmond waterfront during World War II. It is now part of the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home front National Historical Park and home of the S.S. Red Oak Victory Ship.

After six years, absence, most of Richmond's city Employees are back at City Hall at Barrett Civic Center. Missing is the Police Department. Officials need to find about \$70 million to build a new Hall of Justice on part of a surface parking lot at Barrett and 25th Street, plus a 620-space parking structure to make up for the lost parking lot. For now, without funds, the police headquarters will remain at 1701 Regatta Blvd.

A young woman is speeding down a freeway when she is stopped by a highway patrol officer. The officer asks if he could please see her driver's license. The woman replies angrily, "I wish you guys would make up your mind. Just yesterday you take away my license, and now you expect me to show it to you!"

Joe Darling has driven to Buxton, North Dakota for his High School Class Reunion. He will be joined later by wife, Sonja, who has enjoyed the summer camping on the Russian River at Odd Fellows Recreation Club.

By the time a man realizes that maybe his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong.

A taxi is a taxi and spelled that way, too, in English, French, German, Swedish, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Are you supporting the Wednesday Farmer's Market in the Point? Stop in and visit our museum when you do!

ANSWER: Lettuce.

TIPS When Traveling

At the Airport. tip porters \$2 for the first bag and a dollar or more for a job well done. No tip for agents, or flight attendants.

At the hotel. Give doormen \$2 for help with bags and \$1 for promptly hailed cab. Bellhops deserve \$2 for the first bag and \$1 a bag thereafter.

Housekeeping; For each day of a stay, \$2 to \$5 should suffice. But make sure to leave something each day, since a different person usually cleans up each time.



Stiefvater's store in its two floor phase (0718-Sonny Jackson enhanced by Thomas Mercer-Hursh)

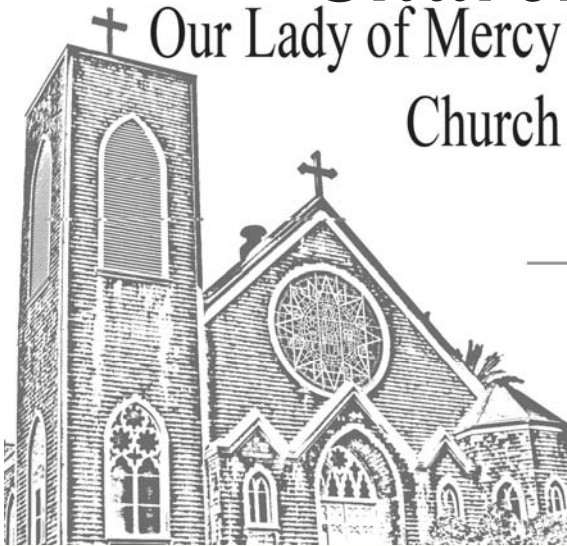
The Early Life of Frank Spenger, Sr, Berkeley's Old Man of the Sea

Thank you to our old friend Burl Willes of the Berkeley Historical Society for giving us a copy of their new publication, *The Early Life of Frank Spenger, Sr, Berkeley's Old Man of the Sea*. It tells the story of Frank Spenger, Sr. the founder of well known Spenger's Grotto Seafood Restaurant in Berkeley. As a Berkeley runaway, young Spenger spent much of his youth in Point Richmond where he learned to fish. He sold or traded his catch to locals, one regular was to the Madam of a local house. He tells of one night he meeting a "rowdy" Jack London who was visiting Madam Sally's establishment with several of his friends.

The book is on display at our museum if you would like to read it, or call the Berkeley History Center at (510) 848-0181 to get your own copy. If space permits I might seek permission to reprint part of the book here.

Gary

Church News



By Dee Rosier

510-232-1387

drosier@sbcglobal.net

Rest assured now that school has started, we will experience our long awaited summer weather.

The financial reports for last year have been completed, reviewed and filed in the Bishop's office. Copies are available. We continue to make needed repairs and improvements as well as helping people around us while enjoying life in our wonderful little community.

Money was also sent to the diocese for deposit into our building and savings account. Even with small upkeep expenses we are able to save.

The remainder of the new chairs arrived and we now have comfortable seating to enhance the round tables. Paired together the church hall has taken on a welcoming appearance.

After having a skin cancer removed and laser eye surgery, Father celebrated his sixth year at Our Lady of Mercy. Some of his colleagues urged him to apply for the position, and to them we will be forever grateful. He also added an additional year to

his chronological age. Having the eye surgery has improved his vision so he is able to see with much more clarity and brightness. Father says that the downside is being able to see his reflection in the mirror. Having improved eyesight has drawn him back to his watercolors.

As for his travels, he attended the public premiere of his documentary at the Rhode Island International Film Festival. While there he visited some of his relatives. He also enjoyed attending the Puccini opera *Tosca* in San Francisco. His parents introduced him to opera at the age of 9 when they took him to the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He also proved that he is among those humans whose computer crashes. Fortunately, none of the parish files were among what was lost.

While away there were several phone messages for mass requests, which will be promptly scheduled.

He hosted a July 4th BBQ which was well received and will do likewise for Labor Day weekend – September 6. A signup sheet is located in the back of the church.

A DVD projector has been purchased and a generous parishioner has donated a ceiling screen. DVD's will be shown in the church hall and provide enjoyable entertainment for parishioners. A new lawnmower was purchased for use in the backyard and church parking lot. The capital for these expenses was largely due to the dedicated volunteers who host the pancake breakfasts

Pancake breakfasts are scheduled for September 20 and October 18. The crew will then recess and resume in February.

There have been several baptisms. We welcome all our new born parishioners and congratulate their proud families. We look forward to watching them grow.

The Parish Council members for 2009-2010 are: Tom Boone (new member), Anne Brussok-Roth, Susan Brooks, Nicole Cruz, Lorraine Joliver-Quinn, Brenda McKinley, Edwina Murray, Dee Rosier, and

Michael Workman (new member).

Prior to his homily, Father Nick Reina asked the parishioners how many were Native Californians – several hands were raised, as he continued a parishioner retained his raised hand clear through to great-great-great grandparents. My ancestor's were original California land grant owners.

We continue to support the local Souper Kitchen. Added to the list of volunteers is newly retired, Lorraine Jolivet-Quinn.

Marie Peckham enjoyed her trip to Japan and is now in Sweden. She is being accompanied by Nancy Noble, who also spent two weeks teaching in Taiwan. Marie has been visiting her exchange students.

We that live on Idaho Street consider ourselves a special neighborhood. On a recent Wednesday, prior to Thursday garbage day, a neighbor asked what color went out. She stated that the people up the street had their blue cans out, so all the neighbors followed suit. Needless to say, it was a green day. We on Idaho Street all stand together. Remember never to ask us what color can to put out on garbage day.

Condolences to the family of Arnold Contestable. Arnold lived in Crockett prior to his relocation to Pt. Richmond.

Condolences to the family of Beverly Dietz. If you had a daughter that was either a Blue Bird or Camp Fire Girl, you knew Beverly as well as Camp Seabow. Wo-He-Lo Beverly.

It is great to have the Farmer's Market in the Point. Seen there recently were Dody Perry and Anna Schwarz.

Remember in your prayers: Jack Healy, Maurice Doherty, Al Frosini, Frankie Mello, Bill Smith, Katherine Workman, and Shirley and John Gerk.

Had the pleasure of hosting my kindergarten friends for a get together at my home. They were very impressed with Pt. Richmond.

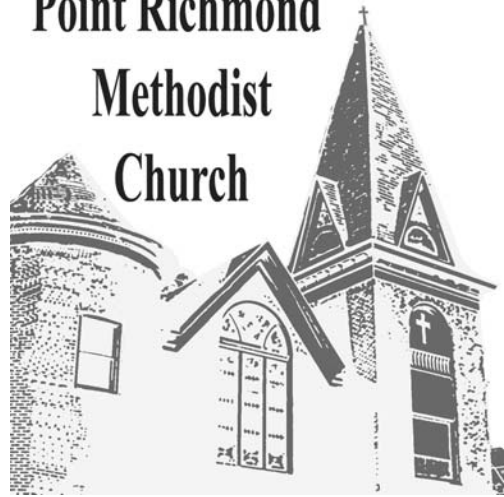
Tania Mantua, her husband and I interviewed Anna Schwarz and heard first hand her unique life story. It was captured on video and Anna enjoyed being the star.

Anna is in need of daily assistance and seeking a female who would be available daily for several hours a day. If you know someone, please contact Father O'Rourke.

**TOMORROWS ARE ONLY TODAY'S
WAITING TO HAPPEN**

SEE YOU IN CHURCH

Point Richmond Methodist Church



By Jean Reynolds

510-235-2988

jeanormr@pacbell.net

The Jazz service on Fathers' Day was one of the best ever with Dan Damon on piano; Kurt Ribak, bass; Jon Arkin, drums; and Lincoln Adler, sax. Vocalists included Gill Stanfield and Sheilani Alix, the Angel Choir, and the Joyful Noise Choir joined by the familiar voices of Liam Thompson and David Reynolds. The combined choirs sang Pastor Dan's new hymn: "Jubilate Deo" with choreography by Christine Silva-Netto. The dads got a musical, colorful treat that day, as did the rest of the congregation.

We had a spectacular week of Vacation Bible School August 3 – 7 titled "Growing God's Garden." Twenty-two students made flower pens and three kinds of collages with Jean Womack,

planted seeds with Kristi Johnson, played games with Sarah Thompson, Paige Viebrock, and Leslie Gortemiller, painted Maggot Art with help from Bethany Reynolds and artistic UC Davis maggots, sang with Pastor Dan, Sarah, Bethany, and Jean Reynolds, learned about some plants and stories in the Bible associated with them with Jean R. and Kristi, played catch, juggled and cleaned up with Bill Thompson, and shucked corn together for lunch on Friday. Jane Carnall, Norma Wallace, Valerie Gortemiller, Pat Pearson, Deby McFadyen and Jamela Smith Folds brought treats to share. Deby used her nursing knowledge for first aide. Jim Davis and Pat Pearson baked brownies on Friday for dessert and aromatherapy. Norm and David Reynolds made pizza for lunch. Katie Belton recruited new families to attend, and Gill Stanfield and Linda Andrew-Marshall made signs and submitted news articles to get the word out. Myrna Martin, Wendy Cacho, and Jamela came every day to help with art and life. Special kudos to Bill Thompson, Jean Womack, Sarah Thompson, Paige Viebrock, Pat Pearson, and Leslie Gortemiller: their enthusiasm all week really set the tone for a week to remember! When will it be time for VBS again? I can't wait!

On Sunday, August 9, 2009, some diligent plant-lovers met at 8:00 a.m. to prune and weed alongside professional garden designers Patrick McMahon and Nancy Buell. Pastor Dan Damon, Norm Reynolds, Stephen Shank, Norma Wallace, Helen Wysham, and Kristi Johnson all worked until the breakfast bell at 9:30 a.m. Russ Johnson and Jean Reynolds served breakfast to the hungry gardeners. The roses, courtyard, parsonage yard, and memorial garden all got a facelift!

We honored Heather Damon with breakfast on July 5 to acknowledge her recent graduation from UC Davis. Heather majored in history. This summer, she traveled to Washington D.C., Italy, and Greece: a fine way to celebrate the end of her undergraduate studies!

Russ and Kristi Johnson hosted a garden party on July 26 in their beautiful yard in Martinez. They hope to be able to say, "Farewell, Martinez," and "Hello, Richmond," if all goes well selling and

buying real estate; we second that wish.

Pastor Dan and Eileen Johnson had some time away in July. They attended the Hymn Society Conference at St. Olaf College and did some sightseeing in Minnesota and Washington D.C. While they were gone, Stacey Barnowe, a student pastor recently at El Sobrante UMC, preached one Sunday; Sarah Thompson led the service. Jean Reynolds preached another Sunday; Norma Wallace led the service.

Richmond resident Laura Salina celebrated her ninetieth birthday with friends and family on July 25 in Friendship Hall. Laura's daughters Marcia Waldbillig from Houston, Texas, and Ginny Ostrander of Richmond arranged an afternoon tea party for Laura at the church. Marcia and Ginny are familiar faces at the church, and we were glad they chose the church as the site for their joyous gathering.

Budding hymn writer Taliah East sang one of her compositions for worship on August 16. Pastor Dan collaborated with her to put her music on paper so others can sing it too. We benefit greatly from Dan's connections to others in the musical community and from the chance to hear gifted musicians like Ms. East.

On the Calendar:

Every Sunday, September through May:

10:00 a.m. Sunday school for all ages meets until 10:45 a.m.

11:00 a.m. Worship

Wednesdays, starting September 9: Joyful Noise Choir practice. 7:30 p.m.

Saturdays, starting September 12: 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., Angel Choir rehearses. Christine Silva-Netto directs and choreographs. Pastor Dan Damon directs and accompanies. Usually the choir sings for worship once a month. Call Pastor Dan to sign up or if you have questions: 510-232-1102.

Sunday, September 20: **Traveler Unknown CD release concert.** 7:00 p.m. Suggested donation, \$10. CD's available for \$15. Jazz quartet features Dan Damon, piano; Kurt Ribak, bass; Lincoln Adler, sax; Randy Odell, drums.

Saturday, October 10, 9:00 a.m., GRIP
Harmony Walk "Get a GRIP on Homelessness."

Our community will once again get a chance to Have a Heart for the Hungry and Have a Heart for the Homeless. Walkers ask for pledges and join with others at the Civic Center Plaza to rally and walk to support GRIP programs like the Family Shelter and the Souper Center. Businesses are invited to sponsor the walk and include their business logo on the event shirts.

Saturday, October 24: Silent ART Auction at the Point San Pablo Yacht Club, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Calling for artist donations! If you would like to donate a piece of art for the sale, call Deby @ 510-235-0165.

Saturday, October 31: Spooky Pancake Breakfast. 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. \$5 includes a stack of Boy Scout Recipe (Chicago World's Fair) pancakes, juice, coffee or tea. Wait to see what is spooky!

If you have questions about these events or would like more information, call Pastor Dan Damon, 510-232-1102.

POINT METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY

Mid Dornan

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

NOV. 6, 1928

The Social League met in the M.E. Church parlors with Mrs. Scofield and Mrs. Oehne as hostesses. The meeting was opened by repeating the Lord's prayer, led by the President, Mrs. Burdick.

There were 16 members present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The coming Bazaar was discussed and we decided to advertise it by putting it in the Richmond papers. Chairman of the booths are to see that wrapping material is furnished to wrap the articles bought by the people. Mrs. Dingle made a report on the kitchen committee for the Luncheon.

The Kitchen committee:

Mrs. Dingle, Chairman, Alexander, Redman, R.W. Jenkins, Stender, Burdick.

The Table committee:

Mrs. Schofield, Chairman, Mrs. Oehne, Owens, Gray, Osborne

All members are to help wait on tables.

The next meeting will be a business meeting with no hostesses.

Moved and seconded Laundry bill of \$1.54 be paid.

Dues

Mrs. Holbrook .60

Long .60

Gray .60

1.80

Plate offering 1.80

Ladies Aid 1.00

4.60

Food Sale 18.20

Mrs. Burdick 1.00

\$31.83 Old Bal

4.60

\$36.43

1.54 Laundry

34.89

\$38.29 New Bal

Mrs. Shaw, Sec



WWIC, Est. 1908

Margaret Morkowski

The Women's Westside Improvement Club Meets at the Point Richmond Methodist Church.

Ahhh, the year begins. Yes, the ladies of the Womens Westside Improvement Club (WWIC) have started the Club's 101st year with a flourish. We held our first meeting of the year on September 1st. It was great two see everyone after our summer break.

As many of you may know, the WWIC was established on July 7, 1908 by a group of ladies here, on Richmond's west side. Three years earlier, on August 7, 1905 the governor had signed the incorporation papers officially making Richmond a City in the State of California. Many of the original members of the WWIC were married to the "founding fathers" of Richmond who had prepared the papers of incorporation.

Now the ladies realized the "founding fathers" were busy writing ordinances, staffing the police and fire departments and corresponding with Sacramento. As a result, the ladies formed the WWIC to undertake "projects" which would enhance the community, and the ladies planned to have some fun along at the same time.

During the first 3 or 4 months the ladies had their luncheons, discussed various ideas for projects and finally decided on three. These three projects are still benefiting our community today. One project was the "building" of a playground at the corner of Nicholl and Washington, next to the Baptist Church. PRAM (Parents, Resources And More) and the City of Richmond recently upgraded the Playground with new ground cover and play structures. The "Playlot" is called the Janice Park and families enjoy it every day.

The ladies also started a Reading Room for the citizens of Richmond. It had a librarian and was opened with a large collection of books in one of the store fronts either on Washington or Park Place. In 1910, when the City received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to establish and build the City Library at 4th and Nevin, the ladies voted to allow the reading room to become the

West Side Branch of the Richmond City Library.

The third and by far the most challenging of the projects the ladies took on that year was the purchase and installation of a drinking fountain. Now this was not going to be any ordinary drinking fountain. Remember, this was 1908, our streets were not paved and during the summer and fall when it was hot, the wind would blow and clouds of dust would parch the throats of every living thing. Since this was the condition in most of the small towns across America, the "drinking fountain trade" took action and produced a series of drinking fountain catalogs (the internet shopping media of its time) for its customers. The ladies consulted and studied the available catalogs and chose a fountain with an award winning statue. The award wining statue was that of an American Indian. Please note, historians tell us, that neither the Indian depicted in that statue and nor the Indian depicted in the current Indian Statue, resemble members of any known Native American Indian tribe or nation. It was the just a beautiful statue. The 5 foot statue was to be placed on an artistic and functional 10 foot base.

The base was nothing to ignore. Near the top of the base were two lights, one on each side. These illuminated the area. There were two faucets just below the lights, these were waste high for people to drink water. About 12 inches lower, but on the side facing the street, there was a trough for horses. Then at the bottom of the base and below our faucets, were two drinking bowels for dogs. I think we in the Point have always loved our dogs. The cost of the statue and base was \$857 and with shipping and installation, the total came to \$1,000.

For fund raising activities, the ladies organized whist (card game) tournaments, tag sales (garage sales,) and bake sales. But the best fund raiser was the "Ball." Of course, the ball was a formal event

(Continued on page 11)

Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Park

The Historical Park General Management Plan has been approved and the National Park Service has opened new administrative offices at 2566 Macdonald Avenue right across the street from the newly renovated Richmond Civic Center.

Their phone number is 925-232-5050 and the office will be open for visitors from 9:00 am to 4:pm, Monday through Friday.

**The final plan can be viewed at
www.nps.gov/rori/parkmgmt/planning.htm**

WWIC (Continued from page 10)

with men in tuxedos or dark suits and ladies in long dresses. It was the biggest event of the year, everyone had fun and the money came pouring in.

The club is still very active. We contribute funds and lead efforts for various community activities. We contribute to the Point Richmond History Association, to the Save the Plunge Trust; to the Washington School "Many Hands Program," to the Friends of the Richmond Library for the PRAM's reading program, to the Point Richmond Landscape Advisory Committee, Washington School's After-School program and to the Point's Summer Music Concerts. Our current hands-on projects include restoration of the "Point Richmond Directory" sign the Indian Statue Rose Garden and the Washington School Library.

The Ladies meet for lunch on the first Tuesday of the month from September through June. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 6th at 11:30 am at the Point Richmond Methodist Church's Friendship Hall. For additional information please call Margaret Morkowski at 234-4219. Hope you come and join in the fun.

Out and About Town

Margaret Morkowski (510) 234-4219

The last of this year's **Point Richmond Summer Concert Series** will be held on **Friday, September 25 from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm on Park Place. The Arts of Point Richmond**, as always, will have an exhibit during the concert. Please invite all your friends and family and join us in closing out the summer in style. Call Andrew Butt at 236-7435 for more details.



Well, September is here and that means **Washington Elementary School** is open for "business." The kids and teachers are all excited. I bet the parents are too. With a stern face, one fourth graders said that their new teacher was "strict" but that they were "funny" too. Sounds like a great teacher. Because of the State economic crisis, the school budget has been drastically cut. Last year all of the classrooms were willed with children and their teachers. This year, three of the classrooms are vacant. We have three fewer teachers and the class sizes are much larger with combined classes for a couple of the grades. **The Washington School PTA and Point Richmond's Many Hands Project** are providing volunteers, funding programs and filling-in when possible to support the school. If you would like to volunteer or contribute funds, please call **Becky Jonas, President of the PTA at 235-0157 or Margaret Morkowski President of the Many Hands Project at 234-4219**. By the way, the Many Hands Project will be holding its annual fundraiser this October. If you would like to participate please call Margaret at 234-4219 for more information.



The **Point Richmond Farmers' Market** is a great addition to the Point. Wednesday, September 16th was Kids Day and everyone had a lot of fun. Some of the retailers and restaurants have specials that night and it's a good chance to get those fresh fruits, vegetables and baked goods for the rest of the week. By the way, if you need a little gift for someone special, stop by one of the artists' and retailers' booths. I'm sure you'll find just the right item. There is live music every week, baked potatoes, pie-by-the-slice and Kettle Corn too. **The Point Richmond Farmers' Market is located on Park Place and is open from 4 pm - 8 pm every Wednesday.** The certified farmers' market is sponsored by the Point Richmond Business Association and managed by the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association. Please call Margi Cellucci of the PRBA, at 237-0101 for more information.



Point Richmond's Historic **Our Lady of Mercy Church** invites you to join them at their monthly **Pancake Breakfast** fund raiser. We serve pancakes, eggs, sausages, bacon, fruit, coffee, tea and juice - all for just a donation of \$8.00. Stop by the Church Hall on the third Sunday of the Month. Those up-coming dates are



Sunday - September 20th, October 18th and November 15th. Breakfast is served between 8:30 am and noon. Come join in the fun. Please call 232-1843 for additional information.



On Saturday and Sunday October 17th- 18th, some of the artists in the Point are having an "Open-House." Details are still in the works, so please call Steve Hurst at 233-5393 for information.



Did you get a chance to join the **Save the Plunge Trust** on August 15th? They hosted a little "Preview" party so everyone could see the huge progress being made on the restoration of the Plunge. Almost two hundred people climbed the steps and walked inside the "lobby" of the plunge. We could see and smell the newly refurbished iron work, the newly poured concrete pool and the new stud-framing for the dressing and shower rooms. With the new windows and the monitor restored, we could see everything with no artificial light. It is all so impressive. If you missed the event, please don't be discouraged. The Plunge is scheduled to open the first part of 2010. If you would like to contribute to the restoration of the Plunge or if you have any questions, please call Rosemary Corbin at 235-5779.



For up-to-date information on "What's Out and About" search **PointRichmond.com**.



Mary Highfill, Rosemary Corbin and Theresa de Valencé In front of the Plunge on August 15th

Plunge Progress

On a beautiful August 15th nearly 200 Plunge enthusiasts gathered in front of the Richmond Natatorium to learn about progress of the super restored pool. Talking on the progress of the Plunge were former mayor Rosemary Corbin, Plunge Trustee Ellie Strauss, and project architect Todd Jersey.

The gathering was told that the pool's restoration was pretty much on schedule and they were still going for a December opening (Todd Jersey said that it will more than likely be January). Everyone was given a look inside.

Speakers once again talked on the pools most impressive attributes:

- Largest indoor pool in California
- Its water is treated with ultraviolet

technology instead of chlorine.

- Naturally lighted in daylight hours by 170 windows.
- Heated by radiant and solar systems.
- 100% naturally ventilated by 132 operable 3 x 4 foot windows.
- All of this makes it the “greenest” and healthiest swimming pool in the U.S.

Funds are still needed to complete phase 2 so volunteers were on hand selling Plunge t-shirts, Plunge magnets and Plunge DVD's. If you would like to help by purchasing one of these moments or making a donation call 707-894-0160 or you can get magnets and DVD's at our museum on the Triangle hours on page 2.

Plunge interior photo by Thomas Mercer-Hursh



Archive Photo Gallery

Historical Photo Restorations by Thomas Mercer-Hursh, Ph.D.



*Left: Stiefvater's
Department Store
(ghost in cover
photo) (0607-DC
from Don Church)*

*Right Above:
West side of West
Richmond (0605-
DC from Don Church)*

*Right Below:
Sharp eyes will
see the Post
Office; A.B.
Smallwood,
Funeral Director,
Arndle(?) Block;
and Union Tank
Lines Co. in
addition to
Stiefvater's (0613-
DC from Don Church)*



LOOT

at the Masquers

A review by Theresa de Valencé, TdeV@bstw.com

So life has been rough lately, eh? You don't know how bad it can get. *Loot* is a hoot—where the bad guys get away with . . . almost everything. Death, a funeral, and a bank heist—all are turned on their head.

Loot was written in 1966 by **Joe Orten**, a playwright of scandalous black comedies who became known for his “outrageously macabre” style. The storyline is nonsensical—à la Monty Python—taking pokes at society, government bureaucracy, and the Catholic church.

The play has a very “fresh” feel, partly due to the youthfulness of the actors. Director **Jessica Holt** is new to Masquers as well as much of the production staff, so the play doesn't have the familiar, comfortable Masquers footprint.

The set, designed by **Steve M. Vickers**, is full of clever details. Visible before the play begins, the audience can ruminate on what they see before their attention is called away to action. The way in which the wall sections in the proscenium tuck up to the drapes is very neat. I particularly enjoyed the “lived-in” look of the walls on the set, though the crown moulding does seem a bit bizarre.

Possibly the Director paid attention to my rant about actors simulating accents which are not their own (<http://tinyurl.com/pf8vzr>). Gratefully, Dialect Coach **Lauri Smith** was engaged for this production. For the many folks who avoid plays with “foreign accents” because they're unintelligible, *Loot* has fewer indecipherable bits than many.

The strikingly lovely Fay (**Lyndsey Kail**, *photo right and group photo, centre*), long-limbed and enticingly shaped, captivates most members of the cast; I was all the way into the audience—removed from her ambit—and I was still entranced.

But be careful, she doubles as a poisonous, man-eating spider—lustrous and tempting. (*Photos by Jerry Telfer.*)



Nurse Fay occasionally casts a token nod to compassion—but it is veneer thin. Her child-like self-absorption soon shows her primary allegiance. Fay illustrates a zealot's frequent predilection to justify all her desired actions by wrapping them in chapter and verse of her religion.

Dennis (**Drew Ledbetter**, *group photo, left*) is what the modern world might call a metrosexual, but I've always known as a pretty boy—a man blithely wandering through the world using his physical beauty as a currency. But Dennis is a bad boy as well—a dangerous man without brakes—the kind who'd make a girl's parents cringe. Were I in my first youth, I'd've been fascinated. Like the intended prey of a snake.

Dennis is an undertaker with an attitude—dressed in the only real costume, with a tip of the hat to formality but mod all the same. He speaks, on

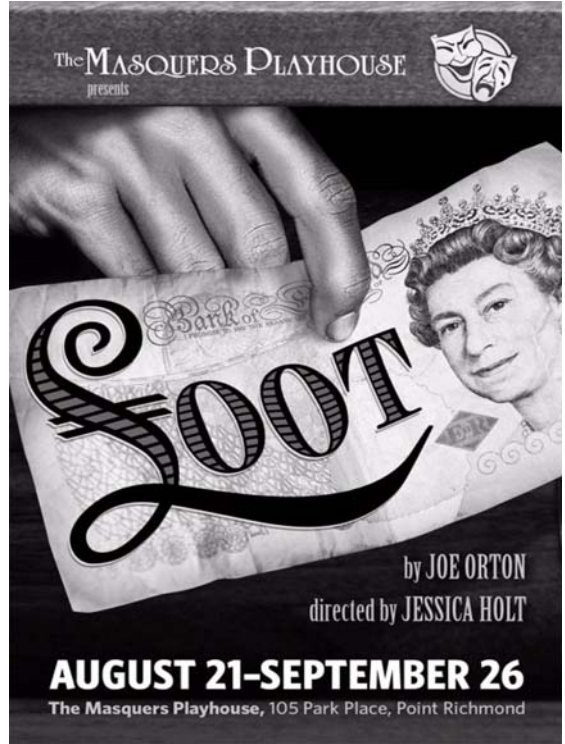
occasion, in a suitably subdued voice as befits his profession, but we see his antics—we *know* he's really enjoying himself. And so the audience wonders: is there *nothing* he won't do?

Hal (**Aaron Martensen**, *group photo, right*) is a cool, blade of grass who moves like he's being rustled by the wind. He's raised slouching to a fine art. He's a pretty boy of a different flavour who gives new meaning to the idea that the boy next door is not quite who he seems.

While Hal is a slightly tatty, former alter boy, he retains but two traits from that strait-laced life—truth telling and the ability to look very innocent. He's affable and compliant and very criminal. His notions about what to do with the money are mirth making. And, he devises an unusual pair of castanets. His fight scene is elegantly choreographed by **Matt Cowell**.

Meadows (**Matt Stevens**) has a brief onstage appearance as an upright policeman who captures the malefactor(s) and wrestles 'em into handcuffs.

McLeavy (**Peter Pinfield**) is the only honourable man in the play. Unfortunately, he is not destined for greatness; it's not that kind of play—the man just doesn't show up well. Though at times I felt sympathetic toward him, at others, I felt as contemptuous of him as do his tormentors.



McLeavy is a handsome new-made widower whose face spends a lot of time screwed up in a believable paroxysm of grief. He is surprisingly normal, stiff knees and all.

McLeavy is full of amusing, rude remarks about his family alongside all the prejudices of a staunch Catholic. In a reasonable world, his conservative views might be sensible, but the Church gets lampooned in this play. In spite of his stuck-up pomp, I found Peter attractive—a perfect soupçon for a voyeuristic middle-aged reviewer.

Despite what he says, Truscott (**Jim Fye**) looks like a cop whose very movements

Continued on page 21



William L. Thompson, M.D.

Old Historic Road Grades in the Point Richmond Hills

Dr. Thompson was born in Point Richmond on February 17, 1909. He grew up in the Point, attended Washington Elementary School and graduated from Richmond High School in 1926, attended U.C. Berkeley and in 1929 at the age of 20 was admitted to the UCSF Medical School.



He completed his medical school in 1933 and interned at Highland Hospital before joining the Civilian Conservation Corp. as a contract surgeon for the Army. Dr. Thompson practiced medicine for 39 years in Richmond, we are lucky to be the recipient of his written memories of his life in Point Richmond. This is a reprint of his gift to all of us. We will reprint his entire series, then put it all together in a single publication. Thank you Dr. Thompson!

Because of the housing developments in the subject area, more than ever be aware that Dr. Thompson wrote this almost 20 years ago.

First Part

Anyone who has walked in the Point Richmond hills from Nicholl Nob south cannot have failed to notice the great number of old road grades that have been carved into the hillsides in early days of the settlement. At present these have been almost entirely destroyed by erosion or overgrown by brush and, more recently, by trees. Usually these old tracks run roughly horizontally along the hillsides. One can rarely hike anyplace in this region without traveling along or across these old pathways.

Probably the first roads in this hilly area were the old Washington and Crest avenues. These had to be made by the Santa Fe in order to construct and maintain their old reservoir at the upper end of Crest Avenue. The establishment of this water supply was essential before the Santa Fe Yards could be put in operation. When the Standard Oil Company decided to locate in the Point Richmond area it preordained the formation of a town at this site.

Workers had to live close to the plant. There were no automobiles or other forms of transportation so people had to walk to work. Developers foresaw that the town would spread along the hills so an extensive road project was graded over the entire ridge. Probably most of the now used and developed roads occupied by homes north of the Santa Fe tracks were laid down in this same grading procedure.

So why didn't the Point continue to grow on out along the Potrero Ridge? The answer can probably be found in the street car lines. These connected Oakland and the East Bay with the Standard Oil Company and the Santa Fe. However they had to loop quite a way north and east to avoid the marshes and the occupied Santa Fe land. As a result of this they were laid down on a line that later became Macdonald Avenue. Now the presence of car lines made an easier route to the Standard Oil Company so Richmond was gradually formed along Macdonald Avenue and the Potrero Hills were no longer needed for residences. The old graded roads on the hills were then allowed to disintegrate.

Except for the old East Richmond Avenue at

the base of the hills the only old graded roads that later came into use were East Scenic Avenue and Buena Vista Avenue. My fathers house was apparently the first to be built on East Scenic Avenue. This was about 1906 or 1907. At first no one owned automobiles so this road was poorly maintained and used mostly for delivery services with horse and wagon. In 1917 my father bought his first auto and we dug a garage into the hillside. Dirt from this excavation was used to resurface and improve this old road. Buena Vista Avenue was formed below East Scenic and passed diagonally up the hill to meet East Scenic above the old Spiersch residence. These are the only two of the old graded roads that have remained constantly in use.

Another little street should be mentioned here and that is Glen Avenue. It never was a street but was a fairly side passage directly up the hill from the top of Montana Street to East Scenic. It was never used as a street but was a convenient route up to East Scenic for a walker and avoided going a long distance around the roads. As a child I recall my brother and I helping Mr. Morrison,

Max Henry and my father to construct a wooden walkway up the street for the convenience of the residents.

Starting above the old Santa Fe reservoir two old grades ran diagonally up to the summit of Nicholl Nob. The one on the north side of the hill is still visible but is almost completely overgrown by weeds and brush. The grade on the bay side of the hill also runs diagonally upward and in my early years it had been mostly eroded away. In recent years it was regarded and is used as an access route to the top in order to reach and care for the radio site and water tanks on the summit.

We might mention here that Professor Bots of the Botts airship used the top of Nicholl Nob to construct his old plane because it was the only hilltop around that was easily reached. That was about 1900 or 1901 and the Santa Fee route up to the reservoir was available and there was a rather easy slope from here to the summit. It was quite possible to transport his equipment up this slope with horse drawn vehicles.

Continued with the next issue



*From Nicholl Nob
Photo by Gary
Shows*

Point Richmond Pioneers

1975 Interviews from Gary Darling

In 1974 and 1975 fifteen year old Gary Darling conducted seven biographical interviews with Point Richmond pioneers. He did these interviews to fulfill the requirement of a service project to the community for the highest rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scout Troop 111 of Point Richmond. They were published in the old Point Counterpoint newspaper 39 years ago. We think they are good enough to publish again and show a wonderful reflection of time's influences. So we will reprint an interview with each issue of TPIT.

Reminiscing the good “Ole” days with Jerry Solich

Jerry Solich came to Point Richmond in 1902 from Yugoslavia with his parents. He had two sisters and six brothers. Jerry's first job was delivering newspapers and he worked with Don Church, another much loved Point historian, and John and Stanislaus Casey. In 1911 he started work for Standard Oil and worked there for about 3 years. By chance, he met a man who was willing to help him get a job working for Santa Fe Railroad. He began working in the round house and then as a student fireman. Eventually he became an engineer. He worked for a total of 35 years for Santa Fe. Jerry is at present a caretaker of Johnson's tree forest (near Alvarado Park) and lives at 216 Delfino Street here in Point Richmond.

Point Richmond, says Jerry, was an island surrounded by water, and the actual establishment of any real town was in about 1900 or 1901 when Santa Fe and Standard Oil moved in. The water of the bay then extended up to about 1st or 2nd Street. The first effort to connect the island of Point Richmond to the mainland was the construction of Cutting Boulevard which was built with the intention of blocking of high and low tide waters of the bay.

One of the things best told and remembered by Jerry is the story of the lost statue of the Indian. The statue was located at the present site of the 2 telephone

booths on the tip of “the triangle” in front of the library (*ed. the Indian Statue had not been replaced, I did not know that there were phone booths instead*). It was donated in 1909 by the Point Richmond West Side Ladies Improvement Club. Every lady in the club was honored because her name was placed on a plaque which was mounted on the stand of the statue.

The actual statue was made of copper and was about 6' 1". The stand was made of bronze. In the stand there were 3 water fountains. One was for the people, another for the horses. All of the horses and dogs would go there for a drink of water when they came to town. The horse and dog troughs were automatically filled by some kind of plunger system.

The story of the lost Indian, as told by Jerry as follows:

The men were trying to steal the statue. It so happened that the Indian stood across the street from the police station and the men were cutting the legs of the statue with a special saw. By now they had cut through one leg of the Indian and half of the other, when they heard someone coming.



They jumped down ran away and decided they wouldn't make another attempt for awhile. It so happened that there was a violent snow storm the next day and it knocked the Indian down. It fell right in front of the horse trough. The next day the statue was reported missing. This was in the year of 1913. To this day no one seems to know where it went. It seems like it would show up by now.

This "mystery of the lost statue" has bothered Jerry and many others for years. Do you have the lost Indian or any clues to the mystery?



"Scenic Avenue" by Donna Roselius

IRRESISTABLE TEMPTATIONS

- To write something on a steamy mirror .
- To feel house plants to find out whether they're real or not.
- To look up my last name in the telephone directory when I'm in a strange city.
- To fill in words on other people's unfinished crossword puzzles
- To write 'wash me' on a dusty, dirty car window.

Mid

LOOT

Continued from page 17

insinuate fantasies of a Clouseau-esque inspector. Jim is the only actor in this performance I've seen before, and he presents a quite different character: an indifferent, government employee ponderously discharging his duties—what are for him penetrating deductions, and for us, the circumlocutions of a tortuously illogical bureaucrat following the rules. Some people found this exceedingly funny. Unfortunately, the man was hot under the stage lights in all those layers, but your average inspector couldn't really show up wearing less.

LOOT

at the Masquers Theatre

Aug 21—Sept 26, 2009

For reservations, call (510) 232-4031

<http://www.masquers.org>

Jim's presence becomes a target for attention-seeking watchers—his mobile, elastic face with his perfectly chiselled nose; his voice, the pipe antics, and swishes of the raincoat—all drew me in; my eyes often followed him around the stage. Jim is definitely a man to put on your watch list.

While I'm not enamored of the British humour style of comedy, or the targets of the playwright's satire, *Loot* was fun. These six characters, the product of the collective creative genius of the entire production, are scintillating gems. They're all gorgeous and vibrant.

Loot deserves a look-see.

Reviews by Theresa de Valencé of SF Bay area community theatre performances are also published at <http://www.ReviewsByTdeV.com>. Join the mailing list by sending an email with "subscribe" in the subject to Theresa@ReviewsByTdeV.com.

Caesar Frosini's Legacy

Patricia Pearson

The Frosini family consisted of Mother: Rose Orsini, father Quintillio Frosini (Pisa), children: Sergio Caesar Frosini, b. 2/3/15, Alberto (Al) Frosini b. 9/11/17, Frieda Frosini Alonzo, b.7/27/19. The Frosini house, historically 433 Contra Costa Street, was renumbered by the City as 411 Contra Costa Street. A History Association Plaque is affixed to the outside of the residence.

Ceaser Frosini's daughter, Diane Frosini, gave me permission to share with you the Point Richmond adventures of her father which he entitled Caesar Frosini's Legacy. They consist of several short stories. I have attempted to present the stories in chronological order as a series.

This excerpt is Part Two:

Our home was in the middle of an Italian colony. The Irish and Swedes also had their colony. Somehow we kids knew where the imaginary line we could not cross was or else you had a fight in those early twenties. In fact, Leo Giovannetti and I started school, but neither of us spoke English, Italian was all we knew. The principal had to send us home and my mother found a tutor to teach us the basics of English. Four or five months later we were allowed back to school. Time and time again we were harassed by bullies, but eventually Leo and I could hold our own. We learned to evade a gang by running, 'and could I run' by the time I was 8 or 9.

Sundays were our big meal at noon. Generally we would go to some Italian stomp, such as Giant Park, El Sobrante, Stege East Shore Park as they would have Bocci Ball, dancing and tug-a-war with a heavy rope. They would choose up sides and Pa was always wanted. Pisa was his stand by name, as he originated from Pisa, Italy. The winners won a case of beer or wine at nearby Regglo's Giovannetti, an Italian deli. Even after a big Sunday dinner, Pa could eat a bushel. No one ever contested him for he always won prizes.

Each and every fall of the year, my Dad would crush no less than 3 tons of grapes. Always the wine grapes were crushed outside of the wine basement then transferred via a wood chute thru a hole in the foundation and into a huge redwood tank. Generally, the crushed grapes would start fermenting within three or four days. I was likely 12 years old when I was first introduced to enter the redwood tank and stomp said grapes (with rubber boots). I had a rope tied around my waist, and our basement wasn't much more than 8' to 9' high. When I entered the tank, I didn't have but 1 ½ to 2 feet clearance to the floor joist on the second floor, as I stomped the grapes. When grapes are fermenting, they throw off a gas, as I call it, and it has a potential for becoming ill because of the lack of fresh air. This operation would require about 20 to 30 minutes. Many times I would be somewhat groggy and I would have to be pulled out by the rope. I remember that on the second or third year, I vomited and never stomped grapes thereafter.

Pa bought an electric wine crusher and a hydraulic wine press (2). Of course he had me helping with the deliveries, which was at night and many times until 11 or 12 o'clock. When I was 14, I was able to pass our driver's test and had my drivers license and was, of course, proud. How Pa finagled getting me a license, I don't know, but I believe his attorney, Tsar Calfee, had a hand as 16 was the earliest you could get a license.

In 1924, a San Quentin Prison break took place that I want to mention. Three convicts escaped in a motor boat, and they headed to Point Richmond. Next door to my father's house, lived a policeman and he hollered about the prison break. The story, as I remember, was that the Contra Costa Sheriffs Posse, Richmond Police, and Berkeley Police deputies were planted from Standard Oil Long Wharf to Winehaven. In those days the San Rafael Ferry was operating also (later Peter Cairo was one of the Captains) Well, those convicts never had a chance, as they were gunned down before getting even close to shore.

I had two paper routes in Point Richmond, besides selling boxes of cookies at our local bank.

My biggest thrill was first in 1927, I was employed by Andrews News Agency to sell papers when Dempsey and Tunney fought for the Heavy Weight title. (Note: The location was North of Tewksbury and Washington where the Santa Fe yards are now located.) Ordinarily, the dailies were 2 or 3 cents each. But that night, the paper was 5 cents each. I worked till 10:00 o'clock and earned \$1.75. I received 1 ½ cents for each paper sold. Again in 1928, Dempsey and Tunney fought a rematch. Again Jack Dempsey lost and I only made less than \$1.50 because they had hired more boys.

From the tunnel to the S.P. Ferry on Garrard

Ave was a mile long. I would walk that far to sell a dozen papers, as the S P. Ferry was operating and once in awhile and ocean freighter would dock at Parr Terminal near the S P. Ferry. My sales were zero as foreign ships docked there also and of course 'no speaky English'. I got an idea to short out my walking and speed up my trips. I had an old pair of skates that I wasn't using. I nailed a set of wheels on a 2" x 4" x 4' long and I then nailed a wooden box on the 2 x 4 and whittled two pieces of wood for handles and away I would go. Well, that idea didn't last long as my Mother made me quit because I was wearing out my tennis shoes."



The original house was built in 1903 and was raised in 1913 to become the top floor with two stories under it. The second floor had at least two units and the bottom floor had a small apartment. Behind this was the wine area, it was partially concealed from view by the contour of the hill. A hole was cut in the foundation wall to provide a chute for the wine grapes to pass from outside to the basement.

Photo courtesy of the Frosini family and the Richmond Museum of History

On This Date in RP History

The Chinese Liberty Ships

By Steve Gilford

Leola Chow began working in the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond early in World War II. For a year she worked in Yard Three as an estimator, keeping track of all electrical materials that went into each ship. She'd joined the Health Plan at that time. Although she'd enjoyed the shipyard work, she'd had to leave the job when it drew near the time for

her daughter to be born.

When Mrs. Chow was ready to go back to work, she was only interested in working the Swing Shift, working nights so that she could spend her days with her infant daughter but that meant she couldn't to go back to her old job at Yard Three. Working Swing Shift there would have meant traveling back and forth to work on public transportation, by herself, at night. It was a prospect she found very unpleasant. Luckily, the Richmond Field Hospital was much closer to her home and when she applied for some sort of job there, she was hired as a receptionist. This surprised her a little because she'd had no experience in that sort of work. Before long, though, she found out why she'd been hired. Because she was fluent in both English and Chinese, the hospital had wanted her on staff in order to have someone available to be a translator on the Swing Shift. Translators were important because there were a great many Chinese-American workers in the shipyards. Hundreds, if not more, spoke no English at all. When they needed medical care, there had to be a way for them to communicate to the hospital staff. One reason there were so many Chinese and Chinese-American workers at the shipyards was that Chinese community was deeply concerned about the progress of the war in the Far East. Many had fled from there to avoid bloodshed that had started long before the formal outbreak of WW II.

China had been an early victim of Japanese aggression but now with the help of Allied supplies was carrying on an effective battle to free the country from the invaders. Many of these shipyard workers knew that their families and friends in China were suffering severely. Building



*Pearl Roesch
Mail Room Clerk*



A special "Chinese" edition of the Richmond workers' magazine featuring the delivery of two Liberty Ships, the Chung Shan and the Chung Cheng, to their Chinese officers and crews.



Chinese-American shipyard workers stand by proudly as the flag of China is raised for the first time aboard the Chung Shan

ships was a way for American Chinese to help beat back the Imperial Japanese Army.

Each day, at shift changes, ferries from San Francisco carried groups of Chinese from Chinatown to the yards. Many of them worked together in crews led by an English speaker who helped coordinate their efforts with the other shipbuilders. Those who spoke no English worked mostly in janitorial positions cleaning up the work sites. Many others, often well educated either in the US or in China, worked in skilled positions in



These four Chinese-American men worked in the Duplicating Dept., one of the shops servicing Richmond's Yards 1 and 2

the ship ways and offices. In fact, Mrs. Chow's husband was an engineer at the Kaiser yards.

When the US government agreed to turn over two new Liberty ships, the *Chung Shen* and the *Chung Chang*, to the Chinese government as part of the Lend-Lease Program, Richmond, perhaps because of the number of Chinese workers employed there, was selected to supply them. It was good news for China because the new ships meant more supplies would soon be on their way across the Pacific. As was often the case with Kaiser shipyard ships, these two Liberties were built even faster than called for in the already optimistic production schedule.

In the Fall of 1943, when the Chinese sailors and their officers arrived to take over these brand new vessels and put them into their country's service, the shipyard published a special issue of the magazine, *Fore n Aft* to recognize Chinese-American contributions to the impressive achievements of the Richmond Yards.

©Steve Gilford
sageprod@aya.yale

*Steve Gilford wrote this and other articles about Kaiser Permanente's history. He has given us his permission to reprint them.
Thank you Steve.*



Wong Yen, Window Washer, Yard 3



*Leung Hin,
Leaderman Prefab Plant*

EXCLUSIVE OVER 90 CLUB

An impressive list that grows each month.

Lee Christian - 93
Eunice Ruth Hursh - 93
Jean Moyle Spiersch - 95
Mark Gebhart - 95
Gretchen Van Tassel Shaw - 91
Dody Perry - 92
Lupe Padilla Lopez - 95
Ruth Mallette - 97
Avis Blanchette - 95
Anna Schwarz - 97
Viola Lala Kennedy

Steve Wyrick - 94
Ed Squires - 93
Goldie Mobley-96
Ann Hanzlik - 96
Shoney Gustafson -93
Madelilne Bellando Albright -92
Roger Wiese - 93
Jerome Vloebergh - 93
Bernard Dietz 95
Al Frosini - 91
Betty Dornan - 90
Charlotte Kermabon Birsinger-92
Thelma Mae Harvey - 93

Delphina Franco - 91
Edna Hathaway - 90
Mary Tom Coe - 90
Jerry Cerkowicz, Sr. - 90

100 Year Club

Ruth Wood Mullen - 102
Gordon Miller - 100
Rena Cairo Gonsalves - 100

Please send corrections and additions to “Over 90 Club” to midornan@sbcglobal.net

Birthdays *September*

Joan Gatten
Sofia Warith
Marie Peckham
Ivar Elle
Daniel Butt
Don Diani
Michael Heckman
Emily Anne Barnes
Al Frosini
Frank Christopher

Linda Newton
Roberta Wilson
Nadia Warith
Bernard Dietz
Stephen Berman
Ingvar Elle
Simeon J. Burtner
Gayle Kaufman
Roxanne Trudeau
John Hadreas

David Reynolds
Donna Roselius
John T. Knox
Jerry Cerkowicz
Kenneth Dolan
Theresa Daniel
Jan Feagley
June Kunkle Blackburn
Lorin Buhler
Isobel Shaw

Aubrey Lee Rentfro
Stephen Kowalski
Stephanie Kowalski
Gene Smith
Diane (Frosini) Diani
Margaret Morkowski
John Bailo
Alice Jordan
Peter Minkwitz

October

Terry Wynne
Kate Lord
Florence Wilson
Liz McDonald
Jean Moyle Spiersch
Maria Shaw
Marguerite Clutts
Linda Pereira
Timothy Doherty

Jodi Bagley
Jeff Ward
Todd Cort
McKinley Bradshaw
Tim Montgomery
Brian Tedrick
Rich Weirick
Marc Bisio
Chris Ward

Helen Frosini
Chad Feagley
Isobel 'Boo' Shaw
Jerry Daniel
Grace Cerkowicz
Otto Barni
Betty Glass Marshall
Maria Inchauspe Smith
Abigail Munoz Rivera

Toni Cannizzaro
Jan Burdick
Leo Mattuecci
Ray Smith
Tony Peter Bernabich
Bill Vallivero

Deaths.....

Myrna Corinne Wishart peacefully passed away on Wednesday May 27th at Seaton Hospital in Daily City. She was laid to rest on June 4th, 2009 at Sunset View Cemetery in El Cerrito, next to her husband Ken and near her parents Allen and Joy.

Anita Marie Brougham, a 95-year-old native of Berkeley and longtime former Point Richmond resident, died in Santa Cruz on May 23, 2009. She graduated from the Providence School of Nursing and served in the U.S.S. Army during WWII in both France and the Philippine Islands. She was an operating room nurse in many East Bay Hospitals. She was preceded in death by her husband George and son Michael. She is survived by her son Greg Brougham of Santa Cruz, 3 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren.

Marie Wilson Dietz, a longtime resident of Point Richmond, is finally at peace after a lengthy illness. Marie was affectionately known as “Re” by her six grandchildren, Tom, Kate, Anne Marie, Jill, Christopher and Scott. She was a member of the Grace Lutheran Church in Richmond, a former board member of the Richmond Museum Association, the Live Oak Branch of Children’s Hospital, Order of the Eastern Star and a charter member of the Brookside Hospital Auxiliary. Marie was most proud of her longtime association with Wilson & Kratzer Mortuaries in Richmond. She served as an administrative secretary for over 50 years and worked alongside her late husband, Francis L. Wilson. Marie is survived by her husband of 29 years, Dr. Bernard “Barney” Dietz, and her two children, Mark Wilson and his wife, Beanie, and Wendy Boyer and her husband, Bill all of Martinez.

“THIS POINT in time”, the book is available once again!

By Donna Roselius, Teresa Albro, Michelle Brown & Rosemary Corbin. It was written in 1980 and published by the Point Richmond History Association. This book contains stories of early Point Richmond, detailed descriptions of historic homes and commercial buildings and is illustrated throughout with drawings and maps by talented Donna Roselius. \$15.00

Pick up your copy at the museum (Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-2).

Or mail your check (made out to PRHA) for \$15.00 for each copy you want and add \$7.50 for UPS shipping. Mail it to: TPIT Book, 229 Golden Gate Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801.

CALENDAR/DIRECTORY

ARTS OF POINT RICHMOND

Contact: Linda Drake, 510672-0793

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE READING ROOM

510-223-0487

GOLDEN STATE MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM AND EAST BAY MODEL ENGINEERS SOCIETY

900 Dornan Drive, Miller/Knox Regional Park. Sunday 12:00 to 5:00. Special openings on Saturdays and Holidays. Admission is \$4, \$2 over 65 & under 12, max. family admission is \$9.00, 510-234-4884 for details.

MANY HANDS PROJECT TO SUPPORT WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Contact, Margaret Morkowski, 510-234-4219

MASQUERS PLAYHOUSE

Quality productions, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, Sunday Matinees at 2:30 pm. Tickets are \$18. Dinner at the Hotel Mac and the play on Thursday, for only \$45. Call 510-232-4031 for reservations.

PARENTS, RESOURCES AND MORE (PRAM)

A volunteer, nonprofit organization serving families with children 5 or under. Playgroups, social events, educational opportunities, Information go to <http://www.PRAM.net> or call 510-215-1734.

PARENT, TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Becky Jonas, President, 510-235-0157

POINT RICHMOND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Meets 2nd Wednesday each month, Hotel Mac, 12-1:30, Contact: Margaret Morkowski, 510-234-4219.

POINT RICHMOND COMMUNITY CENTER

Info: 233-6881

POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Museum at 139½ Washington Avenue, open Wednesday 4:30 to 7:00 and Thursday's 11:30 to 2:00. The deadline for the next issue of TPIT is Friday Oct. 30, 2009. Info call Pres. Mildred Dornan at 510-234-5334.

POINT RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Meets last Wednesday each month, Point Richmond Community Center; 7:30 P.M Contact: Peter Minkwitz, President, 510-232-3663

POINT RICHMOND VILLAGE

"Helping You Help Yourself" Contact: Linda Newton, Chairman 510-595-5566

POINT RICHMOND/WEST SIDE BRANCH LIBRARY

Information call 510-620-6567

RED OAK VICTORY

Open Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday 10am - 3pm. \$5 donation for adults, \$4 seniors, \$2 children. Sunday Breakfast September 10th and October 12th, 9 am - 1 pm, \$6 adults children FREE

SAVE THE PLUNGE TRUST

Contact: Rosemary Corbin, 510-235-5779

WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Washington School at 565 Wine Street offers traditional and Spanish dual immersion curriculum, K - 6th grade. Contact principal Lisa Levi at 231-1417 for more information.

WOMEN'S WESTSIDE IMPROVEMENT CLUB (established 1908)

Richmond's longest standing women's club. Contact: Margaret Morkowski, President. 510-234-4219.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Type of membership (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	\$20.00
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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.

Main Contributors to this Issue:

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Don Church/Allan Smith	Historic Photos
Jerry Cerkowicz	Proof/Information
Pam Wilson	Membership Info
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Theresa de Valence	Article
Margaret Morkowski	Article
Donna Roselius	Line Drawings
Pat Pearson	Articles
Steve Gilford	Article
Gary Darling	Article
Burl Willes	Information

Articles for each issue are due on or before the deadline printed in the calendar section.

Please mail articles and items of interest to:

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"This Point...in time" is a publication of the Point Richmond History Association, a non-profit organization at:
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Visit our website
PointRichmondHistory.org

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