

# THIS POINT.... in time

## NEWSLETTER

The Point Richmond History Association

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

Vol. XXVIII No. 4

February/March, 2010

\$3.00

## Washington Avenue

Circa 1915



Now

# Historic Preservation Awards, 2010

*Report by Sandi Genser-Maack, Chair, HPAC Awards Committee*

The Richmond Historic Preservation Advisory Committee invites nominations for the Richmond Historic Preservation Awards, 2010. The nomination form will be available in February and is due March 31, 2010.

The purpose of the awards program is to increase public awareness of Richmond's heritage by recognizing individuals, organizations, businesses, and agencies whose contributions demonstrate outstanding commitment to excellence in historic preservation, local history or promotion of the City's heritage. Awards will be presented in at a reception in May, National Preservation Month.

In addition to public and private buildings and structures, historic preservation projects may include media, publications, presentations and exhibits, parks, burial grounds, public art, oral history, theater productions, events and video presentations.

Any individual, group, organization or agency involved in historic preservation or promoting Richmond's heritage is eligible to receive a Richmond Historic Preservation Award.

Nominations will be evaluated on the basis of one or more of the following:

Active involvement with a relatively wide variety of historic and/or prehistoric resources.

Contribution to the preservation of and/or the promotion of Richmond's historic and/or prehistoric resources.

Initiative in pursuing preservation activities that are not required by law and which do not reflect the organization's mandate.

*Home Front Award: the National Park Service, through the Rosie the Riveter/ World War II Home Front National Historical Park, will sponsor a "Home Front Award" to recognize an individual, project, program or publication that preserves a home front site or structure, or that promotes recognition and understanding of this important historical period in Richmond's history.*

Nomination forms will be available on the City's website: [www.ci.richmond.ca.u](http://www.ci.richmond.ca.u) or call HPAC Committee member Pat Pearson at (510) 234-2532 or [ppearson174@hotmail.com](mailto:ppearson174@hotmail.com) and ask for a PDF copy to be emailed to you. You may pick up a hard copy at City Hall or at the Point Richmond History Museum.

# *From the President*

*By Mid Dornan*

*No news from Mid this issue.*



*Scenic Avenue*

*Donna Roselius*

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*We are all looking forward to the next opening ceremony of the Richmond Municipal Natatorium, aka The Plunge.*

*PRHA Photo Archive  
#0432 enhanced by  
Thomas Mercer-Hursh*

Thank you members for your renewal:

**Bruce & Ann Bartram Family**  
**Marcelina B. Smith**  
**Jerome Vloeberghs**  
**Joann Cannon**  
**Zoanna Kille**  
**Edna Hathaway**  
**Richard & Charlene Smith Family**  
**Susan Snyder & Richard Neidhardt**  
**Family**  
**Marilyn Darling**  
**Penny L Canario**  
**Royce Ong\*\***  
**Olivia Jacobs\*\***  
**Alphonso Diaz**  
**Susan Reynolds Prine**  
**Mary Crosby & Tom Piazza Family**  
**Jay & Karen Fenton Family**  
**Jack N. Seuberth**  
**Mike & Karen Shaw**  
**Christopher Spencer\*\***  
**Robert Marshall Larsen**  
**Betty Menzie**  
**James Ellis**  
**Norma Wallace**  
**Mary Highfill**

And a warm welcome to these new members

**Mary (Julie) Simmons\***  
**Norm Hantzsche\*\***  
**Deborah Haley**  
**Arlin Robins\***

\* 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:*  
***Thursday 11:30 am to 2:00 pm***  
***Saturday 11:30 am to 2:00 pm***

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

- **Betty Dornan**
- **Bruce and Ann Bartram**
- **Pat Pearson**
- **Mid Dornan**
- **Bonnie Jo Cullison**
- **Susan Brooks**
- **Anita Christiansen**
- **Sonja Darling**
- **Margaret Morkowski**

***The Cover:***

*PRHA archive image #0754-Gary Romel showing Washington Avenue in about 1915*  
*and a modern photo for your comparison taken by Thomas Mercer-Hursh*



# Editor's Notes

*Gary Shows (510-235-1336)*

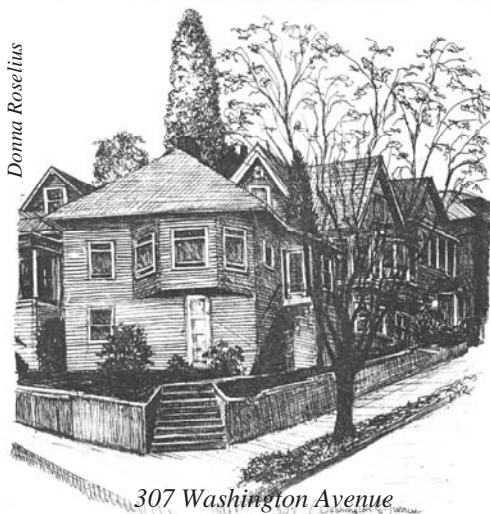
Lots of good contributions in this issue, keep it up folks!

First of all thanks so much to James W. Hayes for sharing his research on Professor Botts, a Point Richmond legend. Many believe that the Point could be famous for flight if a storm hadn't destroyed Botts flying machine by toppling it from the top of Nichol Nob shortly before its maiden flight. To read more about Professor Botts see Dr. William Thompson's articles in *This Point in time* issues April/May, 2009 and June/July/August, 2009.

Thank you Michelle Healy for her June Albonico story and my usual gratitude to our sharp, dependable regular staff.

I appreciate the thoughtfulness of Gary Romel of Port Orford, Oregon for sharing his photographs of old Point Richmond. One of them is our cover photo for this issue.

The deadline for the next issue of "THIS POINT.....in time" is March 26th.



## *Thank You!* *Our Special Supporters!*

### *History Makers*

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Christopher Spencer

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David & Anne Roth

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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

Norm Hantzsche

# A-Mid Trivia

*Mid Dornan (510-234-5334)*

QQ: How many words are in the English language,?

ANSWER at end of Trivia

\*\*\*

Not only Good News but GREAT news! Thanks to the efforts of Marsha Tomasi, Martin McNair and Congressman Miller, the Point Richmond post office will NOT be closed! It had been on the list to be closed.

\*\*\*

2010! Remember when you were trying to envision what to call the new millennium and now it is already two thousand ten! What happened to the last nine years?

\*\*\*

According to the Greeting Card Association, 1 billion cards are sent each year on Valentine's Day. If you are included in this, you have made someone happy.

\*\*\*

David Vincent, local attorney-at-law, sandwich-board wearer fund raiser, etc. is being honored as 'Sweetheart 2010' at the Point San Pablo Yacht Club on February 11th for his many years of community service. This is an annual fund raiser for the historic First Methodist Church.

\*\*\*

Edna Hathaway is wished a speedy recovery from a fall in which she broke her pelvis. Edna is one of our "Over 90" special birthday people.

\*\*\*

President Hayes signed an act allowing female attorneys to argue cases before the Supreme Court on February 15, 1879.

\*\*\*

Isn't it disturbing that common courtesy has to be legislated? The Altamonte transportation department will make putting your feet or briefcase on an empty seat on a crowded train and using your cell phone in 'quiet zones' subject to fines.

\*\*\*

Turning 80 should be as much fun for everyone as it was for Pat Pearson as her family honored her with an open house on her December birthday. Over eighty people shared her day and even the weather cooperated, the rains beginning only at the time the party was due to be over.

\*\*\*

If people weren't meant to have a midnight snack, why do they put a light in the refrigerator?

\*\*\*

The Point Richmond Business Association is planning surveillance cameras for the downtown district to make the Point safer.

\*\*\*

If you have one soda per day it can mean a ten pound a year gain.

\*\*\*

According to the CEO of the American Lung Association of California, Richmond "is not only a leader in the state, but a leader in the nation." During the past year the city passed ordinances to restrict tobacco use in outdoor areas, impose fees on sellers, place limits on tobacco sales etc. but the city's smoking in an all multiunit housing drew the highest praise and called it the strongest restriction in the United States to protect residents from secondhand smoke. The State of Tobacco Control report gave Richmond an F in 2008, but an A in 2009.

\*\*\*

Several members have expressed a concern because their address label lists their address or Occupant. We are informed this is a new postal requirement for class marketing.

\*\*\*

Five super-healthy snacks: Popcorn, Dark chocolate, prunes, hard-boiled egg and almonds.

\*\*\*

For the first time ever, in 2009 more cars were sold in China than in the United States.

\*\*\*

All the pathways in Miller Knox park have been repaved. What a wonderful place to walk now! Anyone unable to manage any elevation changes would do well to check out the park.

\*\*\*

63% of U.S. teachers say they buy food for their students every month with their own money.

\*\*\*

ANSWER: According to the Global Language Monitor web site, the millionth word is Web 2.0.

#### DO YOU KNOW HIM?

'Sadie' informs us information is needed for research on a Stanley Owslely, known as "The Bear" who supposedly produced LSD in his house in Point Richmond in 1966 . If you have any information on this person call Sadie at 510.575-8043 or Mid at 510.234-5334

## GOOD NEIGHBOOR

*Theresa de Valencé*

Usually we only have terrible stories to pass around on the Neighborhood Watch List, so I thought I would tell you about something which proves what a good neighborhood we have and resulted in some good to others.

The night before Thomas and I were due to depart on a business trip, I opened the door of the second fridge (25 cu ft) and noticed that while the light came on, the fridge was not cold. Worried, I opened the door to huge freezer compartment and, sure enough, the food inside was all thawed. Everything was cool, but not cold.

So I got on the phone and called many neighbors in the Neighborhood Watch group (handy that I had the list and I would like to recommend that we publish some of it, but that is a later discussion). Whether I reached a person or answering machine, I delivered the same message: I had a LOT of food which could not be refrozen and people should not bother calling but just come by and pick up stuff.

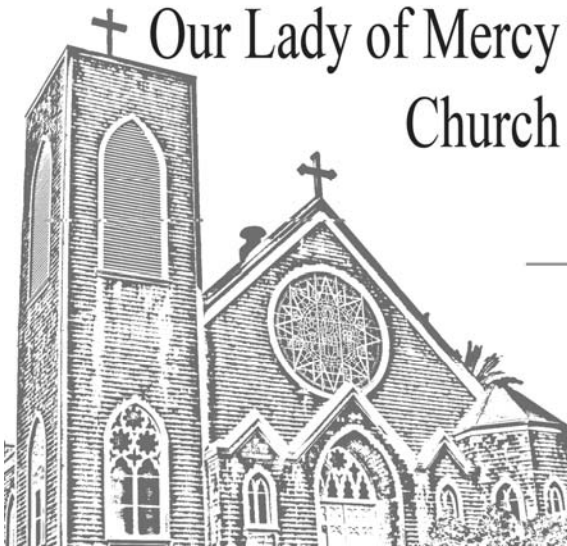
What I sometimes mentioned is that Thomas and I buy meats, fish and shellfish in enormous quantities. We eat too much as it is, so we divide all meats into small quantities, then vacuum-seal the meats. Usually I buy

60+ chicken thighs at once, invent a large quantity of marinade, divide the thighs into groups of six, pour in the marinade, vacuum-seal and freeze them. When I take the packet out of the freezer, I leave the raw chicken in marinade for 1-2 weeks in the fridge with no problems at all, because there is no air in the package. Fish that has been vacuum-sealed very fresh, can sit around the fridge for at least a week.

So there was ground beef, ground chicken, ground pork, pork tenderloin, pork chops, duck, many cuts of beef, dozens of packets of shumai, pot stickers, won ton, filo dough, ahi tuna, sea bass, giant prawns, a couple of varieties of squid, etc. Because of the properties of vacuum-sealing, the food should survive in a friendly state after being frozen for up to 4+ years. (I haven't been doing this long enough to know for sure, but so far everything which was successfully sealed--sometimes it's not--is always fine). When the frozen food is moved to the fridge, it usually sits around for a while--some of it up to 3 weeks--before we get around to cooking it. This is perfect for Thomas and me because we like having the option to pick between 6-9 different meat/fish items for dinner.

Many, many glorious neighbors just showed up at our door (most bringing their own shopping bags!).

# Church News



*By Dee Rosier*

510-232-1387

*drosier@sbcglobal.net*

It does not seem possible that 2009 is gone and we now welcome 2010. It is my thought that all of us retirees can testify that time did not pass this quickly while employed, nor in our youth when there were so many anticipations. It is with great expectations that we look forward to 2010.

The church shined in its annual glow for Christmas services. Christmas Eve services were held at 8:00 PM, although it was midnight in Nova Scotia. Following Christmas Eve Mass, everyone joined in the parish hall for hot chocolate and cookies. Our Christmas gift was the presence of Dody Perry and Anna Schwarz. Father anointed Dody as she begins her hopeful road to recovery in the form of chemo.

Donation envelopes for 2010 are located in the back of the church. You will also find unlabeled ones should you wish to participate. Please complete the sign-up sheet. At the end of the year, a listing of your total contributions will be mailed to you.

During the month of November the envelopes for All Souls Day were collected and placed on the altar in memory of all of our loved ones, who are never

forgotten. A Mass was also celebrated to honor those who have served in protecting our safety, health and well being – police, firemen, military and public service. We are indeed indebted

A celebratory brunch was recently held in honor of our long time parishioners. We have a number of great people in the parish who are getting along in years and it seemed the right time for us to all be together.

We continue to collect money for our roof fund on the first Sunday of the month. Like most savings, it is slow, but one day will become enough to grace our lovely church with a brand new roof. Speaking of the roof – crane your neck from the freeway and you will catch site of the newly installed light in the church tower.

PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY – the white Lexus license plate **2ZEM964** who took the liberty of blocking the entrance/exit of the church parking lot and capturing several parishioners who were forced to use the sidewalk to exit. The parking time was not minutes, but hours.

The 2010 budget is being worked on and will soon be presented to the parish council.

Father David requests that when leaving a message for him you speak slowly and clearly and be sure to leave your phone number. It is sometimes difficult to decipher when mumbled.

One of the many joys of the holidays was seeing proud grandparents with their grandchildren. An outstanding example was Stanley and Nancy Toledo with their six handsome/prett group. Margi Celucci was also seen with new granddaughter, Margaret. Only a grandparent feels the pride.

Mark your calendars – pancake breakfasts will resume on February 21, 2010.

Our support to the Souper Kitchen continues. Should you be interested in volunteering, please call Edwina Murray – 233-7529. Our Lady of Mercy parishioners serve lunch on the fourth Monday of the month.

The daytime bible study group continues to meet and the evening group is looking for new members,



please call Ann Brussok – 215-9905

Our parish continues to grow as we anticipate two upcoming baptisms.

Our Anna Schwarz continues to thrive in her new residence, although she has taken a few falls, but after the black/blues heal, she's once again herself. Anna is a trooper and will see her way clear to April fool's day when she adds another year to her illustrious life.

An early Mass was celebrated on the Epiphany and we then joined in the parish hall to enjoy a delicious potluck dinner hosted by Katherine and Michael Workman. It was a cold evening, but warming being in each others company.

Condolences are sometimes not enough, especially when it applies to two prominent, life time parishioners. On December 16, we lost Shirley Gerk. Shirley was the mother of 9. It was spectacular when she, John and the children arrived for Sunday Mass. They occupied two pews and it was a site never to be forgotten. If there was a parish get together, Shirley was always behind the counter serving. A warm, gentle woman who will be missed by many.

Chano Forner attended the brunch for the Parish elders, and for many of us, it would be the last time we would see him. Michael Workman captured a great picture of Chano shown saluting us with his coffee cup. A tribute to his life was shown by the attendance at – it was standing room only and included not only his family, but the Galileo, Fratalanza, Chevron, and friends. At the reception he was eulogized by many, but in summary he did live his life his way.

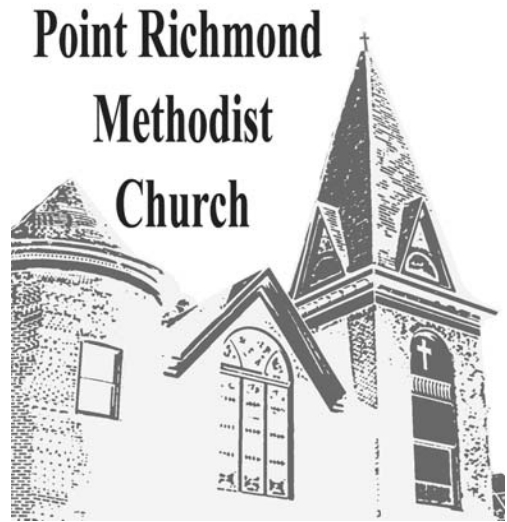
Remember in your prayers: Al Frosini, Frankie Mello, Bill Smith, Katherine Workman, Dody Perry, Anna Schwarz and John Gerk.

Should you have the opportunity to see Cirque de Soleil – do not pass up the opportunity, it is awesome.

Happy Birthday my favorite grandson (only have one) – Ama will always love you.

THE MAN WHO WALKS WITH GOD  
ALWAYS GETS TO HIS DESTINATION

SEE YOU IN CHURCH



*By Jean Reynolds*

510-235-2988

*jeanormr@pacbell.net*

The Thanksgiving Feast was especially well organized this year! Kudos to co-chairs Deby McFadyen and Fran Smith! Our technical crew: Tinna Manansala, Paul Garnett, Mim Drake, and Phil Jordan drew on their expertise to have the smoothest event yet. Three visits by the Hobart repair staff got our old Wolf stove in working order: the kitchen crew rejoiced to have both ovens in top form. We served approximately 250 meals: most in Friendship Hall, but some packed to take home. Everyone enjoyed the clean and beautifully decorated setting, created by Jill Jenice Shirah, Kristi Johnson, Russ Johnson, Pat Pearson and Steve Shank. Eileen Johnson and Tom Belton provided live music to dine by: Pastor Dan was sadly absent due to a bout of the flu. We offer a huge thank-you to our business donors: **Art Lounge, Bark Stix, Brazil Café, Cafe Altura, Edibles, Hidden City Café, Hotel Mac, Hydrangea, Little Louie's, Outback, Pt. Richmond Market, Santa Fe Market, Spot Liquors, and Starbucks.** Please support them throughout the year! Numerous individuals donated money to cover cost of the turkeys, stuffing ingredients, and all that is needed for such

a large feast! Pie bakers baked pies to punctuate the meal. Many cheery volunteers the day of the event made for a pleasant day for all. Neighbors and friends came from far and near to help cook, transport food, serve, greet guests, bus tables, and clean up. We delivered extra food to the Bay Area Rescue Mission, but not much was left over this year. We are grateful for the effort and contributions of all and for a community who is there to share the feast!

The Joyful Noise Choir and Angel Choir joined with El Sobrante UMC's Chancel Choir and bell choir: Los Campaneros Sobrante, to present a concert "*Carols of the Season*," in the Point Richmond sanctuary on December 17. Jane Carnall accompanied several of the choir numbers. The Angel Choir added their dance interpretation to "Shepherds and Angels". Linda Andrew-Marshall, Gill Stanfield, Eileen Johnson, Dan Damon, and Bethany Reynolds soloed. Jacqueline Seidel and Marilyn Lomelino performed a handbell duet. Eileen Johnson directs the two choirs from El Sobrante; Pastor Dan Damon and Christine Silva-Netto direct the Angel Choir; Pastor Dan directs the Joyful Noise Choir.

The Annual Holiday Bake Sale on December 19 was a big success! Tom and Shirley Butt at Interactive Resources provided a store-front space, and sidewalk signs pointed the way. Many willing bakers provided a wealth and variety of treats. Pat Dornan's beautiful wrapping assured that customers' delicious purchases would remain intact until they arrived home. New to the sale this year: We sold fair trade coffee, a tasty way to support coffee growers who meet basic standards for fair employment practices. We plan to sell the coffee throughout the year.

The sanctuary was packed and over-flow seating in Friendship Hall filled for our Annual Christmas Eve Jazz Service featuring the Dan Damon Quartet and musical guests Paula Helene, Dave Tattershall, Sheilani Alix, Taliah East, Heather Damon, Gill Stanfield, and Bethany Reynolds. Kelsey Tostenson sang the first verse of Silent Night. Manuel Navidad read a Christmas story for the children. Liam Thompson read the Christmas

story from Luke. Quartet members Kurt Ribak, acoustic bass; Randy Odell, drums; Lincoln Adler, sax; and Dan Damon, piano, skillfully backed the singing. Eli Botchan was our certified sound engineer.

Helen Valentine hosted the UMW Christmas potluck on December 8 at her Rodeo home. We enjoyed Helen's decorations, delicious food, and Christmas cookies: Helen baked some new varieties to enjoy as well as old favorites. We brought gifts for people served by the Bay Area Rescue Mission, shared stories of Christmas past, and heard stories from Kenya from Arjhunna, a medical student at Stanford who just arrived here in November.

Member News: Carolyn Kirkpatrick was here for several weeks recently to visit family and friends and to thaw out after living in Mica, Washington, for the last year. She and her family helped with the Thanksgiving feast, and we enjoyed her voice in the choir and Sunday school discussions; she returned to Mica in mid-January.

#### Calendar:

On February 21, 5 pm: **Bobby Hall and Friends Gospel Concert.** This annual event combines a celebration of Black History Month with a chance for several choirs from the bay area and beyond to gather, make and share music. A free-will offering benefits the First United Methodist Church.

Thursday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.: Bring your sweetheart and help us honor **David Vincent** at the **Sweetheart Dinner**, nearby at Point San Pablo Yacht Club, 700 W. Cutting Blvd., Richmond. David is a local attorney, and has served on the boards of the Point Richmond Business Association, Masquers' Theater, and Save the Plunge Trust. You have likely seen him clad in a sandwich board sign to promote a fund-raiser for a good cause or at the community center with a fun way to celebrate Valentines' Day, Easter, or the Christmas Tree-lighting. His contributions to our city help to make it a special place to live! Tickets for the dinner and program are \$40 and must be purchased in advance. Call Mid Dornan at (510)234-5334 for tickets.

**Lent and Easter:** **Lent** begins with Ash Wednesday on February 17, and lasts until Easter. **Easter** is on Sunday, **April 4** this year. We are sure

to have a full morning of celebrations: It may include a worship in the garden at 8:00 a.m., breakfast at 9:00, Sunday School at 10:00, worship in the sanctuary at 11:00, and an Easter Egg Hunt following worship. Attend for any and all of the morning for the best day ever!

Every Sunday, September through May:

10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Sunday School for all

ages

11:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., Angel Choir

rehearses. Christine Silva-Netto directs and

choreographs. Pastor Dan Damon directs and accompanies. The Angel Choir sings for worship about once a month. Questions? Call Pastor Dan: 510-232-1102.

Wednesdays: Joyful Noise Choir rehearses 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Space available for all voice parts.

Visit the church website at: <http://>

[www.pointrichmond.com/methodist](http://www.pointrichmond.com/methodist) for updates to the calendar.



## Christian Science Church



*Steven Blair*

Reviews of last year, 2009, had stories of gang activity, teenage and lesbian rapes and domestic violence in our city. So in response, community and church leaders made a Call to Action by standing out in the streets of the affected areas to show their strength and peacefully protest these violent acts. The Call to Action also included having everyone “pray without ceasing.” (1 Thesalonians 5: 17). Our church is now answering the Call to Action by inviting all members of the community to a talk that will “point out the importance of prayer.” In the talk Peace and Recon-

ciliation: A Spiritual Approach, the speaker will show examples of how important it is to rise above and “defeat the temptations or suggestions of evil.” The speaker is Ryder Stevens, a retired military chaplain of the United States Army. He will tell us we need not “let our thoughts be occupied by the reports of evil or to be impressed by these reports.” The talk will be based on the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, the author of Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, which includes her statement of “stand porter at the door of thought.” (Page 392: 24). Yes, we need to stand up and fight evil by guarding the entrance to our thoughts from anything that does not promote or acknowledge “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” (Luke 2: 14). You are so invited to bring along your family, friends, and neighbors to hear how prayer works in all ways and at all times. We will meet on Saturday, February 13 at 10:30 am at the Point Richmond Community Center, 139 Washington Avenue. As always, you are also invited to come into our Reading Room at 114 Washington Avenue to read the Pulitzer-prize winning newspaper the Christian Science Monitor, use our resources to study the scriptures and ask questions relating to Christian Science; and attending our church services Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. We look forward to seeing you and sharing how we can “Love one another.” (1 John 3: 23).

# WWIC, Est. 1908

**Jane Vandenburg**

The WWIC met on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009. We heard an update on plans for the Christmas luncheon and sampled a vegetable pate prepared by the caterer, Ani Toroyan, who is Armenian and is prepping a Mediterranean themed meal for our holiday meal.

We welcomed Julie Davis as speaker. Julie who grew up in the Point and is also know as “Mary Davis” (for completely innocent reasons) addressed the group on the all-important subject of identity fraud. Julie, who has recently retired, was assistant district attorney for years in the County of Sacramento, specializing in identity theft. She prosecuted those who use other peoples’ identities for criminal gain, a growing threat to the individual since there is so much of our personal information floating around in cyberspace.

Julie cited the estimate of ten million victims annually ~ only a third of these incidents are reported, numbers which are steadily growing. Identity theft has only been a crime since 1998, but is now being vigorously prosecuted by the Attorney General’s Office.

She gave us great tips on easy, commonsense tactics to avoid being victimized, including the advice to never carry your Social Security card in your wallet with the rest of your ID, and paying bills with on-line banking rather than by check, as cancelled checks are a source of information for

criminals. She also advised using one credit card only for all internet purchases. Another piece of valuable information that Julie shared is that the police department must take a report of your theft, and ~ though many departments are hesitant to do so – you are within your rights to insist.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, the gala Christmas luncheon was enjoyed by forty plus members and their guests, including Anna Schwartz, Amelia Drake and Marion Voight. Anna sang her traditional “Silent Night” in her native German and told the story of the writing of the carol. The WWIC Chorus led the group in the singing of carols before the meal was served. The Mediterranean feast, prepared by Ani Toroyan, included pomegranate chicken, pilaf, hummus, carrots with cumin, tabulli and dolmas. The hostesses brought desserts and Robin Mitchell contributed a salad made from dried fruits.

Thea Kynthia was the chair of the hostess committee, and also brought decorations from her store, Hydrangea, including cloth tablecloths and festive arrangements of silvered leaves. The rest of the committee included Janice Cook and Kathy Kiehn.

The Ladies meet at 11:30 am for lunch on the first Tuesday of most months at the Point Richmond Methodist Church Friendship Hall. Please call Margaret Morkowski at 234-4219 for details. Please join us.





# Out and About Town

Margaret Morkowski (510) 234-4219



## New in the Point... 2 great restaurants.

After a long delay, the 2 newest/oldest restaurants are now open in the Point. The 1904 Baltic is open.

**Baltic of Point Richmond** is a great restaurant. It specializes in German & American food with its famous bar, a Bier Garten, Live Music and Catering. Jayson Fennimore and his family are the co-owners of the new establishment and are gracious and friendly hosts. The food is awesome. (510) 237-1000.

Do you remember The Point (c1910)... years ago there was a Italian restaurant and the one time the best fried chicken. Well, it's now a Rugby themed English Pub named the **Up-and-Under**. It has great food, great memorabilia and a great owner, Nathan Trivers. Ask Nathan about Rugby. He's played Rugby all over the world... he'll explain the "Up-and-Under play" and the other details of the game. You'll have a fun time enjoying this "kid-friendly" place. (510) 778-1313.

Just a note... **Both families**, Jayson and his wife and baby daughter of the Baltic and Nathan and Nickki of the Up-and-Under, live here in the Point and have already joined in and contributed to many of the Point's community events. Welcome to both families and thank you for coming to Point Richmond.

The **Washington School Many Hands Project** Spirit of Leadership permissions slips have all been submitted and more than 150 students signed-up. That's almost 1/3 of the students at Washington School. This will be the greatest year ever. Last year 120 students signed-up and 84 completed the 5 assignments. This year the theme is gardening. The children with their parents will do their research, write their essay, give their oral-presentations and critic their experience all focused

on subjects like seaweed, composting, plants, bugs, water or dirt. It should be great fun. There will be a Pizza party, a field trip and educational "awards" to follow. The Many Hands Project Board would like to thank everyone who has contributed toward the Project. Donations were less than usual this year because of the economy, but it not too late for you to contribute and receive your "apple." For more information, please call me at 234-4219.

## Up-Coming Events:

**-February 21<sup>st</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup>**, members of the historic **Our Lady of Mercy Church** will provide their famous **Pancake Breakfast**. The menu includes pancakes, bacon, sausage, eggs, fruit, juice, coffee, coco, and tea. Breakfast is served from 8:30 am to 12 noon. Come and join us in the Parish Hall for good food, good friends and a good time. The Pancake Breakfasts will continue on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month through October. Hope you will join us. Please call the rectory at 232-1843 for more information.

Remember, for an update on what's new, call the **Point Richmond/West Side Branch Library at 620-6567** and the **Point Richmond Community Center at 233-6881**. Also check **David Moore's [Point Richmond.com](http://PointRichmond.com)** to get up-to-date information on the latest in the Point.





# An Interview with Point Richmond's Fascinating Anna Schwarz

*Interview by Tania Mantua*

## *Leaving Czechoslovakia*

Anna remembers that she thought Amsterdam was beautiful; the tulips resembled a rainbow of colors. When she was finally reunited with Walter he was very emotional. Walter was in a hurry to get married and travel to the United States. Not all of Anna's papers were in order and they were told it would be at least 6 months until they could marry. Walter was very impatient. They were staying with a group of immigrants and with them they hatched a plan that they felt sure would allow them to marry. Anna would stuff pillows under her dress and pretend to be pregnant. They returned to the offices with Anna newly pregnant and pled their case. The officials were still reluctant to marry them. Walter became so frustrated and agitated that he threatened to jump out of the third story window unless they agreed to marry them. The official didn't want any further scene and dutifully filled out their paperwork. Walter bought Anna a new wedding ring; unfortunately, it was not a 4 carat diamond. They returned to the civic building ready to marry, they were accompanied by Hank who was to be their witness and translator. Anna did not speak Dutch. They were married along with 50 or more couples in a mass ceremony. Anna kept asking when they were married because she couldn't understand the language of the ceremony. When the gavel finally came down, Walter turned to her and said, "Now, we are married." With their marriage all their documents were complete and they were able to book their passage to the United States. Walter had a relative, Gustav Epstein, who lived in San Francisco and was a stockbroker. He agreed to be their sponsor in the U.S. and sent Walter a first class ticket for the crossing of the Atlantic. Walter traded his first class ticket in for 2 tickets in steerage class. In April, they boarded a ship for their voyage to New York. They had rough weather and Anna remembers being very sick and unable to eat. Many of the passengers were also sick. It took four days and

five nights to complete their journey.

## *In America*

Once they arrived in New York they contacted a Jewish immigration agency for help. Initially, they were placed with an Orthodox Jewish family to live. Because she was not Jewish she was not allowed to cook in the house. Eventually, the agency helped them find an apartment in Washington Heights. Anna didn't speak any English and was a little shy about going out alone. Walter asked her to go to the corner store and get some oranges. He gave her some money and had her practice saying, "oranges." She went to the store and successfully asked for oranges. The sales clerk asked, "For juice?" Anna ran out of the store fuming. She told Walter that the people in New York were anti-Semitic. He asked why and she explained that the clerk asked her if the oranges were "for Jews." Walter had a good laugh.

Anna started to feel homesick and decided that she would like to go to mass. She and Walter took the subway to St. Nicholas Catholic Church where the mass was still given in Latin. Anna recognized all the hymns and sang along. After mass the priest asked them if they were refugees and were they hungry. He invited them to the rectory for breakfast. He helped Anna find a job as a camp counselor and lifeguard in Hackensack, New Jersey. There she learned many folk songs in English and each night her campers enjoyed teaching their counselor to speak English. In just 8 weeks her English greatly improved. Walter got a job in the town of Merrimack in the upper Hudson Valley and they only got to see each other on Tuesdays when they would rendezvous at their apartment in Washington Heights.

Walter's mother sent them two railroad tickets to San Francisco from their sponsor, Gustav Epstein. Gustav's father and Walter's grandmother were siblings. They turned their train tickets in for 2 bus tickets and used the residual funds for spending money

for the trip. They bought some new clothes and Anna bought herself a new hat. It was a long trip across America on a bus. Anna and Walter would speak Czech on the bus and at times their conversation got very colorful. They were surprised and a little embarrassed when a passenger, who had been sitting behind them, got off the bus and said to them in Czech, "I've really enjoyed your conversations." Walter reminded her that they really should speak English and not assume that there are not others around who can speak their languages.

After finally arriving in San Francisco they rented a cheap hotel room on Market and 4<sup>th</sup> street. It was a rough area but they were happy to have a room. Walter went out to buy a new shirt while Anna took a shower. She was just toweling off her hair when she looked out of the window and saw a large Cadillac limousine complete with chauffeur outside their hotel. Someone rang their room and told them that Gustav Epstein was there to visit. They welcomed him in; he was very handsome and well dressed. He advised them against staying there for the night and told them that he had been approached by two prostitutes while he had been waiting for them. He invited them to his home for dinner and told them that he had rented an apartment for them. Gustav lived in Pacific Heights and had a very nice home.

In 1941, Walter and Anna settled into their lives in San Francisco. Walter got a job for Gustav's brother at Clorox and Anna worked at a hat shop, H. Liebes on Grant Street. She started out only marking the prices on hats but on her first day she was asked to assist in the sales department because they were so busy. At the end of the day she was second in sales to the sales manager. She was a saleslady from that day forward. She worked 6 days a week and made a grand total of \$80 per month. Walter went on to lose his job and become a Fuller Brush man doing door to door sales. Anna's days were long and hard, she was on her feet all day so she decided to look for another job. She applied with Standard Oil at 225 Bush Street but she did not have adequate secretarial skills so they put her application on hold. After the U. S. entered the war there were more job opportunities for women. Eventually, Anna was hired as a receptionist on Columbus Day, 1942.

Her job was going well when she was informed by the company that because she was not a U.S., citizen she could not handle confidential files and she would have to be transferred. They were worried that she could be a spy. She started working in the safety department where she handled workers compensation claims. She did statistics and work for refineries around the states. She ended up retiring from that department in 1974.

After living in the United States for 5 years, Anna became a U.S. citizen on November 14, 1945. From then on she referred to herself as a cancelled Czech.

In time, Walter was told by a friend that there was a movie house for sale in Point Richmond. Walter still had a passion for movies and was excited about the opportunity. He borrowed \$10,000 from Gustav and bought the movie house business. It was the Point Movie House, where the Symphony Restaurant is now located. The movies ran 7 days a week, 24 hours a day to accommodate the shipyard workers' schedules. The first movie ran under Walter's management was "Tiger Shark" with Edward G. Robinson. Anna would spend Saturdays there in the projection room with Walter. Walter commuted to Pt Richmond from San Francisco everyday. He had a heart attack while driving on the bridge, after that they decided to move to Pt. Richmond. They rented a house on Western Avenue for \$100 per month. The business survived for 2 years, but with the end of the war the shipyards were shutting down and there was no more business. People also turned to television and went to the movies less often. Florence Wilson and Freddie Giacomelli both worked at the theater and are still living in Pt Richmond.

Anna continued to work in San Francisco and either took a bus or carpooled to work. Walter died in 1954 and eventually Anna decided to learn to drive. Anna has been very active and until recently swam 5 days a week. She loved the Plunge and celebrated many birthdays there and has fond memories of singing Christmas carols in her bathing suit. She also swam at the Chevron Rod and Gun Club and the YMCA. She is still active in the Women's Westside Improvement Club and was the musical director for Our Lady of Mercy Church for many decades. If there is ever an empty seat next to Anna, which there rarely is, grab it, she has a lot of stories to tell.

# Archive Photo Gallery

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

**Washington  
Avenue**

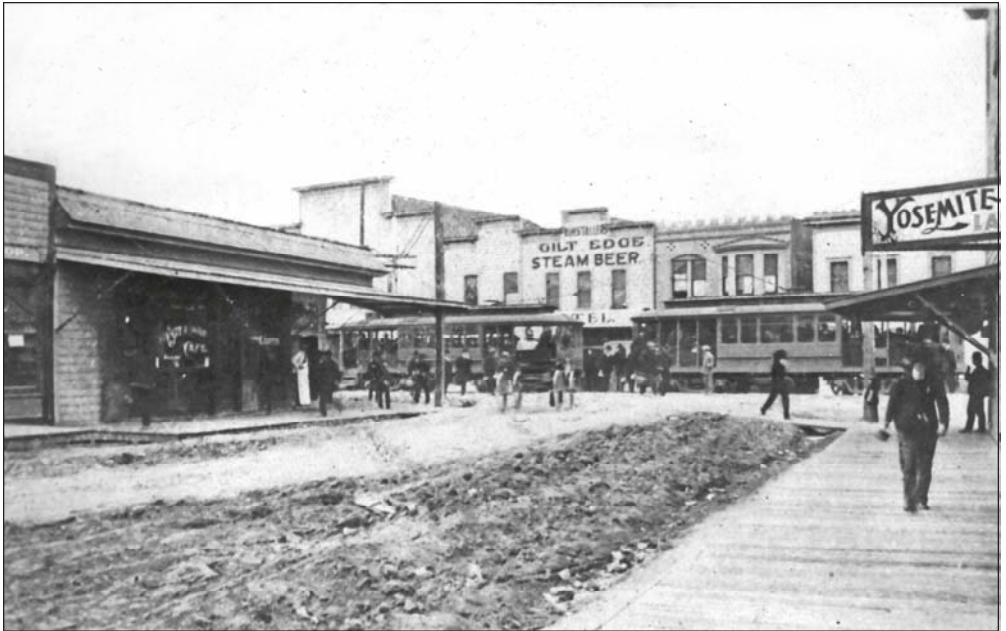


*Above: #0058-DC  
from our Don  
Church Collection*



*Left: #0023-DC  
from our Don  
Church Collection*

Right:  
#0056-DC  
from our Don  
Church  
Collection



Below:  
#0248-DC  
from our Don  
Church  
Collection





# KITCHEN WITCHES

## *at the Masquers*

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

Part of the job of a work of art is to startle the viewer, to jostle her/his expectations in some way—often, but not necessarily, unpleasantly—to do something new and fresh. Many people who write reviews, or those who burble about a performance just seen, convey their impressions of the work by detailing *what* happened, not *how* it made them feel—in other words, they diminish the power of the storyline to surprise the viewer. In my view, every creator should get her/his moment in the sun. For this reason before I see a new work, I usually shun speculation and limit myself to the first sentence and last paragraph of reviews and publicity announcements.

In spite of these habits it's almost impossible to bring a truly open-minded perspective, so I had expectations for *Kitchen Witches*—what do *you* expect from a comedy whose playbill illustrates a chef wearing her mixing bowl with contents as a hat? Camp jokes?

*Kitchen Witches*, written by **Caroline Smith** and directed by **Robert Taylor**, concerns two friends who aren't, anymore. These historically rancorous celebrity chefs (should that be *chêves*?) must work a televised show together.

Although I expected to be amused, having seen 3 of the 4 actors before, I still had strong reservations about the play. I dislike slapstick; I find people behaving like asses embarrassing, not funny.

Well, I was right. The play starts out with a sketch of personalities—mere caricatures—doing some foreseeable, stupidly ludicrous things. I felt awkward; in truth, we would not broadcast some of these antics—too absurd. Not too long into the play, though, the characters lose their thinness; they become real people and their behaviour starts to lose its predictability. Then there is a shocking twist and we're into totally new ground.

As we sit in the audience of the Masquers

théâtre watching *Kitchen Witches*, we become viewers of a live recording of a television show. The people onstage talk to us, the TV audience. We slip in and out of *participating* in the play, becoming more embroiled as the play progresses. In addition, a Masquers audience is loud—aficionados joining in—thereby exacerbating this sense of altered reality. There is semi-continual laughter from the audience.

With a small cast, some of whom wear street clothes, Costume Designer **Marjorie E. Moore** doesn't have a lot of opportunity to exercise her talent, but she performs breathtaking feats nonetheless.

My Actress Most Enjoying Herself award usually goes to an actress who expresses glee and self-satisfaction with her rôle, a shoo-in for Dolly Biddle (**Ellen Brooks**, *photo*, left), the more flamboyant of



the pair of wacky chefs. (*Photo by Jerry Telfer*).

Dolly is short and smug. She's amused with herself, her accent, her dress, her accoutrements, and her cooking flair. Except when she's not—which provides its own excuse for histrionic embellishments. Although I know she's following a script, Dolly feels like she's ad-libbing her way through the performance with great swashes of tragic over-acting.

Dolly is one of those characters I tend to like instantly, probably because she's so outrageous. I don't mean she'd make a good friend, or a mother—that would turn me homicidal!—but she's entralling.

When Isobel Lomax (**Dayle Farina**, *photo*,



right) showed up, I didn't much like her, possibly because she's obviously horning in on someone I've taken a shine to. Isobel is tall, trim, nicely turned out, and professional, and like all successful professionals, slightly intimidating. She reminds me of a number of people I've known—prissy, polished—and worked with—long-suffering, with nose down to the relentless grindstone of negotiation, one bloody inch at a time. Of course in a working world, one must disguise one's distaste and view her actions logically; in so doing, one discovers she is quite correct. I see I must give ground. Grudgingly, I give up one half inch of my dislike.

Somewhere in the second act I realized I quite admired Izzy. The whole darn thing is a performance—it's surprising to see how smoothly she's made me forget I'm watching a play.

Robin, the camera person (**Nancy Benson**), has few words, yet she is a fully contributing member of the cast; she manages to deliver several comic lines without a word spoken. Her costume is outstanding. Whoever got the bright idea to dress her up like that? Robin is what amazes me about the conjuring act that is théâtre—how did Robert and Nancy and Marjorie take square black letters from a plain white piece of paper and create Robin? She has to be seen to be believed.

In his blurb in the programme, **Coley Grundman** (playing Stephen Biddle) mentions that this is the first performance in many years where song hasn't been an integral part of his performance. In fact in this production, he goes further—much of what he communicates to us doesn't use any words at all. Even during the play I was aware of how much I concentrated to keep my eye on his eyebrows—whether he was speaking or not. He has me convinced I'll regret missing something otherwise.

If the character who changes most is the star, then the show is about Stephen, though one arrives at this notion rationally, not because the story seems so. Stephen rushes through a range of emotions: from anxiousness to self-conceit to cynicism, from energetic to beleaguered—all believably.

Coley, though he's not singing, still manages to dance with his usual dexterity; Stephen becomes



quite adept at railroading the ladies' actions, if only to keep the combatants apart. Though the ladies' "fights" seem natural, the movement onstage is as well choreographed as a dance.

The set, props, set changes and lighting all look very simple—yet they do an excellent job of convincing us we are where we are not. We're not at the Masquers, we're sitting in the audience for a TV show. It's very clever.

If you like slapstick, you'll enjoy this play from the moment the curtain rises. But, even if you don't, there's a lot to enjoy.

*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](mailto: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 Four:*

In the summer of 1925 the Richmond Natatorium (Bath house) opened which many kids in Point Richmond truly enjoyed. Prior, we young boys swam at the foot of Western Drive (Bono's) but we had to be concerned as to the tide. Why? Simply, this location was also the sewer outlet for all of the Goats Hollow area. On low tide, the debris (waste) would not float away so we had to watch the tides. We did have a beach that was actually sandy, near Standard Long Wharf, Keller's Beach, in those days was not sandy, and old man Keller wasn't the most congenial.

After the new bath house was built, I would do errands for the manager and I lived in the water. When 15, I received my Life Saving Award and the training resulted in my saving 4 or 5 kids in later years.

At 15, I wanted to play football, as I was already 6 feet tall and 160 pounds, but my father refused. So each wine season I fulfilled the long hours. He was to relieve me on Saturdays and Sundays, but it didn't always happen. Oh!, I was given show money and allowance for the bare necessities such as clothes, etc. I was a demon at

times, in driving his ½ ton, particularly when pulling the 2 wheel trailer which had solid rubber tires. In going around the Point Richmond hill roads and some blind turns, I would love to race and cause the trailer wheels to go sideways and at times slide off the road. Twice I remember losing the trailer, but it was built of heavy iron as well. On one occasion the trailer went thru a guy's fence. Well that weekend, my piggy bank did not receive its dollar.

At 15, I had my first permanent job at the Felice and Perelli Cannery. Joe Felice put me to trucking cans to the warehouse. Would you believe I was getting 15 cents an hour? At first it was 8 to 10 hours, but later we worked 14 to 16 hours. I worked there the following summer at age 16. Joe Felice liked my efforts and when the apricots and peach season terminated, he offered me the number uno job at the Fruit Salad.: confronting 24 women. I had to be certain that the assorted fruit was plentiful as those women didn't have idle time. Picture a platform that I walked over and slightly below me were 12 women on each side of me with their respective bins for fruit, which they placed into cans moving on leather belts. The pay was 25 cents an hour that year. An attractive redhead gave me goose pimples. Isn't it ironic that red heads became my first choice, as I married a beautiful redhead.

I worked again at Felice and Perilli at the age of 17. I finished the season just prior to starting my senior year at High School. My friend, Art Glover heard of a job at Blake Brothers rock quarry and they hired both of us. I was led down a hole where a large steel cylinder (6') round revolved around and around. The quarry rock came down from an opening by small gauge rail cart in a cloud of dust. Now, across the cylinder from me was a 6 foot brawny Slav covered with dust. You could just see the whites of his eyes and his red lips. The dust covered all of his face and body. The foreman gave me a 16 pound sledge hammer and the idea was to break the bigger rock and feed said rock into the steel revolving crusher.

*(Continued on page 19)*

Oh yes, we started at 11:30 at night and finished at 7:30 am. By then all three joints of each hand were bleeding, plus I also was covered with white dust. We worked ten hour shifts. Art, being a smaller person, got the job of being the train switchman who dumped the rock on us below. At the end of the shift I had to bathe my hands in water and Epson Salts for an hour. We worked three nights only, because the company had filled their order. We were paid 50 cents an hour, no showers, no overtime, and no dust collectors. Those were terrible working conditions. We knew two men later that died of lung disease.

Again, in my senior year in High School, I

pleaded with my dad to let me play football.

My friend, Lou Ferry, who was first string full back in 1930 and later played for St Mary's as first string quarter back persuaded my father to let me play. Al took over hauling the wine press and crusher and I went out for football without any previous practice. I beat out three candidates at mid term, but I also got busted up and was knocked out twice.

Lo, and behold, after all my long hours of work and again during this wine season, I still kept up my grades and I graduated from Richmond High at the age of 17.

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Attorney at Law, Community Guardian, Sandwich Board Activist, Member of the Board of Masquers,  
Save the Plunge Trust, Point Richmond Business Association, Holiday Celebration Promoter

**Thursday, February 11, 2010**  
Pt. San Pablo Yacht Club  
700 W. Cutting Blvd. (at Canal Blvd.)  
Richmond, CA

No-Host Bar 6:30 p.m.  
Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Dinner Tickets \$40.00 each  
Proceeds Benefit First United Methodist Church  
For tickets contact Mid Dornan at 510-234-5334

# June Albonico

## Swimming Instructor

*By Michelle Healy*

Splish splash, I was learning how to swim. Fast forward four plus decades and I am watching another class of four and five year olds laughing and enjoying their chance to show off new skills. “Teacher June, I can flutter kick.” “Teacher June I can put my head all the way under water.” ”Mommy, Daddy watch me jump in the pool.”

It appears that little has changed since 1956 when “Teacher June”/ Swim Instructor June Albonico joined the staff of the Richmond Plunge. Well, there is one big difference. She and her students are at a different pool.

In 1956, June Albonico decided that if she was going to keep up with her three growing kids she needed to work on her strokes and endurance.

She signed up for adult swim lessons at the Plunge. Apparently her strokes and endurance didn’t need too much work. She was recruited from her class and encouraged to enroll in lifeguard training. After that she was asked to keep going and earn her Red Cross Water Safety Instructor certification. This was truly a labor of love as she worked two and one half years before being hired on to the paid staff. “It was a fun place to work, nice people and never a dull moment.” At that time she never imagined this would become her career or that she and her colleagues would be responsible for teaching thousands and thousands of local kids to swim. In those days they used every inch of the old pool. Kids lined the pool walls, shoulder to shoulder, trying to impress a parent or an instructor.

Today, I am visiting “Teacher June” at the Richmond Swim Center on Cutting Blvd., next to Kennedy High School. I swam here regularly in the early 70s: Summer swim teams, assistant swim

instructor, and school meets. But I learned to swim at the Plunge, enrolling in one two week session after another, rotating through the different instructors. I was always pleased when I got promoted by Mrs. Albonico. I knew I had earned it. Anyone who knew anything about the Plunge knew she was very kind, but also one of the most demanding instructors. She will not be fooled. You were expected to demonstrate: stroke skills, endurance and pool safety.

As it is with so many excellent instructors she has that special ability to push people toward their best. Mrs. Albonico’s reputation as a fair, but thorough instructor goes three generations deep in some families. Marcus Rayon, Battalion Chief for City of Richmond Fire Department reports that in addition to he and his siblings, there are aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews on the long list of her students. “We are a family of firefighters. Safety is very important and we know that June treats each of the kids as if they were her own, but also keeps the standards high.

The Richmond Swim Center, at nearly 40 years is still a beautiful multipurpose facility that



*June Albonico and two young students*

gets plenty of use. It will be great when both pools are open. Through the years the only major change at the Swim Center was the installation of a roof over the racing/main pool. This change allowed the pool to be used year round.

There was a drawback. The change in humidity increased the amount of upkeep and preventive maintenance needed. It is this same humidity, plus earthquake risks, 75 years of wear and tear, and irreparable damage to all systems that forced the City of Richmond to close the Plunge in 2001. When the old pool closed many staff members including Mrs. Albonico packed up their equipment, years of good memories and went to teach at the Richmond Swim Center. It was likely that the pool and building might meet the wrecking ball.

As a longtime advocate of water based recreation or rehabilitation opportunities for all ages, Mrs. Albonico realized that permanent closure of the Plunge would radically reduce the space available for reasonably priced lessons, synchronized swimming programs, open swim, water based rehabilitation, and lap swimming. The plunge has also served as a practice area for kayaking, canoeing, and beginning SCUBA divers. "The goal of aquatic programs sponsored by Richmond Recreation and Parks has always been to meet the needs of the greatest number of city residents. Of course swim lessons and water safety must receive the highest priority." states the longtime Swim Instructor.

Rosemary Corbin, Former Mayor for the City Richmond states "June Albonico is one of this city's greatest treasures. She has actively supported Aquatic Programs for all ages since she came to the plunge years ago. With her knowledge and experience she was an invaluable asset for Save the Plunge"

With this in mind, Mrs. Albonico became an active spokesperson for Save the Richmond Plunge Trust (STRPT) founded in 1997 as part of the nonprofit Richmond Friends of Recreation (RFOR). The latter was formed 1979 to maintain and increase recreation opportunities in the face of budget cuts which continue until this day.



*Plunge to reopen soon*

Members of STRPT proved both vocal, creative and after you drive by the building at the corner of E. Richmond and Garrard, you will also say very successful. Funds have come from selling souvenirs, a day at Golden Gate Fields, a car show, dinner theatre, the City of Richmond, private and corporate gifts and various grants. This is not the Plunge where Teacher June started her career!

Old features have been restored and new ones added: the water will be run through an ultraviolet system to eliminate chemicals, when you open the 132 windows you will enjoy natural lighting and lose that muggy feeling common to most indoor pools. Whoever thought a plunge swimmer would need sun protection or that your parents would no longer have to endure a sauna to watch the kids learn their strokes.

Take a look at the sign atop the building, the Plunge will once again be known as the Richmond Municipal Natatorium. I still remember the day my grandmother explained to me that a "nat" was a nickname for an indoor swimming pool. Until that day, the only gnats I knew were bothersome little bugs.

In the next few weeks while we wait for the Richmond Municipal Natatorium to open, take time to thank a few of those who came on board when this renovation was just an idea and then held their ground for the years : Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, Mayor Emeritus Rosemary Corbin, Frances Smith, Bob and Ellie Strauss. Take time to thank June Albonico, too. If you are signing up for lessons, you know my recommendation.



# The Truth about Professor Botts

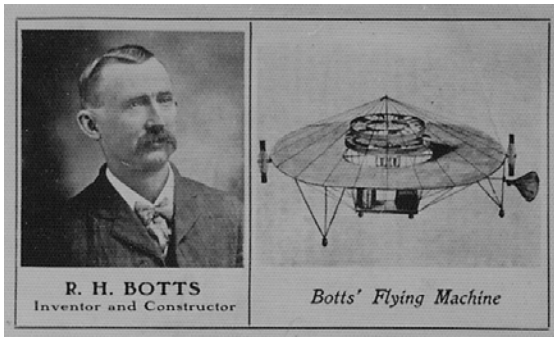
Research on Activities of Robert Henry Botts (1857 - unknown)

By James W. Hayes

*Inspired by Dr. William Thompson's article on Professor Botts reprinted in TPIT April/May, 2009 issue.*

*Now learn much more about this fascinating maverick who came to Point Richmond.*

As a child in the late 1940s I was fascinated by a card in our Oklahoma home with a picture of a man and a "Botts' Flying Machine". Attention-getting words on the back of the card said "Get off the Earth." My mother told me the individual depicted was one of our relatives. The card, actually a stock offering and promotional device, was eventually lost. Fortunately a cousin provided a photograph of the identical card.



**GET OFF THE EARTH**

Why not? 33,000 lbs. raised one foot high in one minute's time is a horse power, while 33 lbs. can be raised by a screw propeller direct.

One sq. ft. of canvas in an aeroplane, travelling at the rate of 20 miles an hour, will carry one lb., while at 40 miles per hour it will carry 4 pounds.

The gravity of one sq. ft. of canvas in descent is nearly equal to one lb. of weight descending at 11 miles an hour.

You might as well put legs to a locomotive as to put wings to a flying machine; therefore, the rigid aeroplane with advancing and ascending, neutralizing propellers, supplemented by light and very strong power, will solve the problem. Our new engines will meet this demand.

We have constructed four propellers weighing only 40 lbs., and containing 66 sq. ft. of blade surface.

Our neutralizing, lifting propeller blades, when in action, will advance over eight different currents of air, while the advancing propellers are so placed as to produce a direct lift on the aeroplane.

Our aeroplane will contain one sq. ft. of surface to each pound of weight to be carried.

Our entire machine is constructed on plan of the bicycle wheel, the inner and outer rims of the aeroplane being strongly guyed to a central mast; and we challenge the world to produce a lighter construction having equal strength with less wind resistance, since our one-man-machine, including 8-horse-power engine, can be built, weighing from 100 to 150 lbs.

We, as a company, propose to perfect a one-man-machine first, leaving the commercial possibilities to be determined in the future, thus making no extravagant claims.

Our experiment station is located on Mount Nicholl, at Point Richmond, Cal., which is the most suitable location for experimental purposes that nature could provide.

For lowest prices on stock, and other information, address the WORLD'S AERIAL NAVIGATION AND CONSTRUCTION CO., Point Richmond, Cal.

Many years later I became interested in family history and learned that Robert H. Botts was my great grandmother's brother. A Missouri history book published in 1881 identified Botts as the son of Addison Botts and Martha Warden. The biographical note mentioned Robert H. Botts as the inventor of the "Invincible washing machine". A search at the U. S. Patent Office revealed Botts held seven patents including an "Air-Ship" and a washing machine. His first patent is dated 30 November 1880 - "Be it known that I, Robert H. Botts, of Coloma, Missouri have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Washing-Machines." His Airship patent is dated 10 December 1901 - "Be it known that I, Robert Henry Botts, of Albuquerque, in the county of Bernalillo, Territory of New Mexico, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Air-ships". R. H. Botts is listed in the 1900 U. S. census for Albuquerque. He is 42 years old and his birthplace is Missouri. His occupation is "miner".

A diligent search of the Albuquerque Journal Democrat newspaper provided the following article dated Friday, December 13, 1901.

## **ROBERT BOTTS, INVENTOR RUMOR THAT HE HAS PATENTED AN AIR SHIP RECALLS CAREER OF ERRATIC MECHANICAL GENIUS WHILE IN ALBUQUERQUE**

*With the rumor that Robert H. Botts, formerly of Albuquerque, has been granted a patent on the mechanism of the model of an air ship, has come a revival of interest in the man, who during his residence here was the laughing stock of the many and the respected friend of the few who had faith in his undeniable mechanical genius. It took long and persistent inquiry to*

*discover any one who remembered Botts and his air ship, but once the circle of his friends was found, the thing became easy for these knew him well and a few were and are still confident that at sometime or other from the constant workings of his visionary brain will evolve some worthy invention. R. J. Sweeney of 515 South First Street remembers Botts, was his friend almost from the time of his arrival in Albuquerque and is the only one of his friends here who has kept track of him. Mr. Sweeney has kept up a desultory correspondence with the inventor, who at the time of his last letter was located in Point Richmond, Cal. When Botts came to Albuquerque a good many years ago he had as the sum of his worldly possessions, two diminutive burros, a part of a miner's outfit, and a valuable kit of tools. In all his ups and downs, he always managed to keep his tools. His friends say that while he is a man of no education in as far as the learning of grammar schools go, yet he is possessed of a vast fund of knowledge about things mechanical, seeming to be able to grasp the secrets of physics by a sort of intuition. This from his friends. Those who only knew him by his address and habit, thought his mind a little unsound. Botts first attempt at invention while here, was a machine for the washing of gold with a device by which an immense saving could be made in the water. The machine, had it been worked out successfully, would have been invaluable, but there was a hitch in one of the minor details and Botts having just then fixed his busy and erratic mind on the problem of aerial navigation, forgot the humble effort. One of the best of his friends was Doctor J. C. Berry, now dead, who owned what is now the Alvarado Pharmacy at the corner of First street and Gold avenue. To him Botts confided his belief in his ability to build an air ship. He made many plans and drawings and at last at Dr. Berry's suggestion he set to work upon a model. He had a little workshop in a barn in the rear of the Albuquerque Steam laundry which he was allowed to occupy rent free in view of his occasional assistance with engine and machinery. Here he worked night and day and at length*

*produced a model of an air ship, a small affair but mechanically perfect-only it would not fly. The machine was propelled by a gasoline engine made of aluminum, the plane, propellers and car all being of the light metal. The model was on exhibition in Doctor Berry's store for a short time, where it attracted some attention and caused the scoffers to smile and grow more fixed in their belief that Botts was "a little off." With Doctor Berry's help, Botts sent his machine to the patent office, making application for a patent on the mechanical devices of which all were original. Botts left Albuquerque a year ago last June and whether the air ship which has been patented by him is the model he had here, or another product of his fertile brain, is not known. Certain it is that in view of his absolute lack of education, his accomplishments in mechanical invention denote nothing less than genius and the few friends he has here would not be surprised to learn that he has rivaled the feats of Santos-Dumont and surpassed the ambitious Whitehead.*

This colorful news article written in the quaint style of the times placed Botts in Point Richmond, California. I soon located Dr. William Thompson's recollections of Botts at the Bancroft Library. In his writings Dr. Thompson cited a book entitled "Richmond, Windows to the Past". The author of the book researched Botts' life and discovered a certain Barnet N. Botts had published an article on the problem of aerial navigation dated January 1, 1894 at Paso Robles, California. The identical surname and the subject of the article persuaded the author to believe Barnet had changed his name to Robert H. Botts. But the author was understandably mistaken. Barnet is well documented as the son of George W. Botts and Catherine Exline. Barnet appears in the 1900 and 1910 U. S. censuses for San Luis Obispo County and died there in 1918. Robert H. Botts appears in the 1910 and 1920 U. S. censuses for Yuma County, Arizona. Despite having the same surname and interests, no connection or relationship between the two men has been found. Dr. Thompson's articles recently reprinted in "This

Point... in time" describe Robert H. Botts' activities in detail at Point Richmond concluding with the destruction of Botts' invention during a heavy rainstorm. This event was noted in the "San Francisco Call" Sunday issue dated March 13, 1904.

### ***Airship Wrecked by Storm***

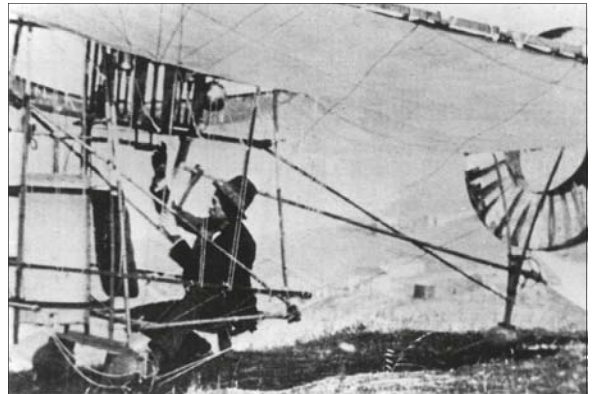
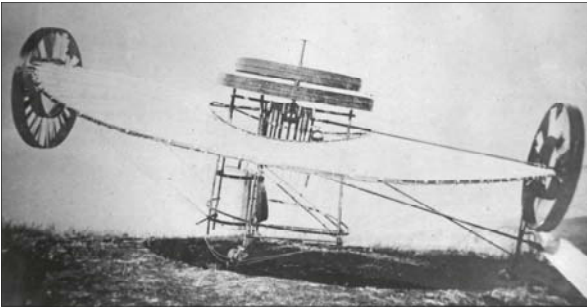
***POINT RICHMOND, March 12, An airship which was being constructed here by Professor Robert H. Botts and which the inventor intended to enter in the competitions at St Louis, was torn from its moorings and totally wrecked by Thursday's storm. Professor Botts has not yet decided whether he will build another ship.***

"Professor" Botts later appears in Parker, Yuma County (now La Paz), Arizona in 1910. He still has some hope for his air ship. In 1911 the local newspaper, the "Parker Post", reported "R. H. Botts, who is the inventor of an airship that he expects some day to launch, has opened a machine shop on lower California Avenue". Botts

continued to submit inventions to the patent office. His final patented invention was a tire pump in 1924. His last known address was Parker, Arizona where his town lot was sold for unpaid taxes in 1931. Family tradition is Botts either died in an explosion or drowned in the Colorado River. Both scenarios are feasible considering Botts' inventive nature and the location of Parker on the Colorado River. An extensive search in the vital records and newspapers of several states has failed to locate any notice of Botts' death. I had hoped to mark his grave but perhaps a more permanent memorial for Robert H. Botts is his presence in the history and lore of Point Richmond.

*James W. Hayes*

*Documentation of Mr. Hayes research is available at the PRHA museum. We are grateful to him for his efforts.*



*PRHA Photo Archives clockwise from top left #0186-DC, #0185-DC and #0186-DC of Botts flying machine from our Don Church Collection.*

*All images were enhanced by Thomas Mercer-Hursh*

# *Birthdays*

## *February*

### BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Mark Gebhart  
Sarah Wilson  
Steven Mertle  
Fred Beesley  
Billy Bob Karl  
Chris Rotting  
Walter MacMillan

Connie Healy  
Helen Valentine  
Marcos Rotting  
Arlene Rodini  
Landow Howe  
Rowene MacMillan  
Dody Perry  
Ethel MacMillan  
Kim Ward

Velma Healy  
Anne Brussok-Roth  
Jared Bigard  
Lupe Padilla Lopez  
Allegra Fenton  
Kay Mayfield Madison  
Artrese Morrison  
Adele Bruno Waymire  
Anne Roth

Gretchen Van Tassel  
Shaw  
Brenda McKinley  
Frank Smith  
Allan Smith  
Leonard Smith

## *March*

### GIRL SCOUTS CAMP FIRE GIRLS

Sheba Warith  
Dale Hawkins  
Karolyn Macdiarmid  
Carol Paasch  
JoAnn Bray  
Carol Darling  
Claire E. Crowson

Dolly Frosini  
Reba Downs  
Rich Schuldt  
Kathe Kiehn  
Ben Bray  
Janice Jones  
Jean Knox  
Lavinia Karl  
Avis Blanchette

Brian Richardson  
Susan Berman  
Mary Valenzano  
Isobel Folson  
Rachel Palfini  
Myron Pestana  
Delphina Franco Tawney  
Lorna Huffstetter  
LeRoy Williams

Lucile Cottingham  
Meyer  
Henry Marchitiello  
Evan Jahromi  
Kenneth Madison  
Kara Piantidosi  
Michael Smith

## EXCLUSIVE OVER 90 CLUB

### *An impressive list that grows each month.*

Mark Gebhart - 96  
Gretchen Van Tassel Shaw - 92  
Ed Squires - 93  
Anna Schwarz - 97  
Viola Lala Kennedy  
Al Frosini - 92  
Lee Christian - 93  
Shoney Gustafson -93  
Jean Moyle Spiersch - 95  
Madelilne Bellando Albright -92  
Charlotte Kermabon Birsinger-92

Jerome Vloebergh - 93  
Lupe Padilla Lopez - 95  
Goldie Mobley-96  
Delphina Franco - 92  
Reva Ward - 95  
Steve Wyrick - 94  
Bernard Dietz 95  
Avis Blanchette - 96  
Roger Wiese - 93  
Ann Hanzlik - 96  
Thelma Mae Harvey - 93  
Eunice Ruth Hursh - 93  
Dody Perry - 93

Betty Dornan - 91  
Edna Hathaway - 91  
Mary Tom Coe - 90  
Jerry Cerkowicz, Sr. - 90

### **100 Year Club**

Gordon Miller - 101  
Rena Cairo Gonsalves - 100

**Please send corrections and  
additions to “Over 90 Club” to  
[midornan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:midornan@sbcglobal.net)**



## Julio P. Carrera

Born January 18, 1928 in Point Richmond, CA

Died January 3, 2010 in Sacramento CA.

Julio was born in Point Richmond and never forgot his Point Richmond roots. He was a faithful member of the Point Richmond History Association and visited in Town very often. He often spoke of how everyone in town helped his mother after his father died in 1930 and she was left with five children and pregnant with the sixth. As he grew up, Julio said he was welcome at many homes for dinner or for cookies and milk after school. He attended Washington and Peres elementary school, Roosevelt Junior High and Richmond Union High School. He maintained life long friendships with several of his fellow school mates.

When he was 15, World War II was on and he convinced his mother to sign papers allowing him to join the Merchant Marine. He remained with the Merchant Marine until the Korean War started. He was drafted right off the ship and into the Army. He served in Korea about three months when he was severely wounded and transported to a hospital in Japan where he spent one year for rehabilitation of his right arm. He received the Purple Cross and was decorated for Bravery in Action. He returned to the Merchant Marine and then transferred to the Crowley Bay Fleet from which he retired.

Julio belonged to several swing dancing clubs and won many competitions. He also enjoyed dirt biking on Nicholl Nob, boating, and water skiing. He was a member of the Galileo Club and a strong advocate for veterans in many veterans organizations. He was an avid Raider fan.

Julio is survived by daughters Judith Adelman and Patsy Taylor; granddaughters Linda Adelman and Megan Schuster, grandsons, Lennon Adelman and Jason Wedge and 5 great grandchildren, his sister Teresa, and his sister in law Pricilla. Julio was preceded in death by his mother Felipa, Father Pedro, sister Pauline and brothers Peter, Phillip and Frank..

At Julio's request, there was no funeral service. He was buried with full military honors at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, CA on January 7, 2010.

We will certainly miss you, Julio. Your friend, Patsy Bill



*#0031-DC from our Don Church Collection. Enhanced by Thomas Mercer-Hursh*



# *Deaths.....*

**John C. Healy** died November 24, 2009, in the Point Richmond home on Ocean Avenue that he purchased in 1955. During WW II Jack served with Co B of the Amphibians in New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Philippines and was proud to be a part of the Liberation of the Philippines. After the war, he became a third generation Standard Oil employee. Jack is survived by his wife, Connie, and daughter Michele Healy of Torrance, CA. one granddaughter, three great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandson. His daughter, Anna Beardsley, preceded him in death. John requested no services. but if people wanted to make a donation in his name consider the Richmond Plunge Trust, P.O. box 70443, Richmond 94807 or the West Side Branch Library in Point Richmond, 94807.

**Shirley Ann Gerk** passed away December 16, 2009. Age 80. Shirley was a tireless, behind the scenes, community worker whether it was for Atchison Village, the Richmond Fire Department, Boy Scout Troop 111, the PTA or her church, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic. She is survived by her husband, John, son Tom Gerk, daughters Kathryn Gerk, Sharon Gerk, Karen Todd and Teresa Gerk. She was predeceased by children Tony, Pat, Dave and Tim Gerk. She is also survived by 19 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren, Sisters Loretta Aherns, Edith Dack, Elaine Spaeth, Don Clark and Audrey Pierce. A celebration of life was held at Our Lady of Mercy church on December 19, 2009.

**Dora (Beesley) Feuerhelm** passed away October 30, 2009 in Concord, CA. Age 88. Dora was born in Provo, UT and was one of ten children. The family moved to the Point when she was young. Dora attended Washington School, Roosevelt Jr. Hi. and Richmond High. She is survived by sisters Beatrice Casey and June Solosabal and brothers, Fred Beesley, Neal Beesley and Richard Beesley.

**Luciano “Chano” Forner** died January 5, 2010. Age 84. Chano was born in Point Richmond to Italian immigrants. He was a founding member of the Richmond Water ski Club, the Galileo Club, Fratellanza Club in Oakland, The Knights of Columbus, the Italian Catholic Federation, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church and the Point Richmond History Association. His friends knew him as Blackie and it is thought he is the only person to water-ski from Point Richmond to the Farallon Islands. Chano retired from Chevron after 40 years of service. He is survived by his daughter, Chere Mascaro, Pleasant Hill and son Mike Forner, Walnut Creek, four grandchildren and one great grandchild. His wife of 50 years Bonnie Sue preceded him in death. A standing room only Funeral Mass was at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church on January 18, 2010 followed by a reception at the Galileo Club.

**Judith Ann (Camren) Walz** age 65 passed away January 25, 2010. Her loving family was beside her during her extended hospital confinement. Born in Watsonville, CA to Charles and Verla Camren, she graduated from Harry Ells High School. Judy is survived by her husband, Rudy Walz, her loving children Connie McClure, Mark Walz and Joanne Modie and three sisters, Janice Jones, , June Szody-Bales (Robert) and Marian Pierce (Chuck). Judy was a 60 year Point Richmond Resident.

**Julio P. Carrera** died January 3 2010, see Pat Pearson’s eulogy on facing page.

# *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. 510-234-4884 for details.

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Contact, Margaret Morkowski, 510-234-4219

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## **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 March 26, 2010. 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.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	History Preserver	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Sponsor	75.00
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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.

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

Please mail articles and items of interest to:

**Gary Shows**

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

or

**email: [gary@alkos.com](mailto:gary@alkos.com)**

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### **Main Contributors to this Issue:**

Gary Shows	Editor
Mid Dornan	Various Articles
Thomas Mercer-Hursh, Ph.D.	Design/Photo Enhancement
Don Church/Allan Smith	Historic Photos
Jerry Cerkanowicz	Proof/Information
Pam Wilson	Membership Info
Jean Reynolds	Article
Dee Rosier	Article
William Thompson, M.D.	Article
Theresa de Valencé	Article
Margaret Morkowski	Article
Donna Roselius	Line Drawings
Pat Pearson	Articles
Sandi Genser-Maack	Article
Gary Darling	Article
Michelle Healy	Article
Jane Vandenburg	Article
Anna Schwarz	Information
James W. Hayes	Article/Information
Gary Romel	Photo

### **Phone Numbers**

Mid Dornan	510-234-5334
Gary Shows	510-235-1336
Fax	510-965.0335

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