

# THIS POINT.... in time

## NEWSLETTER

The Point Richmond History Association

Since 1979

[www.PointRichmondHistory.org](http://www.PointRichmondHistory.org)

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\$3.00



**Desiree Heveroh, the current Light Station Keeper of the East Brother Light Station, is asking you to help save the East Brother Light Station and its unique Bed and Breakfast.**

The East Brother Lighthouse was built in 1873 on a tiny island on the east side of San Pablo Strait as a nighttime aid for ship navigation. It is the oldest existing wood frame lighthouse in the United States. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Registered California Landmark. But many of you are most familiar with it as an operational bed and breakfast.

Unfortunately, on April 1 of this year the underwater power cable that supplies electricity to the island failed. The cost of repairs to the cable are estimated to be upwards of \$200,000. Although the Coast Guard owns the island, they have no money for a project this big. The beacon itself can function on the gasoline generator installed for that purpose but operating the bed and breakfast and keeping the island open to visitors requires much more electricity.

In addition to the cable repair other options are being considered, including solar, wind and wave energy. But these also take more money than the Bed and Breakfast alone can generate.

Desiree has started a Go Fund Me campaign to raise the money needed to save the East Brother Light Station and Bed and Breakfast. To donate go to

**<https://gofund.me/af42a80f>**

For a complete history of East Brother Lighthouse see: *East Brother. History of an Island Light Station* by Frank Perry (2019). Copies are available at the PRHA History Museum. See also: the East Brother Light Station's website: **<https://www.ebls.org/>**

*BJ*



*Please help save this  
unusual and historic  
place!*

# From the President

by Bonnie Jo Cullison

Hello PRHA members and readers.

I have an update on our annual meeting. As this newsletter goes to press, the possibility of assembling safely in larger groups is rapidly approaching but is not quite here yet so the PRHA Board has decided to postpone our Annual Meeting until the Fall when we hope the Community Center will be available for our use. So, once again, I can only say “stay tuned”.

I would like to point out a video that Andrew Butt posted on the PRHA Facebook page on April 1 (no fooling). It is a 5-minute tour of downtown Point Richmond that he shot while riding a one-wheel electric scooter. Not only is it a fun little tour to take but the video will provide a valuable record for the future of what Point Richmond looked like on April 1, 2021. Thank you, Andrew!

And in case you aren’t aware, you don’t have to be a Facebook member to access the PRHA Facebook page. From the PRHA website home page you only need to click on the Facebook button to access all the postings, including many old and new photographs.



Still from Andrew’s video tour

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### The Cover:

***On May 1, 2021 Karen Buchanan was “docent in charge” of our newly re-opened post COVID19 museum. To celebrate Karen set up outside on a beautiful Spring day. Love the costume Karen!***



*Thank you members for your renewal:*

Nancy Webb/Jack Mormon Family  
Louis Stockdale  
Dee Rosier\*\*  
Richard & Roberta Palfini\*\*  
Jim Fisher Family  
Deborah Wilkinson  
Susan Reynolds Prine  
Patricia Dornan\*\*  
Marion Kent  
Olivia & Jim Jacobs\*\*  
Mark Healy  
Bernie McIntosh\*\*  
Richard Giordano Family  
Karen Shaw  
Fran Smith  
Mary Crosby & Tom Piazza\*\*  
Gary Shows Family

*Welcome to new members:*

Omera Johnson  
Offie Walker  
Roxanne Sullivan  
Winifred San Fillippo  
Rick Dustin

\*Gift Membership

\*\*Special Supporter, *Thank You!*



*Thank you!*

# Santa Fe Market

*For distributing*

***“THIS POINT.....in time”***

*Now more than ever, please  
support our local retailers and  
restaurants*

*Visit our little museum and view our  
1000+ picture slide show of historic  
Point Richmond photos.*

*Open Thursdays and Saturdays  
And the first and second Tuesday of  
each month*

*11:30 am - 2:00 pm*

***Did you Know?***

*The famous grizzly bear on our  
state flag was named Monarch.  
The last California grizzly bear is  
stuffed was on display at the  
California Academy Sciences in  
San Francisco.*

## Editor's Notes

Gary Shows

[gary@pointrichmondhistory.com](mailto:gary@pointrichmondhistory.com)

There is lots of interesting items that I think you will enjoy in this issue.

Thanks to James Cheshareck for helping us to understand the loss of the Standard Avenue part of our commercial district.

Thanks to Karen Buchanan for letting us know about what is going on with Lara Choe and the Hotel Mac Restaurant. Here's to wishes that the passing of the COVID19 pandemic will bring about a strong recovery for Lara and our other dining business that have suffered here in the Point. Please support our local businesses more than ever.

Enjoy Oliver B. Pollak's article on a week of shipping business on the Bay.

I am grateful to the rest of our TPIT staff for excellent reporting and I so appreciate your timeliness and honor of our deadline date. You make doing this newsletter fun for me!

Looks like I am done for this issue, so I wish you a wonderful and healthy summer! See you in September!

**The deadline for the next issue of "THIS POINT.....in time" will be Friday August 20, 2021.**

So that we do the proper "social distancing" we paid the printer to fold and staple the last issue, work usually done by our group. Thanks for addressing and mailing go to:

Gary Shows

Jerry Cerkowicz

Bonnie Jo Cullison

***Thanks to the Volunteers who open and close our museum.***

***Linda Andrew-Marshall***

***Heinz Lankford***

***Gary Shows***

***Lori Kauth***

***Bonnie Jo Cullison***

***Karen Buchanan***

## Thank You to Our Special Supporters!

### History Makers

Donna Wilson

Rosemary Corbin

Kathe Kiehn

John A. Thiella & Rosa T. Casazza

Roberta & Richard Palfini

Patricia Dornan

Les Crim

Norm and Jean Reynolds

David & Ruth Janes

The Bartram-Owens Family

Burl Willes

Garry & Maryn Hurlbut

Bob Armstrong

Steven Birnbaum

Ron Vandergrift

Lynn Maack

Barry Goode

Ellen Pechman

Mark J. Kornmann

Jim & Olivia Jacobs

### History Preservers

Kevin, Renee & Griffin Knee

Linda Newton

Tom & Shirley Butt

The David Dolberg Family

Bernie McIntosh

Don & Ingrid Lindemann

Mary Crosby & Tom Piazza

Norma Wallace

Victor J. Westman

Gloria & Mark Maltagliati

Anne Brussok-Roth & David Roth

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Kathy Dornan Barnes

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Karen Buchanan

Sandra & Bruce Beyaert

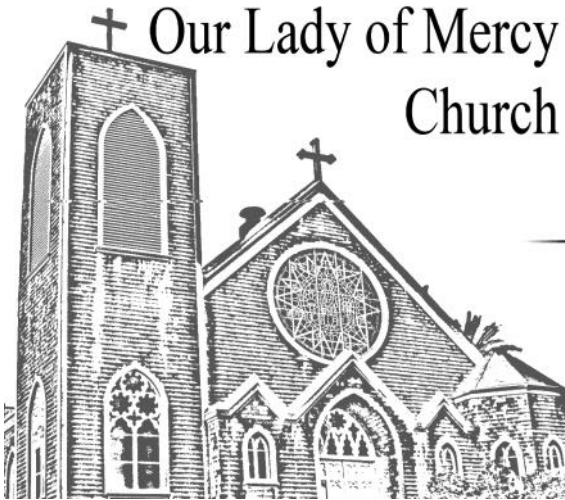
Margi Sullivan

James McCarty (San Pablo Historical Soc.)

Virginia Rigney

Paul Ciabattari

# Church News



**By Dee Rosier**

510-232-1387

drosier@sbcglobal.net

The days are brighter and lengthier which extends to the pandemic as the light at the end of the tunnel gains brightness. At this time, most of us have received our second vaccine and are considered safe.

Taking baby steps, we are slowly returning to what used to be, but in a different fashion. At this time of our lives, we have learned to be accepting and resilient. What we return to will be a new way of life. We have been self-isolated for such a long time, we look forward to release.

During the pandemic, we found new ways to remain attached to our Sunday Mass, by worshipping virtually. It was not the same as sitting next to a friend and holding their hand. What we were in need of were the spiritual words that are necessary to retain our faith. Years ago, we had a Priest who we referred to as, "The King of Homilies." He captured us with his spiritual words which lived inside of us until the following week when we returned. He had a gift which he

shared with us.

The parking lot fence is complete and all that remains are the signs indicating private parking – towing.

The next step will be paving. A towing company will be contacted to clear the lot of those who are not legal. At one time it became a parking lot for unwanted vehicles, until a towing firm came in and cleared them.

This year Easter coincided with Passover – a time of renewal. Looking at past celebrations, we shared a Seder dinner with the Methodist Church. We were indeed ecumenical and shared many get togethers with our neighbors. In their youth, my children attended Vacation Bible School. We also have a certificate from the Baptist Church which was located on Washington Street. Again thanks is given to our special parishioners, The Toledos, who brought us new traditions. They guided us through the Seder dinner.

The name, Rosemary Giacomelli, on our Prayer List, drew much dialog and inquiry from her peers from the past – The families Hayes, Doherty, Darling, Nobles. An instant support group was formed. Rosemary will go down in the history of Our Lady of Mercy as being the one and only female Altar Girl. She is being well remembered.

Father planted many annuals, which are now blooming. The yard area would be ideal for a small wedding or baptism. In the near future, a memorial service for all our parishioners lost during the pandemic will be planned.

Diane Diane had hip surgery and during recovery, her femur broke. She is presently in a rehab facility learning how to navigate.

Condolences to the family of Jean Allyn. Jean was an Idaho Street resident for many years, prior to moving to Sonoma and ultimately, Durango, Colorado. Jean was a gifted lady with outstanding good taste as well as being artistically inclined. She was always happy when working in her garden which she landscaped in her good taste. One of the tributes written about her

commented on her laughter and would certainly agree that she had an uplifting laugh.

Remember in your prayers, those who are unable to join us at Mass, as well as their caregivers:

Jim Arkin  
Thomas Brady  
Linda Cheshareck  
Diane Diani  
Michael Lambert  
Diane Marie  
Edwina Murray  
Fr. David O'Rourke  
Marie Peckham  
Emon Roongruangphoi  
Fred Siegman  
Marcellina Smith  
Blain Yaris  
Christing Young

We are slowly returning to normalcy, with a fresh start and new Lector's schedule. Eucharistic Ministers are not yet included – maybe later.

Mother's Day was celebrated and well it should be if you are fortunate enough to still have one. For those of us who don't, we live on the fond memories she left with us, in order to pass on. Many years ago, we celebrated Mother's Day by presenting each mother a carnation during Mass. The red carnations are believed to be a gift for mothers who are still alive, as it was believed carnation's deep red petals represented that of a beating heart and love, rather than loss.

With no town-wide yard sales, this Memorial Day will be a quiet one. Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30, regardless of what day of the week it fell on, but since 1971 the holiday has been celebrated on the last Monday of May.

It has been a year since many of us were befriended by Covid the Crow. He arrived in the good hands of Mayor Tom Butt on April 29, 2020. He was nursed back to health and bid us goodbye on September 15, 2020. I will continue to speak to

the crows that visit my backyard and ask if one of them is Covid.

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise. Since Venus is normally associated with women – what does that tell you? It tells you that women are going in the right direction. (Trivia dedicated to Mid Dornan)

Slowly returning to normal times, Eliza O'Malley, our wonderful soprano returns to share her lovely voice with us and add to the beauty of the Mass.

Saturday Mass – 1PM

Sunday Mass – 9:30AM

The church is open on Wednesdays (1PM-2PM) for private worship

St. Vincent de Paul Help Line – 510-334-4951

MAYBE WHEN SOCIAL DISTANCING IS A THING

OF THE PAST, WE'LL HUG A LITTLE HARDER,

HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER, AND REMEMBER MORE

THAN THE TIME WE SPEND WITH THE PEOPLE WE LOVE.

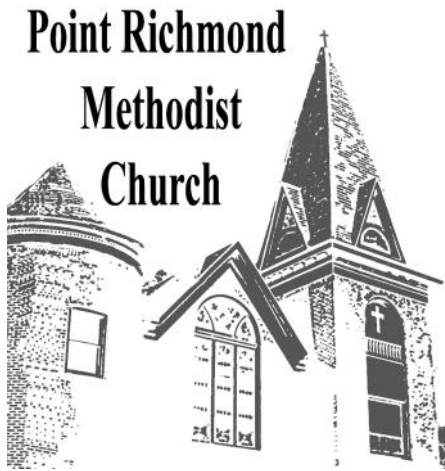
SEE YOU IN CHURCH (SOON)



Dee Rosier

***My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying.***

***Rodney Dangerfield***



**Jean Reynolds**  
510-734-3942  
sweetheart05@mac.com

#### Worship:

During Holy Week, we had a service on Ash Wednesday with our local circuit of United Methodists.

Maundy Thursday, April 1, people gathered on Zoom with their favorite mug and comfort food as we remembered Jesus' last supper. We used break-out rooms to simulate sharing a table and to share stories.

We celebrated Good Friday with the other congregations in our West County circuit. Rev. Emily Pickens-Jones compared the inequities in our criminal justice system with those in Jesus' day. Choirs and musicians from the various churches provided live or pre-recorded music. Rev. Emily's parents from Sacramento, who are both United Methodist clergy, participated in the service.

On Easter, April 4, we met on Zoom at 7:00 a.m. for a short sunrise service. We sang an extra hymn at the 11:00 a.m. service to include more Easter favorites. Gill Stanfield sang "In the Garden." It was Communion Sunday. In the afternoon, Rev. Jacey provided prayer stations in the backyard and side-yard of the church from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. One of the stations was a poster board to list "signs of hope." People passing by added to the list when Rev. Jacey moved it nearer

to the sidewalk. We look forward to a day when we can serve you breakfast on Easter, and have an egg hunt for the kids.

May Cotton learned how to host the Zoom worship and share the PowerPoint file, and filled that role for more than a month. When the pandemic started, no one expected Zoom worship to last for more than a year. Initially, Jennifer Metz Foster was the sole host for many weeks. Then Gill Stanfield took some of the hosting duties. Our hosts are committed to providing a meaningful worship service, and most Sundays everything is seamless. We appreciate our worship team, and all the ways people step forward when they are needed!

#### Education:

After Easter, we started a study of "The Book of Joy," Douglas Abrams' distillation of a week-long conversation between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. They share their life experiences of joy through the lens of their faith traditions, and discuss ways to achieve a more joyful life. Throughout the book, they refer to scientific studies about the effect of joy on our nervous system and emotions. Our reading sparked some thoughtful discussions and the text will not be soon forgotten. Drop in to join the conversation on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. The link is listed on the church website.

#### Mission:

On April 27 we met with Katherine Parker, who works in Nepal as a missionary. It was morning where she was; evening here. She described how the Nepali people have coped during the pandemic. They received some vaccines from China. Some children and their parents attended school via radio broadcast; others used loudspeakers to conduct classes at a distance. People are exploring ways to make enough income at home, instead of being foreign workers in another country. Two hospitals Katherine's organization sponsors are doing okay, funded by a grant from Japanese Methodist Women. She is directing research about gender roles and culture. Katherine asked for us to designate our donations to the community-based rehabilitation program. It mainly provides corrective surgery for children born with clubfoot, a common affliction in Nepal.

Debbie Benko purchased food in May for the



Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP) dinner we sponsor monthly.

Pat Dornan and Barbara Haley are collecting school supplies (or money to buy them) for the children staying at GRIP. The children start a six-week summer school program early in June to help them maintain grade level during the pandemic.

Trustees:

We plan to meet in person for worship sometime in September. The trustees consulted with a specialist about the air flow and filtration in the sanctuary, and will install some new equipment before we resume using the space. We want to keep a good online system in place for when we meet in person: at least fourteen people regularly join us from out of the area on our virtual services.

On the Calendar:

Rev. Cornel Barnett is our guest preacher Sunday, June 20.

Rev. Jacey's ordination: Sunday, June 27, at 10:00 a.m. It will be our worship service that day. Note the earlier time.

Vacation Bible School: July 26-30. Stories, games, songs, and art, for children age four to

grade six. More information coming soon!

For calendar updates, links to our live events, or to play a recording of the weekly worship service, see the church website: <https://www.pointrichmondmethodist.org>



*Jean Reynolds*

### Quiz From Mid Dornan's Files

**How many can you answer without picking up your phone or going to your computer?**

1. In the children's story "Bambi", what is the rabbit's name?
2. In Shakespeare's play "Hamlet," who killed the king of Denmark.
3. When was the GI Bill of Rights approved by Congress?
4. What modern U.S. city began as Fort Duquesne?
5. How many sides does a trapezoid have?
6. According to the Bible, where did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to keep Him safe from Herod?
7. What year was the first Super Bowl played?
8. When McDonald's opened its first restaurant in 1955, what was the cost of a hamburger?
9. In what year did the U.S. Postal Service introduce the five-digit zip code?
10. What breakfast cereal has a leprechaun for a mascot?

*Answers are on page 27*

**In the South they don't PUSH buttons, they MASH THEM**

*Something that I learned while living there*

# WWIC Est. 1908

*News from the Women's Westside Improvement Club by Mary Lee Cole*

The Westside Women's Improvement Club members enjoyed hearing from guest speaker Irene Hightower at their May 4 monthly meeting. Irene presented the Arts of Point Richmond (AOPR) organization, which was launched in 2008 by our own WWIC member and fiber artist, Altha Humphrey. After President Diane Diani opened the meeting by wishing club members Lynn Clifford, Ruth Frassetto and Gail Sinclair happy May birthdays, Mary Lee Cole introduced Irene Hightower. Irene is a talented nature photographer and a longstanding member of the Marin Photography Club. She has studied with masters of nature photography. For a number of years she coordinated AOPR activities, and under her leadership a number of local artists joined the organization, including those working in a variety of paint mediums— oils, pastels, acrylics and watercolors— as well as drawing, fiber arts, jewelry, photography and writing. Thanks to the activities and programs of AOPR, local residents and visitors to Pt. Richmond enjoy AOPR

exhibitions in the Post Office windows, restaurants and cafes. During the Covid-19 pandemic AOPR launched a new initiative, Taking It Outdoors (TIO) to display AOPR artists's work in a large banner format. Point Richmond residents and visitors are enjoying these banners displayed on walls and fences all over town. After her presentation, Irene shared images of her nature photographs for all to enjoy. She wrapped up her comments by answering questions and then members shared their experiences making art.

We had a short business meeting, reviewing the April 6 meeting minutes and Treasurer Doreen Leighton's report, which included information about the results of our first annual BINGO fundraiser. We voted to augment the BINGO fund with other club funds in order to give \$500.00 donations to both the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Richmond Emergency Food Pantry.

Focusing next on old business, Secretary Juels Klotz announced that she had heard from several members who thoroughly enjoyed the club's first Annual BINGO Fundraiser In April. Other club members agreed that it was lots of fun and shared that their guests and friends asked about the date of the next BINGO game. Those who won gift cards for Aky's, Kaleidoscope, the Mom and Pop Art Shop, Little Louie's and the grand prize basket of wine, chocolate truffles and other goodies reported enjoying their rewards.

May is the club's month for electing leadership positions. The task was easier this year since current officers Secretary Juels Klotz and Treasurer Doreen Leighton offered to stay in their positions for another full term. Everyone was delighted. Ruth Frassetto had expressed interest in the First VP position; there were no other nominations from the floor.

Club committee chairs had updates to share: Linda Newton spoke for the Garden Committee and mentioned spending time weeding in the Map



*Members pictured: Kathleen Wimer, Mary Lee Cole, Gail Eierweiss, Diane Hedler, Ann Langille and Carla Bowman. Book group members not pictured: Kathryn Dienst, Doris Mitchell, Linda Newton and Gail Sinclair.*

Garden with member Saru Joseph. Linda looks forward to seeing others coming out to weed and offered to show volunteers where to weed, how to identify weeds to pull— and which plants not to pull! Contact her and she'll show you everything you need to know about the garden. Ann Langille reported that she is caught up with her Sunshine Committee work of sending cards and notes to members. Kathleen Wimer reminded everyone that the WWIC book group meets the Thursday evening after the monthly WWIC meeting. This month members are hoping to meet in person. They will discuss *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins, which describes the ordeal of a

Mexican woman and her son as they flee drug violence in Mexico and make the arduous journey to the United States as undocumented immigrants.

The next membership meeting is June 1. We will celebrate our annual “hat day” when we all wear hats and have a story, true or made up, about our hat. Diane concluded the meeting with her food for thought: “Sometimes you need to pause for a moment and really appreciate all the good in your life.”

*Apologies to Mary Lee Cole because I failed to credit her for her excellent work on the last issue.*  
Gary



### ***Current Art Exhibitions Sponsored by Arts of Point Richmond*** *from Rita Gardner*

*Arts of Point Richmond is a community association established to enrich our community by providing support, appreciation, and exposure for the arts. For more information: [www.artsofpointrichmond.com](http://www.artsofpointrichmond.com)*

#### **NEW EXHIBIT June 1, 2021 - November 2021**

##### **Lara's Fine Dining Restaurant, 1900 Esplanade**

Drive, Richmond (Marina Bay). Exhibition features artists Debi Cooper, Emily Erickson, Rita Gardner, Irene

Hightower, Bill Johnston, Jr., Betsy Kellas, Nora Lee, DJ Leland, Nancy Noble, Ellen Pechman, Judy Rattner, Bette Tarr, Sharon Taylor-Ward, George Tomberlin, Nancy Whitley, Louise Williams.



#### **Through July 6, 2021 at Post Office, 104**

Washington Avenue, Point Richmond. Exhibition of fabric art by Rebecca (Becca) Riley.

Becca describes her art as follows: “Making art is just plain fun – it gives me something to ponder. I like texture that is tactile as well as interesting.



#### **Ongoing: “Taking it Outdoors” Encore**

**addition!** Art banner displays on the walls of downtown Point Richmond. This open-air exhibit first installed last summer has been enlarged and as of June 2021, will feature a total of 50 banners. **NEW:** View the art in this YouTube video,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGCllyKTln4>

For more info on banner project and the featured artists, visit

<http://takingitoutdoors.org>



#### **Through July 29, 2021 at**

##### **Kaleidoscope Coffee, 109**

Park Place, Point Richmond:

Paintings by Jim DeWitt, internationally known artist and yachtsman. Jim DeWitt's

prestigious art career spans decades, and his original paintings are collected worldwide. For more information: [www.jimdewitt.com](http://www.jimdewitt.com).



# COLOMBO HOTEL SACRIFICED FOR I-580

by James Cheshareck

The Colombo Hotel once stood on the Northwest corner of Standard and N. Railroad Avenues. Standard Avenue once stretched several blocks on the edge of town and was part of Point Richmond's business district from the early 1900's through the late forties. This building at 100-102 Standard was razed around 1952, along with many structures when Standard Avenue was widened and realigned in preparation for the soon to be built San Rafael Bridge. Like the nearby Roma Hotel, Hotel Piemonte, Lombard Hotel, and Hotel D'Italia, the Colombo was a first home to many of the Point's Italian immigrants, who were primarily from Northern Italy. Most men found work as general laborers, the fortunate ones gained steady employment at Standard Oil Company. In addition to lodging, the Colombo also housed a bar and a restaurant where new arrivals could keep company.

For many, the Colombo was a starting point for progressing to eventual citizenship and owning a home. Many of the men arrived in the U.S. alone and later sent for their families once they were settled. Employment at Richmond's refineries, railroads, and manufacturing industries provided a key to a better standard of living. Most important to them, their children would have opportunities that the motherland did not provide. Benjamin Brignone was the owner of the Colombo Hotel,

and along with Raffaele Santini and Spirito Calandra, they ran the hotel for most of its existence. It also appears that the wives of Santini and Brignone tended to most of the day-to-day operations. Also notable is that all three men held other jobs aside from managing the Colombo.

Benjamin "Ben" Brignone was born July 8, 1874 in Northern Italy. He immigrated in 1892 and settled in Rocklin shortly after arriving in the U.S. While residing in the Sacramento area he married Teresa Motroni in 1898. She was born in Lucca, Toscana in December of 1877 and her father, Giuseppe Matroni (1846-1918), and several siblings immigrated to the Sacramento area from Lucca just prior to the turn of the century. The couple settled in Sacramento, where they owned a saloon. They had two children, Mildred, born June 5, 1899, and Emilio "Emil" was born on June 12, 1901. A third child, Alberto "Albert" was later born in 1912 while visiting Italy. Around 1904 they left Sacramento for Point Richmond and briefly owned the Standard Hotel at 541 Standard Avenue. They also became part owners of the National Hotel at 443 Standard where they resided after selling the Standard Hotel in December of 1906.

Shortly thereafter the couple established the Colombo Hotel. The Richmond Town Board of Trustees granted Brignone a liquor license in July

1907. Ben Brignone became an active figure in Point Richmond especially in the Italian immigrant community. When the Richmond branch of Court Italia, number 9142, Ancient Order of Foresters was established in November 1907, he was an officer. When the Colombo was up and running, the couple retained their half ownership in the



*Colombo Hotel in its prime, PRHA photo archive #117 from Don Church*





*All that's left of the Colombo Hotel after demolition, PRHA photo archive #392 from Don Church*

National Hotel, and Teresa would often alternate lodging between the two in order to manage both. They would soon need additional help to operate their flagship hotel, now one of the main portals into Point Richmond for Italians.

Giovanni Adamo Raffaele “Ralph” Santini was born November 14, 1867 in Lucca, Toscana. His wife, Veneranda “Vera” Motroni Santini, Teresa’s older sister, was born on May 15, 1872. The couple wed in Lucca in 1896, and their daughter Maria “Mary” was born on February 2, 1902. A couple of years later they made the journey to Sacramento, and settled with the Motroni’s. After a few years in Sacramento they made their way to Point Richmond. They moved into the Colombo Hotel to assist the Brignone’s. Their second daughter, Emma, was born in November of 1906. Giuseppe Motroni also resided for a time in the Colombo.

Spirito Calandra arrived in Point Richmond in 1910. He was born on September 11, 1882 in Cuneo, Piemonte and immigrated to America in 1907. He worked as a ranch hand in Fresno for a few years before making the Colombo home for nearly the next four decades. Calandra for the most part operated the bar and restaurant. He also labored at various jobs, and was co-owner and mechanic of the Grand Garage,

with Polish immigrant John Zacharias (1879-1949) during the 1920’s. The Grand Garage was just up the street from the Colombo. Spirito Calandra, like the Santini’s, resided in the Colombo for the duration of proprietorship, but the Brignone’s lived in several Point homes including 44 Cottage Avenue, 244 Castro Street, and 29 Santa Fe Avenue, before taking up final residency at the Colombo in the mid 1920’s. Both Ralph Santini and Ben Brignone eventually were employed at Standard Oil, Brignone previously a winemaker for California Wine Association at Winehaven.

Other immigrants also found work at the Colombo over the years such

as Emilio and Teresa Gabbani. The Northern Italian immigrants met and wed in Bakersfield. In 1915 they moved to Point Richmond along with their two daughters. The family lived in the Colombo until the birth of their third daughter and Emilio had a job at SOCO. The family then moved to a house at 103 Mancilla Street, they later resided in a nearby house at 104 Contra Costa Street. Both houses were torn down about the same time as the National Hotel during the second phase of eminent domain around 1954. The Gabbani’s relocated to San Francisco around 1926 where Teresa Gabbani died in 1928 at age 44, and Emilio died in 1942 at age 64.

Eugenio and Carlotta Romero Rollino moved to Point Richmond shortly after their U.S. marriage in late 1913. Both had immigrated from Piemonte, and the Colombo was their initial residence. Eugenio found work as a bartender and their daughter Irene was born in 1914. By the following year, the family moved to 126 Standard Avenue, and partnered with Antonio Dorvetta to open Dorvetta and Rollino Bakery at the same address. Around 1924 the couple moved to a house on the corner of lower Castro Street and West Richmond Avenue where they spent the rest of their lives. The steep pitched roof on their house probably reminded them of the snow back

in Piemonte. Eugenio died in 1961 at age 82, and Carlotta died in 1989 at age 100. Their daughter Irene Rollino Patterson, lived in Richmond until her death in 2014. She too, like her mother, lived to 100.

Although they established well-being for their families in Point Richmond, both the Santini's and Brignone's endured hard times and sorrowful events. The Santini's youngest daughter, Emma, died at the age of 8 in 1915. With The Volstead Act (Prohibition) enacted on January 17, 1920, the Colombo's bar was rendered illegal. Exactly four months later the Brignone's middle child, Emil, died overseas on April 17th, less than a year after joining the U.S. Army. Aside from Ben Brignone being elected treasurer of the Point Richmond Order of Druids number 123 in October 1921, the 1920's were burdensome. Nationwide, defiant bars and even soda fountains served alcohol. The Colombo was no different, and Richmond police hauled Ben Brignone off to jail on August 14, 1922 for violation of City Ordinance number 493, known as "The Little Volstead Act". Several establishments in Richmond met the same fate, and bail was \$250 cash. Intransigent, the Colombo continued selling alcohol until Federal authorities slapped an abatement suit against both Brignone and Santini on October 10, 1922.

The Brignone family spent the rest of their lives in Point Richmond. Ben and Teresa continued to operate the Colombo along with the

Santini's and Calandra until their deaths. Ben Brignone died July 30, 1932 at age 58. Teresa Brignone remained at the Colombo until she died November 17, 1936, also at age 58. Their two remaining children settled in the Richmond area for life. Mildred Brignone Petric married a Yugoslavian immigrant and together had a daughter. Mildred died on October 19, 1987 at age 88. Albert Brignone lived with the Petric's for a time before marrying a first generation Italian-American woman from a Richmond family. Her first name was the same as his mothers, Teresa, and the couple had two children together. Albert died on April 1, 1974 at age 61, and his wife, Teresa Botti Brignone, died in 2019 at age 100.

After Teresa Brignone's death Spirito Calandra and the Santini's continued operating the Colombo. Vera Santini died September 12, 1938 at the age of 66 after a lingering illness. Ralph Santini remained until mid-1941. His health failing, he moved to Burlingame to be with his daughter's family where he died July 5, 1941 at the age of 73. Daughter Mary Santini Shur died in Connecticut on April 15, 2000 at the age of 98. Spirito Calandra was the last one of the partnership left to run the Colombo Hotel. He remained there for several more years. Perhaps he knew early on of the California Division of Highways' intent to demolish the hotel once central to Point Richmond's Italian heritage, as well as his home and livelihood. After decades at

the Colombo Hotel, he turned over his keys and checked out for good. His final home was a house on 15th Street in Richmond. Spirito Calandra died on January 29, 1960 at the age of 77.

The next proprietors in the late forties were Giovanni "John" Perrone, and his wife Elisabetta "Elizabeth". He was born August 14, 1885 in Savona, Liguria and immigrated in 1907. He arrived in Point Richmond around 1915, initially residing in the Lombard Hotel, which



*This is what the site of the Colombo Hotel looks like today, photo by James Cheshareck*



## Hotel Colombo

Gabbani once resided in. The Magnaghi's had lived at 72 Scenic Avenue before moving to central Richmond around 1939. The couple had a son and twin daughters. Louie had once been an employee at the C&H Sugar plant in Crockett. After the Colombo Hotel was torn down, the Magnaghi's remained in Richmond until Louie's death on July 14, 1957 at only 44 years of age. Emma Magnaghi

remarried and moved to

was down the street. He found work as a cook and had an apartment on Washington Ave for several years. He moved to San Francisco around 1925, where he eventually ran a restaurant and met his future wife. She was born September 14, 1881 in Como, Lombardia and immigrated in 1912 and settled in San Francisco. They married in 1935 and remained in San Francisco for several years before coming to Point Richmond to run the Colombo. Their tenure was short as John died December 10, 1947 at age 62. His wife lived on 28<sup>th</sup> Street until her death on April 27, 1965 at age 83.

The last owners of the Colombo Hotel were Louis "Louie" Magnaghi, and his Point Richmond native wife, Emma Bruno Magnaghi. Louie was born June 1, 1913, the son of Italian Immigrants from Lombardia, and was raised in Crockett. Emma was born on July 25, 1916 to Italian immigrant parents, her father from Ronchi, Veneto, and mother from Spinetta, Piemonte. Emma's childhood home was 103 Mancilla Street, the very same house that Emilio and Teresa

Orinda but lost her second husband as well. She died April 17, 1994 at age 77. JC



*Colombo Hotel is in the right foreground.*

*Photo archive #1225 from Daniel Butt.*

*Tewksbury hill in the background*



# The Hotel Mac Restaurant

*by Karen Buchanan*

The Hotel Mac Restaurant was closing. It had been a good long run of 34 years, but Bill Burnett and Griff Brazil were ready to hang it up. It was 2012, and the country had just gone through the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. People lost their houses, businesses went bankrupt, and people stopped going out to dinner.

The historic building that housed the restaurant was built in 1911 for \$25,000 by Kate Riordan, a young Irish immigrant and the first woman to register to vote in Contra Costa County. It was originally known as the Colonial Hotel. In 1914, Kate married a fellow Irish immigrant named James Pope who worked at the nearby Standard Oil Refinery. Together they raised 7 children in the hotel, and then sold it in 1930 to the former manager of Berkeley's Claremont Resort, M.V. McAfee. He naturally wanted to

name it after himself, so he changed the name to the Hotel Mac. The restaurant became a favorite Point Richmond gathering place for decades until it was destroyed by fire in 1971. The building fell into disrepair, and was condemned by the City of Richmond. In 1977, a group of local residents including Tom and Shirley Butt and Jim and Darlene Byers purchased the building for \$43,000, and undertook a massive restoration project. The Hotel Mac Restaurant reopened to great enthusiasm in 1978, under the ownership of Bill Burnett and Griff Brazil.

With Bill and Griff at the helm, the Hotel Mac became a favorite hangout for happy hour, as well as a destination restaurant for family gatherings, special occasions and date nights. Point Richmond native Isabelle Murphy started working there as a Seating Hostess soon after it opened, from 1978 to 1981. She recalls that Bill and Griff's vision was very old school – lots of traditional steakhouse-style menu items, including such classics as Lobster Newberg, Stuffed Fillet of Sole, Escargot in the shells, signature Cream of Mushroom soup, and a house salad with a special blue cheese vinaigrette dressing. Even after 40 years, Isabelle still remembers the table numbers and seating layout of the Hotel Mac when she worked there: Table 14, the private booth above the bar and to right of the kitchen, and Table 21, the romantic two-top next to the window on the mezzanine level, where she'd always seat starry-eyed lovebirds.

By 2012, after four years of diminishing business due to the Great Recession, Bill and Griff had been trying to find a new owner to take over the restaurant, to no avail. They made the difficult to close the restaurant, and decided to combine a Hotel Mac Centennial celebration with a closing party. They reached out to all the former restaurant employees who had worked for them since they opened in December 1978, including former Hostess and. As Isabelle recalls, "it was like a family reunion...I saw faces I hadn't seen in 30 years." It was a bittersweet affair, with lots of



*Here is Lara in her beautiful new  
Lara's Fine Dining Restaurant*



tears mingling with the laughter.

That's where Lara Choe comes into the picture. In addition to over 40 years of experience owning restaurants, Lara also has a commercial real estate license. She learned from her real estate contacts that the Hotel Mac Restaurant was coming available. She had retired in 2009 from the hospitality industry, and was ready to embark on the third chapter of her life, after decades focused on her family and serving others – she wanted to do something good for herself and for the community.

When she arrived in Point Richmond, she discovered a nice, quiet town with a warm and welcoming sense of community. She decided to buy the Hotel Mac Restaurant to save it from going out of business and to preserve a beloved Point Richmond historic landmark. It took her two years of hard work to build the business back up



*Lara at the Hotel Mac Restaurant*



*As this issue goes to press, the Hotel Mac Restaurant remains closed and is for lease*

to the point where she was breaking even. Making a profit was never a priority for her, but rather, she wanted to create a community gathering place, a type of “Cheers,” where everyone knows your name. Under Lara’s leadership, the Hotel Mac Restaurant got lots of good press, including being featured on the PBS restaurant review show, “Check, Please,” in February of 2015. She loved to glide through the restaurant in the evenings, warmly greeting her regulars, whom she treated like family. Lara cherishes all the enduring friendships she made at the restaurant.

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic hit the hospitality and restaurant industry especially hard. The Hotel Mac Restaurant was no exception. Lara had to abruptly close the restaurant on March 17, 2020, and stay closed for a few months until she was allowed to partially reopen for takeout only. Then, on June 1, 2020, when the County allowed outdoor dining, Lara put a half dozen tables and umbrellas out on the sidewalk on Washington Avenue, but it was nowhere near enough to cover the daily overhead costs. The landlords would not give her any rent relief, despite the precipitous drop in revenue. After a month and a half of gamely trying to make it work, Lara had to close the Hotel Mac Restaurant for good on July 16, 2020. She decided not to exercise a 14-year option to renew her lease for the Hotel Mac, and instead focus on her new restaurant venture.

Over the course of 2019, Lara had been busy remodeling the former Salute’s space at Marina

Bay into Lara's Fine Dining, which opened with great fanfare on January 15, 2020. It, too, had to close when the Shelter-in-Place orders went into effect in March 2020, but the expansive outdoor and covered patio areas at Lara's Fine Dining were much more suited to outdoor dining. In addition, her new landlord is much easier to work with, and last November offered her, unsolicited, two years of rent relief. Now with indoor dining restrictions easing, Lara hopes to recreate at her new restaurant the fun vibe that had been a hallmark of the Hotel Mac Restaurant, including live piano music by Dan Damon.

Lara is very satisfied with her life right now, continuing her charitable work with Soroptimist International and the Richmond Police Activities League, for which she volunteers her time to teach dining etiquette to Richmond at-risk youth. The rosy memories of the eight years she spent at the helm of the Hotel Mac Restaurant, as well as the warm friendships she made at the restaurant (including with this writer) will stay in her heart forever.



### **Cooking Tips From Mid Dornan's Files**

- **To slice meat into thin strips, as for Chinese dishes - partially freeze and it will slice easily.**
- **For a juicer hamburger add cold water to the beef before grilling (1/2 cup to one pound beef).**
- **Microwave a lemon for 15 seconds and double the juice you get before squeezing.**
- **Microwave garlic cloves for 6 seconds and the skins slip right off.**
- **When slicing a hard boiled egg, try wetting the knife just before cutting. If that doesn't do the trick, try applying a bit of cooking spray to the edge.**
- **Do not use metal bowls when mixing salads. Use wooden, glass or china.**
- **A roast with the bone in will cook faster than a boneless roast - the bone carries the heat to the inside of the roast quicker.**
- **Lettuce keeps better if you store in the refrigerator without washing first so that the leaves are dry. Wash the day you are going to use.**
- **Let potatoes stand in cold water for at least half an hour before trying to improve the crispness of French-fried potatoes.**
- **It is important to let a roast - beef, pork, lamb or poultry - sit a little while before serving. That allows the juices to retreat back into the meat. If you carve a roast too soon, much of its goodness will spill out onto the cutting board.**

## Sometimes It's the Little Things.....

I was recently thinking, again, about the uniqueness of Point Richmond. As with most places in the world it has had its own singular history since being established in the early 20th century and has evolved in its own peculiar fashion. Because it is encircled by a major refinery, the BNSF railroad, a freeway, and the Bay it has maintained a certain degree of separation from the much larger communities and cities nearby. This makes Point Richmond a somewhat unusual place to live in the otherwise densely populated Bay Area. I'm sure most of you are already conscious of that. It may be why you have come here to live.

Then I started thinking about some of the smaller, less obvious, pleasures that contribute to the enjoyment of living in Point Richmond today ("at this point in time" might be an apt phrase for this newsletter) many of them a result of the involvement of people who are living here now.

These for example:

Have you ...

- Seen the otherworldly-looking flowers outside the History Museum at 139 ½ Washington Ave?
- Noticed the little faerie houses up and down Washington Ave. above W. Richmond?
- Admired the lovely, tranquil garden in the Indian Statue triangle created for us all to enjoy by the Women's Westside Improvement Club? (Thank you!)
- Seen the murals on the outside of the Point Richmond Market?
- Ever looked up to find the Black-Crowned Night Herons roosting in the trees near the corner of Washington and W. Richmond Aves.? (and noticed how they have "decorated" the cars below!)
- Stopped to read the new feature displays in the 2 PRHA kiosk panels (the 2 on the backside)
- Spotted the old-fashioned lamp post outside of 139 ½ Washington Ave.?
- Walked through the amazing Wave Garden along the steps between Grandview Ct. and Ocean Ave. (privately created and owned but open to the public)
- Walked to the top of Nicholl Knob and admired the 360° view?
- Checked in on Rosie and Richmond raising their 3 osprey chicks? <http://sfbayospreys.org/>
- Walked around the lagoon at Miller Knox Park
- Sat on a bench in any of the pocket parks on the Bay side and enjoyed the view?

These are just a few that come to mind. Maybe you have some favorites that you would like to share with the rest of us. If so, email them to Gary Shows at [gary@pointrichmondhistory.org](mailto:gary@pointrichmondhistory.org) Maybe we can make this a regular feature in future newsletters.

*Bonnie Jo Cullison*



## Early Minutes of the Women's Westside Improvement Club

*It's amazing what's in the WWIC minutes! They date back to July 1908 when the Club started. The ladies met weekly. In the first six months they set projects in motion that we enjoy to this day: a statue a Washington and Park Place, a large drinking fountain, a park next to the Baptist Church, and the establishment of a reading room where the city hall had been in Mr. Crichton's place. Even the names are historical. These minutes are a priceless treasure of Point Richmond's history.*

*-Linda Newton, Past President*

### **Point Richmond, Calif. Sept. 5, 1911**

First regular meeting of Women's West Side Improvement Club held. Held Tues. afternoon, Sept. 5th at Fire Hall on Park Place at 2.30 P.M.

Meeting called to order by the Pres. Mrs. T.T. Cramer. At roll call four officers were found present. Minutes of the previous meeting read and approved.

Under financial business, a bill was received from Helen Webb for one dollar and sixty cents (\$1.60) for car fare for our entertainment. Motion made and seconded that bill be paid – carried.

Under the heading of new business, a whist party was talked of. The Club has to raise \$21.00 towards defraying expenses of Mrs. Gato Lechun on Women's Suffrage.

Mrs. Coleman suggests that Whist Party be talked on and finished at the next meeting.

Motion made and seconded that the Sec'y write to Mrs. Barry to be with us on Sept. 19th. Also for the Sec'y to write East Side Club and Mendelsohn Club to be present if Mrs. Barry can come. – carried.

Motion made and carried that the Club endorse Mr. Nichol's offer of Fern Park for a new school site for the West Side. – carried.

Sec'y instructed to write a letter to the City Council and Board of Education endorsing Mr. Nichol's proposition.

Receipts for the evening were: Mrs. D. Hopkins dues 1.50, Mrs. J.H. Coleman dues 1.50, Mrs. Geo B. Jones dues 1.50, Tickets (Mrs. Whitcomb) 1.50. Total 6.00.

No further business, Meeting closed.

Mrs. David Hopkins, Sec'y pro tem

### **Point Richmond, Cal. Sept. 12, 1911**

Woman's West Side Improvement Club was called to order in Fire Hall by Mrs. T.T. Cramer. The Sec'y not being present, the minutes of the previous meeting to be read was laid over until the next meeting.

No communications. Moved by Mrs. Marston, seconded by Mrs. Spierch that a committee be appointed to make full arrangements for a Whist Party. Carried. Committee appointed were Mrs. Cramer, Spierch and Murray.

Moved by Mrs. Marston, seconded by Mrs. Spierch, that a communication be sent to the City Council asking them to accept the Comfort Station on Park Place for public use. Carried.

Mrs. Spierch appointed as a Committee of one to attend to the cleaning out of the station.

Motion made by Mrs. Spierch, seconded by Mrs. Murray that we buy scrim and make cash curtains for the Fire Hall. Carried.

A committee consisting of Mrs. Eaton, Mrs. Adams, and Mrs. Hopkins appointed to make arrangements to secure Mrs. Berry at the next meeting.

Receipts of the meeting, Mrs. Riggs, 1.50, Mrs. Grover, .75, Mrs. Spierch 1.00. Total \$3.20.

No further business meeting closed,

Mrs. David Hopkins pro tem.

### **Pt. Richmond Cal Sept 19th 1911**

Woman's West Side Imp. Club Meet in the Fireman Hall and was called to order by Mrs. Grover, Pres Pro Tem. Roll call of officers found all present except two of Fire Comm. Pres Mrs. Cramer being present and taken her chair. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

Bills – Cleaning of comfort station, 1.00, Schrin for windows in Fire Hall, 3.00, Prizes for



Whist Party Sept. 18th, 4.40, playing cards 1.50 – 9.90. All bills were allowed and ordered paid.

New Business – Sec. to write and thank fireman for use of hall for Whist party Monday eve Sept. 18th 1911 also a discussion as to when we will have our afternoon Whist party referred to next month. The club members and friends was invited to Mrs. Coleman in behalf of Richmond Club to attend an open meeting in the Library Auditorium next Monday Sept. 25th.

Park site was discussed by the members all the members soon made the curtains and put them up before leaving.

Receipt from Whist party \$16.50.

Nellie Adams, Sec.

### **Pt. Richmond Cal. Sept 26, 1911**

Woman's West Side Improvement Club meet in Fireman's Hall and was first called to order by Vice President Mrs. Coleman the President Mrs. T.T. Cramer coming in room after. Roll call of officers, all being present acct Fire Comm. Minutes of previous meeting was read and approved. Communications – From the city accepting the res room. Also a letter from the Federation requesting a list of the names and addresses of all the members.

New business – The Australia boys want to come to Richmond and the members were asked if they would be willing to help entertain them. A comm. was appointed to meet with the commercial Club Thursday eve, the com was Mrs. Eaton, Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Adams. A motion was made to have a whist party by Mrs. Coleman sec. Mrs. Murray on Oct 10, and charge 50¢ - carried. Serve fancy cake & tea. Mrs. Coleman chair. Mrs. Marston suggested to have Mr. Cruickshanks look over the house beside the park and report what it would cost to have it fixed for a reading room. Mrs. Adams was asked to see him about it.

Receipt – Mrs. J.R. Coward dues 1.50

There being no further business club closed.

Nellie Adams, Sec

### **Pt. Richmond Oct. 17, 1911**

Meeting of The Woman's West Side Improvement Club in the Fire Hall and was called to order by President Mrs. T.T. Cramer. Roll call found all officers present except Tres. Mrs. Riggs and finance committee. Minutes of the previous

meeting was read and approved as read.

Communications – From Mrs. Annie Little Barry stating she was ready to make us a visit when convenient. Mrs. Welch inviting all the members to a meeting in the Library Auditorium on Monday Oct. 23rd, sec'y was instructed to send postal card to absent members. Mrs. J.F. Eaton wrote about red light district.

Bills – Mrs. J.F. Eaton for stamps 50¢.

Membership - application of Mrs. Rose Willis by card for membership was accepted.

New Business – Mrs. Adams reported Mr. Cruickshanks said not to try and remodel the old parsonage building.

The following Members payed dues: Mrs. Peter Roth, .50, Mrs. John Roth, 2.00, Mrs. Hendricks, 1.75, Mrs. Coward, 1.75, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, 1.75, Mrs. Runyan, 2.00, Mrs. Whitcomb, 1.00, Mrs. T.T. Cramer, 2.50, Mrs. J.B. McCabe, 2.50, Mrs. Brignoni, 1.50, Whist Party Oct.10th, 14.50. Total 28.65.

There being no farther business Club closed.

Nellie Adams, Sec.

### **Pt. Richmond Oct. 24, 1911**

Meeting of the Woman's West Side Improvement Club in Fireman's Hall was called to order by President Mrs. T.T. Cramer. Roll call of officers found VP Mrs. Coleman and Mrs. Riggs Tres. absent. Minutes of previous meeting was read and accepted.

Communications – City council asking the club to adopt resolution, enclosed, for the State Highway and forward same to Mr. Jones. Carried. A communication from State Conference of Charities and Corrections Program. A letter from Mrs. Barry was layed over until next meeting.

New Business – We invited Mrs. Barry to visit us Nov. 7th, also ask Mendosolem at Richmond Tank Club to Federate and have the meeting some place where we could have music and refreshments. Mrs. McHenry and Mrs. R.L. Adams to serve with the assistance of others fixed at our next meeting. Sec to write and invite Mrs. Barry.

The following payed dues: Mrs. L.D. Durum, 4.00, Mrs. U.P. McHenry, 1.50, Mrs. Fred Spiersch 3.25, Mrs. Ellis, .75. \$9.50.

Closed to meet Oct 31st.

Nellie Adams, Sec'y

# Seven Days in Richmond Harbor

April 15-21, 2021

by Oliver B. Pollak

Richmond's front or back yard is the San Francisco Bay. Harbor Channel, Santa Fe Channel, Parr Canal, and Lauritzen Canal are major parts of the Port of Richmond. Railroads, trucks and ships engage in international commerce.

Ports have welcoming lighthouses and foreboding fortifications with cannons and arrowslits defending against invaders and pirates. NERA WAR S above the entrance of this 1942 World War II brutalist Streamline Moderne structure once proclaimed "General Warehouse".



Businesses surrounding the port include Phillips 66, and its subsidiary 76, (Chevron's Long Wharf by the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge can handle four tankers simultaneously), National Gypsum Company (not to be confused with United States Gypsum of "Nomadland" notoriety), and Sims Metal Management at the head of Lauritzen Canal.

On Thursday, **April 15, 2021**, tax returns were normally due; COVID-19 delayed the reckoning to May 17. Karen and I went for a masked afternoon Richmond Harbor walk. Five ships were in the channel, I suspect some sort of record.

My cellphone battled the bright late afternoon spring light at Sheridan Point Park adjacent to the Ferry Terminal. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 34,035, a record high, a mystical sign of prosperity.

That evening I read John McPhee's "Tabula

Rasa" in the *New Yorker*. He explored the writer's craft, rejected and uncompleted stories, coincidence, and catching freighters. McPhee claimed the worldwide inventory of freighters stood at 24,000 in 1990.

Ships fly Flags of Convenience based on advantageous local taxes, labor laws, and relaxed business friendly regulations. According to the International Chamber of Shipping there are about 50,000 merchant ships employing 1,874,500 seafarers. *Statista* estimates there are 56,000 merchant ships.

McPhee ignited nautical memories. In my youth I read Horatio Hornblower stories. During the mid-1960s I wore a Navy uniform on an LST, Landing Ship Tank. I recently reread *Exodus* by Leon Uris and glanced at Tillie Olsen's "Hey Sailor, What Ship?" I watched "Pulang" a 2018 Malaysian film about a Malaccan sailor abandoning his family. My wife gave me a synopsis of *Shipping News* by Annie Proulx. "Call the Midwife," a BBC television series, is set in London's East End near the Thames docks. In London we lived a couple of blocks from a canal with horse drawn barges.

The ships in Richmond Harbor included a car carrier, petroleum tankers, coal and scrap metal cargo ships, barges and tugs, but no container ships.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on June 15, 1972 that infrastructure consultant Bechtel Corporation recommended the Port of Richmond prepare to handle containers or risk the "potential loss of 30 to 50 percent of the present general cargo volume."

In 1973 the Fred Noonan Co., an importer of Mercedes, BMWs, Fords, Capris, Opels, Renaults and Citroens and exporter of American cars to Japan, proposed moving his operations from Richmond to San Francisco. On October 4, 1983 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported, "the move was necessary because of the imminent use of the new auto-carrying freighters that can bring 4000 cars per shipment. The new 50,000-ton vessels require a water depth of 40 feet, unavailable at Richmond" said Noonan.

The container plan flopped, the two towering cranes were scrapped in 2019. Car imports were a success.



*The Grand Orion*, Panama, built in 2016, Ro-Ro Cargo, (roll-on/roll-off), is tied up next to Riggers Loft which along with the *Red Oak Victory* welcomes mariners. Since the 1980s the Ro-Ro ships, the largest carrying as many as 8,000 vehicles on twelve decks, have brought millions of Honda's, Nissans, Subarus and Toyotas from Japan and Hyundais and Kias from Korea to Richmond, Benicia and San Francisco. The cars are driven down the carrier ramp and onto two and three tier railway autoracks at the nearby Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific railhead.

Shipping has risks. A Hyundai Ro-Ro carrying 4200 cars capsized off the Georgia coast in 2019. *The Ever Given* of the Evergreen fleet blocked the Suez Canal for seven days in March 2021. Evergreen appears on container ships in Oakland, railroad cars and our highways.



Above is *Overseas Los Angeles*, 2007, Oil/chemical tanker, sails under the American flag. It left port on April 21 for Los Angeles.



Previous picture, #1 *Jazz*, Singapore, 2019, Oil/chemical tanker, next port Yokohama; #2 *Orient Genesis*, Panama, 2014, bulk carrier, left Richmond for Japan; and #3 *Nave Atria*, Panama, 2012, Oil/chemical tanker, left for Portland, Oregon.

### Friday, April 16, 2021

The Empress of Sausalito hosts corporate events, weddings and Sunset cruises went into the Bay. The DOW Jones closed at another record breaking high.

### Saturday, April 17



This behemoth, the *CSL Frontier* registered in Nassau, the Bahamas, is a Self-Discharging Bulk Carrier. CSL, the Canadian Steamship Line. Company is headquartered in Toronto. The deck containing cranes and conveyors (to the left of the bridge) can load and unload the ship without dockside equipment. It went from Richmond to Port San Marcos, Mexico.



*The Kirby 155-01*, built in 2016, is a petroleum barge.

### Sunday, April 18

The sole ship in port, *Overseas Los Angeles*.



### Monday, April 19

*Waimea*, Liberia, bulk carrier has four large cranes on the main deck. To the left is the barge Double Hill and a tug. Not pictured is the Morro Bay, liquid tank barge, Portland, Oregon.

### Tuesday, April 20

No new ships in the harbor. We spotted a whale working its way up the channel and back into the Bay. The eight blows or spouts lasted two to four seconds. Several misguided whales enter the Bay annually. Not quite a Herman Melville Moby Dick story, but a story none the less,

Louis Windhurst III, opened Whale Point Marine Supply in the Berkeley Marina in 1976 where his father operated Berkeley Marine Fuel Dock from 1965 to 1976. Berkeley Marine Center purchased the facility and Louis relocated Marine Supply to 101 Cutting Blvd. in 1977; moved across the street to 110 Cutting in 1979; to 64 Railroad Ave in 1988; and in 1998 to 205 Cutting, its current location. Louis sold the business to a longtime employee in October 2020.

The name Whale Point is rich with history. In 1956 Del Monte opened a whale processing operation at Point San Pablo Bay producing animal feed and pet food. Whaling was banned in 1971. Lou's great grandfather, a New Bedford whaler,



the 1971 cessation of the trade, and living in Point Richmond led to the business name.

### Wednesday, April 21

Previous picture below is The *Hafnia Lotte* (Oil/chemical tanker) out of Valletta, Malta, in the harbor less than 24 hours when it left about 5 pm ushered by two tugs, bound for Vancouver.

### Conclusion

The confluence of land, railroad, truck, ship access to the Pacific Basin attracted the Ford Assembly Plant and the Kaiser Shipyard World War II industry. The postwar international economy flourishes exporting raw materials including oil, coal, timber and scrap metal. An ebullient Sims spokesperson said they have 90 to 95 percent recircularity, converting exported scrap metal into imported appliances, refrigerators, washers and dryers, a positive contribution to sustainability and keeping the planet green.

The Richmond Museum of History acquired the *USS Red Oak Victory*, one of 531 Victory ships, in 1998. Congressional legislation in 2000 created a national historical park from which emerged Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front. Craneway Pavilion became an event space, a tourist venue.

From April 2020 to April 2021 during COVID-19, the Pavilion served as an emergency 255-bed field hospital for overflow pandemic patients. A protective chain link fence impeded Bay Trail walkers and bicyclists. The removal of the fence in April 2021 brought a feeling of joy and relief.

Signs of the end of COVID-19 and corporate prosperity include a busy port, resumption of local commercial pleasure cruising, and stock market records. Despite the expression misattributed to John F. Kennedy, "a rising tide lifts all ships," unevenness persists in the distribution of wealth. And, the evolution of environmental and electric vehicle legislation transforming the mix of petroleum exports and imported gasoline powered vehicles introduces further unpredictability.

I want to thank Louis Windhurst III and Richmond Museum of History director Melinda McCrary or their assistance.

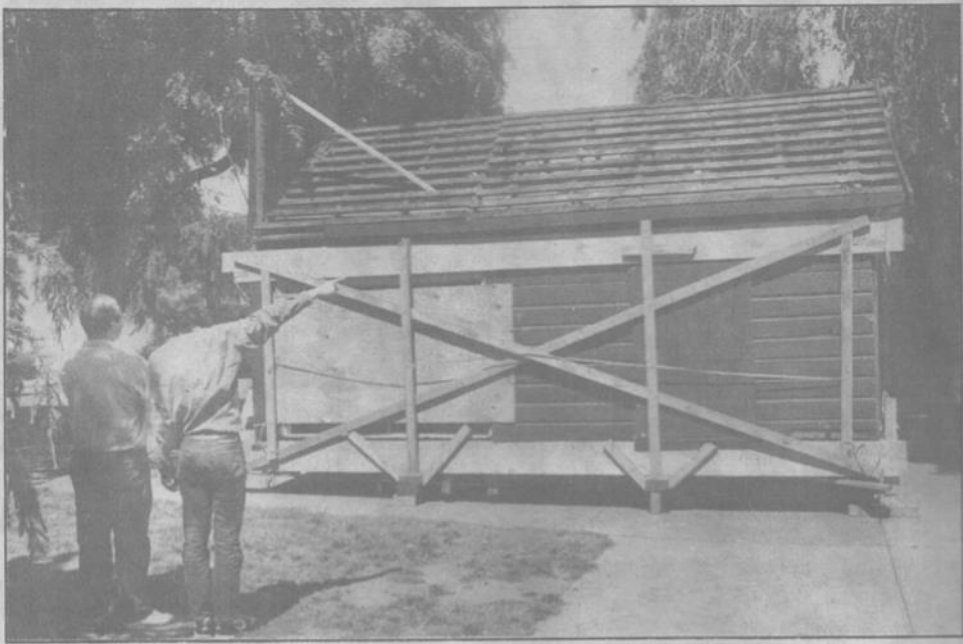


*This is from a "fact diary", a book of headlines and interesting events in Early Point Richmond. It was compiled by Don Church from the "Richmond Independent", "Point Richmond News", "The Leader" and "Richmond Herald Record". It is one of many interesting historical items left for us by Allan Smith.*

## **Items of Interest Point Richmond, early 1900's**

### ***The Record, The Leader and The Independent***

11-12-1918	Flu epidemic hits hard blow to Life Insurance Companys.
11-13-1918	15 new cases due to the Victory Celebration that brought a crowd. Victory bread will soon disappear and white bread will return. Letter to Independent from Councilman Ogborn of the Police Comm. regarding opening of bars last night for the celebration.
11-19-1918	10,000 died in State from Flu. More than 150,000 (still going on).
11-29-1918	Police take off back door and raid pool hall. Arrest 10 for playing Freeze Out.
11-30-1918	Flu still rampant in LA region.
12-03-1918	Mrs. R.E. Redmond back form Merritt Hosp. after nervous breakdown which resulted from overwork from Flu Epidemic at her hospital. Robert Dornan and Tranny Freeman announce wedding last Jan.
12-06-1918	Loss from Flu greatest ever in the nation.
12-09-1918	Flu situation in town is good now.
12-12-1918	SOCco will give all returning men their jobs back if able to work. Los Angeles flu is still raging.
12-17-1918	Schools close in Martinez again. Flu. San Fran Flu epidemic serious again. 427 new, 27 die. 32 persons failing to wear masks paid \$160 in fines during November.
12-31-1918	Home Guards bill City for working during Flu epidemic. 31 dead and 540 new in SF yesterday.
01-06-1919	Theodore Roosevelt died today.
01-07-1919	Schools in Oakland, Berkeley, and Alameda have been closed due to the flu. Richmond orders flu masks on again for both teachers and pupils.
01-08-1919	66 new cases, 2 deaths. Dr. Blake admits it is the Flu again.
01-11-1919	Flu masks ordered back on next week; in SF also.
01-13-1919	5 million gallons of whiskey will be either drank or stored between now and July 1st when nation goes dry.
01-14-1919	4 extra police to help enforce flu mask law. \$10 fine for violation.
01-16-1919	36 states vote the US dry.



Times/Herman Bustamante Jr.

**TWO PASSERS-BY POINT** at a historic Point Richmond house Tuesday as it sits precariously on wooden blocks between the fire station and the library on Washington Avenue.

## ‘Squatting’ house irks officials

By Jim Cole  
Staff writer

RICHMOND — This is the story of a squatter.

It's about a little house that's squatting on city property.

The 90-year-old Point Richmond house was lifted from 139 W. Richmond Ave. two weeks ago and put on wooden blocks behind the fire station.

The move was hailed by Point Richmond history buffs but it has irked some members of City Council, who want to know why the house is on city property without their permission.

"It's just unbelievable," said City Councilman Jim McMillan. "Any ordinary citizen knows you don't go dump a building on city property."

The 10- by 20-foot house was moved by forklift to a little plot between the fire station and the library on Washington Avenue.

The Point Richmond History Association moved the house and hopes to refurbish it and turn it into a museum.

The association had planned to get permits and was working with city staff, said president Jerry Cerkanowicz.

But earlier this month he learned the owners of the property the house was on wanted to begin work on a new building and the historic home had to go.

"It was necessary to move it because of a time con-

straint we had," said Cerkanowicz. He said he did not contact the city before moving the house.

He said the association will present its plans for the house to the city in the next few days. Those plans, he said, will show the house restored and on a solid foundation next to where it is. Cerkanowicz said he hopes to have the house on a permanent foundation by May 10.

"It's not like we did it without them knowing anything about it," he said. Besides, he said, "it didn't disrupt anything."

Nonetheless, Councilmen McMillan and David MacDiarmid said they are shocked that someone would do such a thing without city permission. MacDiarmid said he has concerns about the safety of the structure, which is set on blocks near a busy street.

McMillan said he wants the city attorney to investigate and report to council Monday.

"My objective is not to be punitive," McMillan said. "My objective is simply to see that everybody respects the law to the same extent."

As for the plan to put the building on city property, he said he would have to study it and consider city costs and risks.

Despite the complaints, Cerkanowicz has no regrets. "I think it's a nice building," said Cerkanowicz. "It's a historic building. It would have been a shame to lose it."

Wednesday, April 25, 1990 West County Times Mid Dornan's Archives  
*Our little museum is a jewel on the triangle. Move made possible by our speical caring and creative community. Kudos to all those who made this possible (you know who you are, a list of names is framed in the museum if you don't). Also thanks to Santa Fe Railroad and Chevron Refinery for their help.*

## EXCLUSIVE OVER 90 CLUB

**Martha Bielawski - 100**  
**Muriel Clausen - 96**  
**Mary Bianchini Highfill - 97**  
**Victor Morales - 92**  
**Billie Bonham Shaw - 98**  
**June Beesley Sosabal - 96**  
**Morris Simpson - 98**  
**Marcelina Smith - 95**  
**Jean Knox - 94**  
**Hector Lizarraga - 97**  
**Donna Wilson - 90**  
**Florence Wilson - 91**  
**Loretta Stevens Johromi - 95**  
**Alphonso Diaz - 95**  
**Christopher Wilson - 97**



### ***Cards, Letters & E-Mails***

Gary,

Once again, thanks for a great Spring issue.

I am obligated to point out that the picture attributed to the Womens West Side Improvement Club was not correct. Three of the "bunnies" in the photo were indeed WWIC members but Mid Dornan dubbed this group the Bishop Alley Social Club. We gathered every month for some celebration of Mid.

Best, Fran Smith  
Point Richmond



## ***Tony Salutes Edwardo***

*Tony Ramirez*

I want the readers of this newsletter to know that I have a brother-in-law named Edwardo Mendizalal who worked at Richmond High School for the last 30 years as a janitor. For some 30 years he had been a DJ on a Latino radio station in San Francisco. I had brought him here from Guatemala in 1980 where he had worked as a DJ there at the tender age of 18. It is interesting how he got that job. While working as a janitor for a Guatemala City radio station he learned how to operate the broadcasting equipment. One day the head DJ was sickened by a gall bladder attack and could not do his DJ job, he announced that my brother-in-law knew how to operate the equipment and could fill in for him. So, Edwardo ran that Guatemalan radio station through that night. The next day people called the radio station applauding his performance and demanding that the station keep him as their DJ. So, the 18-year-old janitor became the next new DJ in Guatemala City. When the old DJ was released from the hospital, he got his old job back, but my brother-in-law stayed on as the #2 DJ. He did that until he came to California in 1980.

I recall that in 1980 I had about 12 people living in my Richmond home. In addition to Edwardo, I brought into the house, my wife, my mother-in-law, and my 15-year-old nephew to join my own three sons. Altogether, I brought 12 of my wife's people, I even brought her friend Vivian Aquino who today owns Discolandia De Richmond on 23rd Street. Last year Edwardo suffered a cerebral stroke and is currently getting therapy and is recuperating.



*East  
Brother  
Light  
Station*

# *Birthdays*

## **June**

Alissa Bagley  
Phyllis Downey  
William Shea  
Emeric H. Baxter  
Andrew Butt  
Kristine Lazaro  
Joanne Lansing  
Cathe Brazil  
Brian Rotting  
Stacey Spinola

Gill Stanfield  
John H. Knox  
Alice Baxter  
Wilson Gandola  
Rosemary Giacomelli  
Daniel Buhler  
Dianne Primavera  
Suzanne Unser  
Tom Kenny  
Bill Smith

Aaron Marshall  
Cynthia Wilson  
Workman  
Michael Marshall  
Marcelina Smith  
Gerry Higuera  
Judy Travis  
Lee Christian  
Lillian Karl  
Luke Karl

Graciella Feese  
June Solosabal  
Doreen Minkwitz  
Morris Simpson  
Mary Lee Cole  
Virginia Martinez  
Omera Johnson

## **July**

Francis Smith  
Amy Rotting  
Nicole Sebastian  
Mrs. Chas Baldwin  
Dan Damon  
Julius Matteucci  
Bea Read  
Mary L. Knox

Richard Smith  
Allen Anderson  
Roger Elle  
Trace Smith  
Alice McMahon  
Hilary Lord  
Clifford (Lou)  
MacMillan

Loretta 'Mertle' Lease  
Madeline Bellando  
Albright  
Jean Reynolds  
Regan Bradshaw  
Jon Healy  
Golda Pettycord  
Howard

Martha Bielawski  
Madison Bradshaw  
Dixie L. Mello  
Lea Smith  
Terry Lizarraga  
Joan Glover-Carter  
Hector Lizarraga

## **August**

Donna Wilson  
Kevin Pryne  
Molly Kate Barnes  
Joe Darling  
Marlene Smith  
Barbara Ward  
Connie Fisher  
Alice Thompson  
Linda DeLaTorre  
Zoanna Kille

Mary Knox  
Karla Peterson  
Alia Smyke  
Terrence Doherty  
Lisa Smith  
Kelly von York  
Rose Barra  
Bonnie Ritzenthaler  
Wilson  
Bob Armstrong

Kim Morales  
R. Clayton Barnes  
Michael Shaw  
Megan Lizarraga  
Roy Henry Glover  
Bernie McIntosh  
Beatrice Beesley Casey  
Jim Healy  
John Lizarraga  
Karen Gagnier

Suzanne Bartram  
Owens  
Bernie McIntosh  
Steve Rice  
Kendall Craig  
Gloria Crim  
Floria (Crim) Jones  
Victor H. Morales

***You share your birthday with about 9 million other people in the world!***

***Please help me keep our lists correct, send additions, corrections or updates to our "Exclusive Over 90 Club" or "Birthdays" to Gary Shows, c/o PRHA, 139½ Washington Avenue, Point Richmond, CA 94801 or email to [editor@pointrichmondhistory.org](mailto:editor@pointrichmondhistory.org)***

**They said 'Let us pray'. We closed our eyes.**

**When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land.**

***Desmond Tutu***



## Memorials.....

**Jean M. Allyn** passed away April 12, 2021 in Durango, Colorado, from Parkinson's Disease. She was 93 years old, and is survived by her daughter, Melissa Delio (Ray), granddaughter Steevie, and numerous nieces and nephews. Born in Richmond, California, she is predeceased by her parents and brother, Paul Bicknell. She graduated from Springfield High in Springfield, Oregon, before returning to Richmond where she married Henry Allyn. They built a home and lived many years in Point Richmond, raising their daughter there, before moving to Sonoma, California.

After Henry's death, Jean moved to Durango, Colorado where she lived several years with her family. After Parkinson's symptoms intensified, she moved to Sunshine Gardens where she kept a wonderful attitude, made a number of friends and had fun times. Her dining table was known for its laughter and residents lingering long after mealtime!

Jean loved the Lord, studied, and taught by example. She loved our country, spent her life curious, learning, and had an adventurous, young spirit. She was gifted with the ability to make anything beautiful, she spent innumerable hours gardening, making gorgeous flower arrangements for home and for the Sonoma Alliance Church, drawing, painting, renovating, decorating, sewing, and improving or refining most everything she touched.

Trips up and down slides, even water-slides, with her granddaughter were nothing unusual for her despite being in her seventies and eighties. She was generous, kind, and was always ready for an adventure or to lend a hand. Mom, we miss you more than words can say, but are comforted knowing we will see you again!

Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.



**Robin E. Lafever** It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Robin E. Lafever (El Cerrito, California), who passed away on April 24, 2021, at the age of 79, leaving to mourn family and friends. You can send your sympathy in the guestbook provided and share it with the family. You may also light a candle in honor of Robin E. Lafever.

### How Many Did You Answer!

1. Thumper
2. Claudius
3. 1944
4. Pittsburgh

5. Four
6. Egypt
7. 1967
8. 15¢
9. 1963
10. Lucky Charms

## **CALENDAR/DIRECTORY**

### **ARTS OF POINT RICHMOND**

*Art is for everyone, the artist, the viewer, the Point is art. Contact: Rita Gardner, tropicrita@msn.com More info: <http://www.artsofpointrichmond.com/index.html>*

### **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE READING ROOM**

114 Washington Avenue, Point Richmond, 510-223-0487

### **GOLDEN STATE MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM AND EAST BAY MODEL ENGINEERS SOCIETY**

900-A Dornan Drive. Sunday 12:00 to 5:00. Adults \$5, children under 11 and seniors \$3, family \$10. Trains run on Sunday and Wednesday 11-3, Saturday 12-5 viewing only. 510-234-4884 for details or [www.gsrmr.org](http://www.gsrmr.org)

### **MASQUERS PLAYHOUSE**

*The Masquers remains closed for building repairs. For more information see the website, <http://www.masquers.org>*

### **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**

Joanna Mina, Contact, 510-235-0157

### **POINT RICHMOND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

Contact: Andrew Butt, 510-236-7445

### **POINT RICHMOND COMMUNITY CENTER**

Info: 510-620-6905

### **POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

*Museum is at 139½ Washington Avenue, and open Thursday's 11:30 to 2:00 and Saturday 11:30 to 2:00. See the Editors Notes on page 3 for next TPIT deadline. For information call President Bonnie Jo Cullison at 510-412-2202.*

### **POINT RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

*Meets last Wednesday of each month, Point Richmond Community Center; 7:30 P.M.*

Contact: Peter Thelin at 510-326-8108

### **POINT RICHMOND/WEST SIDE BRANCH LIBRARY**

Information call 510-620-6567

### **RED OAK VICTORY SHIP**

*Open Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, 10am to 3 pm. \$10 Donation/Boarding fee.*

*Pancake Breakfasts one Sunday a month, April - June, August - October, \$9/adults, \$5/kids under 8 years.,*

*For more information call the ship at 510-237-2933 or visit [www.richmondmuseum.org](http://www.richmondmuseum.org)*

### **RICHMOND MUSEUM OF HISTORY**

400 Nevin Avenue, Richmond. Open Wednesday-Sunday, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For more information call 510-235-7387

### **RICHMOND SWIMS**

*The Children and teens "Sail Fish" and Masters swim teams at the Richmond Plunge. Contact: Coach John Schonder, 510-504-0330 - More info at <http://www.richmondswims.org/> or call 415-892-0771*

### **ROSIE THE RIVETER NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER**

1414 Harbour Way South, Oil House next to Ford Craneway. For more information call 510-232-5050 or visit [www.nps.gov/rori](http://www.nps.gov/rori). GREAT movies all day

### **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: Diane Diani, President. Email: [italiandiane@gmail.com](mailto:italiandiane@gmail.com)

*Additions/Corrections to this Directory/Calendar? Email Gary Shows, [garyshows@gmail.com](mailto:garyshows@gmail.com)*

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of membership (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior (65+)	15.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	History Preserver	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	History Maker	100.00

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**Pam Wilson**

**521 Western Drive**

**Point Richmond, CA 94801**

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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 "Editor's Notes" on page 3

Please mail articles and items of interest to:

**Gary Shows**

**229 Golden Gate Avenue  
Point Richmond, CA 94801**

or

**email: garyshows@gmail.com**

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Don Church/Allan Smith	Historic Photos
Mid Dornan	Articles & Stuff
Jerry Cerkowicz	Information
Mark Kornmann	Proof Read
Pam Wilson	Membership Info
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Dee Rosier	Article
Mary Lee Cole	Article
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**PointRichmondHistory.org**

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**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/prhafan/>**

Richmond Museum of History 510-235-7387  
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