

THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Winter -- 2011, 2012

FIRE TRUCK SURPRISES AT RED OAK RETURN

by Lois Boyle

It was a red-letter day for the Richmond Museum Association as visitors watched the Foss Maritime tugs maneuver the *Red Oak Victory* into place at 1337 Canal Boulevard where eager volunteers were waiting to secure her to the dock and then simultaneously saw an auto carrier enter the gate with a 1942 open-cab fire truck from Shipyard No. 3.

Tony D'Ambrosio, owner of Potenza Transport of Fairfield, timed his arrival with the truck to coincide with that of the Ship. It was yet another miracle in the continuing saga of the work the volunteers are doing to have two historic artifacts take their place on the dock and at the same time.

The truck was found as the result of an email to the president advising that a fire truck emblazoned with the words "Kaiser Co. Richmond Shipyard No.3" had been discovered in a wrecking yard in Spanish Fork, Utah, and the writer of the email thought it should be in Richmond. The museum association agreed, of course, and began the process of acquiring it. After several months, it became clear that the purchase cost and freight charges were just too great to get the truck from Utah to California. Again, miraculously, the president was put in touch with Tony D'Ambrosio. She described the situation to him. With the spirit of a true historian and a lover of drama, he agreed to move the truck and staged its return perfectly.

As planned, the two arrivals were in place for the Home Front Festival by the Bay on October 15th. This could not have happened without the help of many local businesses:

- ◆ Manson Construction lifted the port gangway onto the deck, out of the way of hull work and lifted the stored propeller from the dock onto the gun tub so the old propeller could be replaced with the new one, all at no cost.
- ◆ Foss Maritime prepared the tow plans, arranged for the bar pilots, and with precision took the Ship to and from the BAE shipyards in San Francisco, all at reduced cost.
- ◆ Hempel Paint shipped all the necessary paint to BAE, at one-third the original bid fee.
- ◆ M. A. Hays Co. arranged the liability insurance at the 11th hour, on a weekend, and declined its usual commission.
- ◆ Edge Hull Testing made several trips to the Ship provid-

ing multiple testing services, above and beyond the scope of the agreement.

The work was completed in the 22-working-day contract period, with hull integrity guaranteed for five years.

Come visit the Ship and admire its renewed beauty! And see the original Shipyard No. 3 fire truck; it's a diamond in the rough, but we think it's beautiful in its own way.

The *Red Oak* was moved in time for another ship, the *Henry J. Kaiser*, to take the dry-dock berth for its required work. It seems poetic that a ship built by Henry J. Kaiser should be moved from a berth needed by a modern Navy ship named *Henry J. Kaiser*.



CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY ART

Due to popular demand, the current exhibit, "*Photographs of DOROTHEA LANGE: Richmond 1942-1944*," has been extended through January in the Seaver Gallery.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

by Lois Boyle

The annual membership meeting of the Richmond Museum Association will be Sunday, January 22, 2012, at 2 p.m. in the Seaver Gallery at the Museum. Those of you who have not had the opportunity to see the current exhibit are in for a treat. The world-famous photographs by Dorothea Lange of the Richmond area during World War II will still be on exhibit. We are now the owners of these photographs and can exhibit them at our discretion. Continuing to have them on exhibit is a choice we are now at liberty to make.

At the meeting the past year's accomplishments will be reviewed, many in which we take great pride, and we will elect our officers who will lead the organization through another busy year, 2012. The challenges of growth require strong leaders, and you will want to be a part of the election process to assure that we get the best.

The Museum has been asked to provide a significant exhibit in the Visitors Center of the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park, which is expected to open in May of 2012. This is indeed an honor to produce an exhibit of Richmond's story in a National facility, and our staff has already begun the process of researching the creation of such an exhibit.

The meeting will also include the adoption of an aggressive Plans and Programs schedule for the year with the association-related operating budget. The growth of the Museum has made these two organizational operations extremely important, and we hope you will participate in this decision-making process with us.

The ongoing work on our major artifact, the *Red Oak Victory*, is expected to culminate in the full operation of the vessel, as we take the Ship on its maiden voyage since its historic stay in the mothball fleet. It was placed in Suisun Bay in 1968, coming out to Richmond in 1998, and returning from dry dock in 2011. What the date will be when she sails on her own power is an unknown, and determining that is the challenge facing us in 2012.

2011 can be viewed as one of the busiest and greatest years in the history of the organization. Volunteer involvement was at an all-time high, and the accomplishments were many. Community support for our work was evidenced in the high visitation numbers recorded at both the Museum and the Ship. Use of our research resources grew as a result of the strong interest in our work. It was a busy year for our small staff of two. Inna Soiguine and Matt Walker were visibly involved in the year's progress at the two facilities. We have been blessed by their participation with us.

Our continued growth needs your ongoing support and we look forward to working with you for our community in this next year.

RE-LAUNCHING THE SS RED OAK VICTORY SHIP

by Clare Fischer

In spite of rain, an unprecedented number of visitors attended the November 11th Veterans Day celebration of the return of the *SS Red Oak Victory* from 22 days of hull restoration work in dry dock. It is difficult to assess



Tom Butt, Nigel Herne, Chevron Refinery Manager, and Marian Sauer after the re-launch of the Red Oak.

what single event proved to be most captivating during the rich ceremony co-sponsored by Chevron and the Richmond Museum of History with the support of the Kiwanis Club of Richmond and the volunteers of the historic Victory ship. There was standing room only for most of approximately 400 guests who enjoyed an informative and entertaining program that included music, speeches and the re-enactment of the *Red Oak's* launching in November of 1944.

Jeff Wright, a member of the Museum's Board of Directors, welcomed the audience and introduced guest speakers and the musical performance of *Smooth Sailing*, sung by The JACS. This song, written by Stephen McNeil and recently rediscovered, was originally written as the official music for Kaiser ship launchings and in all probability had not been performed since the war's end in 1945.

Russ Yarow, representative from Chevron, reviewed some features of the refinery's history and its contribution to the war effort. Lois Boyle, President of the Richmond Museum Association, followed with a rich account of women's extraordinary participation in the military and the home front. Her remarks, "Call to Action, 1941," added to the sense of pride in work well done in the past and continuing to the present through the efforts of men and women volunteering to restore and maintain the *Red Oak*. Tom Leatherman, Superintendent of the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park, emphasized the importance of the Victory ship's accessibility to the public, and John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor, endorsed the efforts of all those associated with the project and the on-going activities to



HOME TO RICHMOND, PART 1: WOULD THE SHIP RETURN FROM DRY DOCK ON TIME?

by Lois Boyle

Our plan was that the *Red Oak Victory* would return from dry dock in time for the Home Front Festival on October 15th, so it was an anxious day, October 12th, when the officials of BAE Shipyards advised us that a job we thought was finished actually required additional hull replacement work before it could be approved by the Coast Guard for return to Richmond, with an estimated additional cost of almost half a million dollars.

It seems that further hull testing had determined that degraded hull sections on the starboard side contained twenty-one holes of varying sizes and needed to be replaced. The holes were in a strip of hull three feet above the waterline. Clearly, we couldn't afford this additional work, and we could not leave the Ship in San Francisco, so we made an urgent plea for help to the Coast Guard compliance office. The Coast Guard recognized our plight and determined that the repair of holes three feet above the waterline for a short tug-assisted voyage back home could be accomplished with a short-term repair using epoxy putty.

Even that fix was to be costly, not only in material but labor, and would involve potential delay with more berthing fees. But our crew, in its usual creative manner, devised a plan for volunteer repair. Three men, Richard Arnold, Greg Blasquez and Brian Bender, worked from 6:30 in the evening until 10:30 p.m. outside on scaffolding provided at no cost by BAE and inside the hold, applying epoxy to the critical areas.

On the 13th, the Coast Guard returned for its final inspection and signed off on the crew's work. With incredible efficiency, a tow plan was developed by our saviors at Foss Maritime, and the Ship was towed home on schedule. Instead of half a million dollars, the project cost less than \$300. It is this kind of incredible effort that made it possible to get the Ship into dry dock in the first place, and then to get it out on time. The *SS Red Oak Victory* was home in Richmond on October 14th, ready to celebrate the next day at the Home Front Festival.

CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY ART

by Clare Fischer

Twenty photographs taken by world-renowned artist Dorothea Lange in Richmond during the home front years were featured at a well-attended event on October 8th that combined the exhibit with the unveiling of a new installation for the patio created by mosaic artist Tina Amidon. Through the curatorial efforts of Joseph Fischer (Museum Board member), Inna Soiguine (Museum Manager), and Matt Walker (Museum Assistant), this historic display invited viewers to experience Lange's unique photographic account of Richmond and its people during World War II. An extraordinary panel of speakers offered stories about their association with Dorothea Lange, providing an insightful context for the photographs.

The day's event began with a festive wine and cheese reception and the unveiling of Tina Amidon's "contemporary loveseat" commemorating TEPCO, the Technical Porcelain and China Ware Co. of El Cerrito, which produced dinnerware for restaurants and for the Pacific Fleet during the war years. The audience was treated to dancers from El Cerrito High School wearing headpieces that represented TEPCO chinaware. The loveseat sculpture, composed of broken pieces of china that Amidon collected from the TEPCO dumpsite along the Richmond shoreline, provides a whimsical and colorful addition to the

Museum's patio. (See the story and picture on page 4.)

Attendees were invited to enter the Seaver Gallery to view the Lange exhibit and enjoy the rich historical observations offered by two associates of Dorothea Lange during the home front years. Christina Gardner, 91, and Rondal Partridge, 94, held the audience's attention with anecdotes and critical commentary about Lange's photographic art and warmly entertained questions from the audience. The photographic prints were purchased from the Oakland Museum of California to be added to the Richmond Museum of History permanent collection for archival research and display. Lange's photographs dramatically document the character and realities of life in Richmond during the war years.

The exhibit, "*Photographs of Dorothea Lange: Richmond 1942-1944*," has been extended through January due to popular demand.

Have you noticed the fancy new look of *The MIRROR*?

We thank Leah Becker, owner of the UPS Store on Sand Creek Road in Brentwood for producing our new, improved image.

TEPCO LOVESEAT IS ART FOR HISTORY

by Sandi Genser-Maack, *TEPCO National Collectors Club*

On a blustery Bay Area day in early 2011, local artist Tina Amidon sat on the beach near Pt. Isabel and thought how wonderful it would be to have a hot cup of coffee right about now.

Coffee. Cup. Chinaware.

Tina was at “TEPCO Beach,” named for the shards of china covering the beach and extending well into the Bay, disposed of by TEPCO for 50 years until more than 40 years ago.

TEPCO, the Technical Porcelain and China Ware Co., was in business, first in Albany and then in El Cerrito, from 1918 to 1967. The plant was on Manila Avenue where the Department of Motor Vehicles office stands today. TEPCO made dishware for restaurants, clubs, churches, halls and the armed forces and was the largest manufacturer of restaurant china west of the Mississippi. It was the biggest business in the history of El Cerrito.

Nobody really knows how long they used the bay as a place to dispose of their seconds, but there really is a lot of it there and many collectors and artists have used TEPCO Beach as a source of supply and inspiration. And TEPCO Beach is in Richmond.

Which leads us back to Tina, the coffeecup chair and the Richmond Museum of History.

Tina is a mosaic artist and has exhibited all over the Bay Area, including showing a teacup chair at an International Mosaic Show in San Francisco in 2003. The teacup chair had TEPCO shards in it among other bits and pieces.

But now we have a coffee cup. Tina proposed this as an art installation for the patio of the Richmond Museum of History, and she and Lois Boyle, Museum Association President, and Inna Soiguine, Museum Manager, brainstormed what it would look like, how big it would be and where it would go.

The decision was that the Coffeecup Chair should be big enough to sit in, and when sitting in it, one should be able to see all of the patio.

The project was funded by the Clarabelle Hamilton Discretionary Funds through the San Francisco Foundation Seaver Gallery, Patio and Grounds.

The cup is a style that TEPCO labeled Ship Cup, with straight sides. And although TEPCO made and decorated its ware in many colors, its main color was Sunglow, a warm tan color, often found as the base of a pattern or design or plain.

Tina’s Ship Cup is based on Sunglow shards with a variety of other colors and patterns, bits with names of restaurants and enough different back stamps to show the diversity of TEPCO’s output. All are pieces that she found at TEPCO Beach.

Among the shards are a plate from Louie’s Club, an El Cerrito restaurant of the past, a copy of a photo of the



Tina Amidon in Tepco Coffeecup Loveseat in the Museum patio at the unveiling. Photo courtesy of George Post.

TEPCO plant and other items showing the history of TEPCO.

Another link of TEPCO to Richmond is that the ships produced at the Richmond Kaiser Shipyards carried TEPCO dishes when they went to sea.

Tina, who lives in central Richmond and is an RN at Kaiser Oakland, has named the sculpture “Tepco Coffeecup Loveseat.” Other work of hers can be seen at www.tidalzonearts.com.

Come visit the Museum and have a cup of coffee on us. Well, at least visit the cup.

RE-LAUNCH CONTINUED FROM P. 2

preserve and educate the general public about Richmond’s exceptional place in history.

Richmond’s Vice Mayor, Tom Butt, set the stage for the “re-launch” enactment, introducing Marian Sauer, 91, who portrayed the wife of Red Oak Iowa’s mayor in 1944. Sauer, dressed in 1940’s attire, swung a “champagne” bottle onto a replica of the Ship’s bow, and the audience enthusiastically applauded this symbolic blow for victory!

RICHMOND’S OLDEST NATIVE PASSES ON

Sadly, we report that Ms. Lillian Ghidella, acknowledged as the oldest living person born in Richmond, passed away in her sleep on June 10, 2011. This information came to us from Ms. Ghidella’s son Allan of Orange, CA. Lillian would have been 98 years old in July.

HOME TO RICHMOND, PART 2: THE SAGA OF THE SHIPYARD FIRE TRUCK

by Lois Boyle

Many months ago, a thoughtful man referred to this office a national advertisement for the sale of a 1942 fire truck used in Kaiser Shipyards No. 3 during World War II and now in Spanish Fork, Utah, declaring that the vehicle should belong to the Richmond Museum of History in Richmond, California. That seemed reasonable. The matter was referred to the Board of Directors. The truck became the object of considerable interest and the Board members started a fund to buy the truck.

Museum board member Karen Stephenson agreed to pursue the subject, finding free transport for it on a section of Santa Fe lines. An equal amount of rail was required for the section from Spanish Fork, Utah to the California line. This section belonged to another line — Union Pacific.

Judy Morgan of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce took



Richmond Fire Chief Michael Banks joins RMA President Lois Boyle in the cab of the Fire Truck on arrival day.

amounted to about \$600. But just not enough.

And just when the situation seemed hopeless, a young man from Benicia who had made a free move of a container for the *Red Oak*, was asked if he could move the truck. It turns out he is not licensed to go outside the state and his truck is specifically designed for container transport, but he has a friend who has an auto transport vehicle. That man was contacted (he lives in Fairfield and works out of Benicia), loved the story, appreciates the work of the Museum and recognizes the value of the Ship, and agreed to do the

entire trip for just his expenses and beyond that ... to deliver it on October 14th at the same time the *Red Oak* was expected to arrive home from the dry dock in San Francisco. (Our new friend loves drama and thought this delivery schedule would make a nice splash. And it did!)

So the Richmond Museum Association has a 1942 fire truck once used at Kaiser Shipyards #3. Now, one more bit of information: Judy Morgan of the Chamber again thought it would be good to know who made the truck and perhaps that company could be pursued for a donation toward the restoration. The president and vice-president thought about this for a minute, considering who might have created this truck, when a lightning bolt struck! Lo and behold it is a Ford Motor Company truck. Who would have thought, judging only from its title, boldly displayed on its side!

Well, Judy's good idea is being pursued and we may just get another vehicle restored equal to our beautiful 1931 Model A at the Museum — also restored by Ford years ago.

Who says this world is not full of good, wonderful people who care as much about our goals as we do. We just have to open the right window!



the lead to find equally free transport on Union Pacific. It was not to be had — after all what is Richmond, California, and its shipyards to a railroad in another state? So then, with the purchase price and transportation expense combined, it was going to cost upwards of \$10,000 to buy and bring the fire truck home. The project was out of the question.

But Judy struck again, and put the forces together to ask the Chamber's membership for donations. The publicity was beautiful and incredible. The story was picked up by Richmond City Councilmember Tom Butt's e-Forum and Chris Treadway, the community reporter at the West County Times. Every local person seemed to know about the truck, and, little-by-little, donations started coming in: small ones from caring people that finally



RECENT DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

Myrna A. Barnes 08.28.11
Mop pail (pre-war, c. 1938)

Inna Soiguine 09.23.11
Victrola Records. mix
Victor Records. Beethoven, Chopin
Columbia Records. mix
TEPCO bowl

Unknown 10.07.11
A Sanitary Survey of Richmond. Abbot Crum. Ca. 1930.
Examines the sanitary facilities of Richmond with some photos and documents. Book put together by hand.

Robert W. & sister Kea R. Scofield 10.26.11
Garlic bowl. Levine Mfg., Richmond, CA

RUDDER AND PROPELLER ON THE *RED OAK* -- BEFORE AND AFTER DRY DOCK. WHAT A DIFFERENCE!



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Privileges:

- ◆ Reduced admission to events
- ◆ Discounts on services, books, and gift items
- ◆ Quarterly newsletter, "*The MIRROR*"
- ◆ Advance notice of tours and events
- ◆ Free entrance to Museum and Ship

Yes, I want to become a member

Enclosed is my check for

\$ _____ (payable to RMA)

Categories of Membership

\$25	Senior/Student
\$35	Individual
\$50	Family/Organization
\$65	Contributing
\$100	Sustaining
\$500	Patron
\$1000	Benefactor/Corporate

___ New ___ Renew ___ Gift
___ I Would like to volunteer

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

___ I would like my newsletter sent by e-mail
(saves money & trees).

Mail to:

**Richmond Museum of History
PO Box 1267
Richmond, CA 94802**

ITEMS NOT ON DISPLAY

THE EDISON-DICK MIMEOGRAPH

by Lynn Maack

Before laser printers, Xerox machines and carbon copies there was the mimeograph machine. In 1876, Thomas A. Edison filed a United States patent for autographic printing by means of an electric pen. A second patent further developed his system to “prepare autographic stencils for printing.”

Albert Blake Dick invented the mimeograph stencil in 1884 and began manufacturing equipment to make stencils for the reproduction of hand-written text. In 1887, the A.B. Dick Company released the model “0” flatbed duplicator selling for \$12. It was an immediate success. They named the machine The Edison Mimeograph.

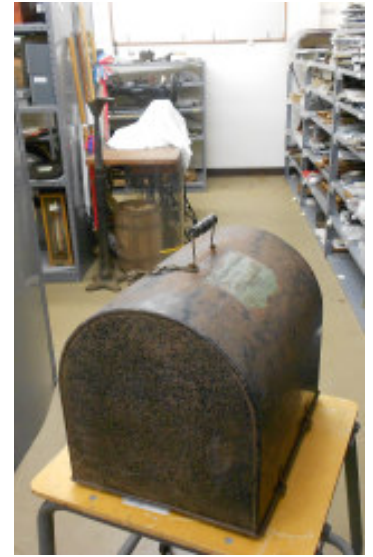
Copying or reproduction of documents is important to any business or organization. The mimeograph machine in the Museum’s collection represents a culmination of many inventions in document-reproduction technology beginning in the late 1700s with printing presses. In 1876, Thomas Alva Edison started on a path toward better duplicating processes when he invented and patented his “Edison Electric Pen.” Edison’s pen was a cumbersome, liquid battery-operated, hand-held device, much like a metal-engraving tool, that enabled writing on a special, waxy paper stencil via a series of minute holes perforating the paper. Ink applied to the back of the stencil penetrated only through the holes drawn by the pencil. On a flat-panel apparatus, the stencil was placed atop a blank sheet of paper and ink was applied to the stencil. By applying pressure to the stencil, whatever was drawn or written on the stencil was transferred to the sheet of paper below. The production rate was about four or five copies per minute, and the stencils reportedly



could produce up to about 3,000 copies before wearing out. It was not long before the flat-panel system with its electric pen gave way to a faster, rotary one with stencils produced by typewriter. In 1900, the A.B. Dick Company teamed with Edison to produce the Edison Rotary Mimeograph system. The principle of image transfer was the same as that using the Edison Electric Pen, but a hand-cranked rotary drum, improved ink-delivery mechanism and stencils designed for typewriting made the process much faster and more efficient. A.B. Dick advertising

claimed that the 1904 Edison Rotary Mimeograph No. 75 could produce 2,000 copies from a single stencil at 45 to 50 copies per minute, a significant improvement over the flat-panel duplicators.

The Museum’s artifact is Edison’s Mimeograph No. 76, which is nearly identical to the No. 75, but with a few different levers and setting features. In the photos, you can see the steel drum, perforated to allow ink to penetrate and extrude through the stencil to the blank paper, which is fed from the wooden tray. The drum holds the stencil firmly in place while the operator turns the crank (wooden handle in lower position), which turns the drum. The blank paper passes under the drum between the drum and a roller that presses the paper against the stencil, thus transferring ink from the stencil to the paper. Voilà! Instant copy!



The Museum’s example of Edison’s and A.B. Dick’s mimeograph machine is in operable condition. The sheet-metal carrying case is rusty but displays a legible label that contains six patent dates from 1897 to 1906. The machine itself shows a most-recent patent date of 1909, which was the year the No. 76 was introduced.

The rounded-top case measures 16 inches long, 13 inches wide and 14 inches high, plus handle. Basic operating instructions are glued to the wooden paper-feed tray and more detailed instructions are glued inside the case. Four latches secure the case to the wooden base making the unit portable.

A.B. Dick was still selling Models 75, 76, 77 and 78 in 1930 and used the Edison name on such systems until 1940.



Sources: <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/ABDick-Company-Company-History.html>; http://www.officemuseum.com/copy_machines.htm; http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2008/08/dayintech_0808.

Richmond Museum Association, Inc.

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The Richmond Museum of History is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit educational organization. Gifts and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Richmond Museum Assoc., Inc.
P.O. Box 1267
Richmond, CA 94802

HELP RAISE THE ANCHOR!

CERTIFICATES OF INVESTMENT

We have launched a *Red Oak Drydock Campaign*. Savings Certificates, redeemable for passage on the Ship's first cruise after dry dock, are now being sold at \$20 each. The first cruise requires six (6) certificates, which will have an appreciated value of \$150 -- the cost of the first cruise. Certificates must be purchased by December 10, 2011, and are available in the Ship's Gift Shop, or by calling the Ship's office at (510) 237-2933.



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Admission:

Members: Free
Seniors/Students: \$1.00
General: \$2.00
Children: Free w/adult

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
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Permit No. 78

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Call (510) 235-7387 for information and tour appointments.
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