

THE MIRROR

The Richmond Museum Association Newsletter

Winter 2008 - 2009

Vol. 57

No. 4

CELEBRATION OF NEW MAIN GALLERY EXHIBIT

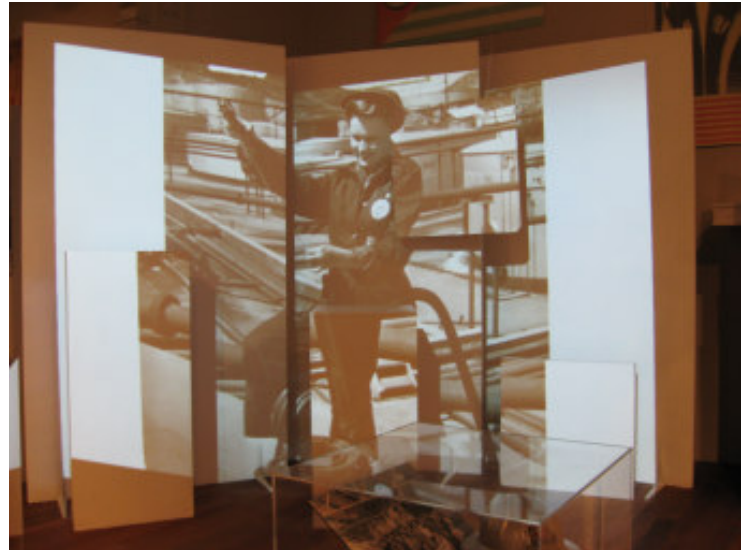
VISUALIZING THE HOME FRONT EXPERIENCE

by Clare Fischer

On Saturday, November 22, visitors to the Richmond Museum of History attended the opening of the new installation in the Main Gallery of an impressive array of photographs, posters, objects and other ephemera associated with World War II. Drawn from the Museum's collection, "*Richmond at War-The Home Front Experience*" offers a visual sense of what Director Donald Bastin calls "the big story." He notes that it is a story of the massive changes introduced by the war effort that altered "the trajectory of Richmond's history." The Main Gallery has been modified to tell a substantial part of that story.

With the installation of the current exhibition, the Museum has entered the modern period. Visitors are invited to view a rich display of photographs, posters, objects and ephemera that provide glimpses of both public events and personal history: records of victory ship launchings, announcement of the Japanese evacuation, war bond posters, letters from those serving at the front, a piece of parachute taken from a Japanese plane that crashed in a kamikaze attack, photos of families and housing in Richmond. Among the varied features of the exhibition that stand out for me are the hardhat worn by Don Hardison during his work at the shipyard and documentation of ethnic diversity engaged in or impacted by the war effort. Most striking, and to the curators' merit (Bastin and Clementina Diaz), is the prominent slide projection of photos associated with Richmond's building of 747 Liberty and Victory Ships. Bastin reports that this large, changing (24 images changing every 30 seconds) visualization is "just a taste" of the massive activity associated with Richmond's wartime effort.

The opening event offered viewers a splendid opportunity to view representations of Richmond's homefront as well as a special showing of a media project in the Seaver Gallery. The "*Richmond Voting Project*," part of the Neighborhood Public Art Project and led by Sanjit Seth, involved high school students and older Richmond residents in recording stories about voting and civic life. As viewers stood in the middle of the gallery, four elders and four students projected on large screens across from one another exchanged memories and questions about political engagement in Richmond.



A life-size, multi-level, changing slide projection showing Richmond's shipyard activity is a prominent feature of the new Main Gallery exhibit.

Annual Membership Meeting of the Richmond Museum Association Sunday, January 25, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Seaver Gallery, 400 Nevin Avenue
Annual Report, Election of Officers, Adoption of
Budget and Calendar, Amendments to the Bylaws.
See page 4 for more details.

Opening of Nevin Park and Celebration of the 55th Anniversary of the Richmond Museum of History Saturday, January 31, 2009

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
400 Nevin Avenue
Live Music by the Albany Big Band
Historical Fashion Show by Nostalgic Reflections
See page 2 for more details.

NEVIN PARK RESTORATION: UPDATE

by Donald Bastin, Executive Director

The Richmond Museum of History has been a major beneficiary of the work being done by the City of Richmond in making major changes and upgrades to Nevin Park. The Museum received a complete repainting of the outside of the building, is now encircled by attractive fencing and completely re-landscaped.

For these upgrades we particularly want to thank the Director of the Redevelopment Agency, Alan Wolken, and the Superintendent of the Parks Department, Anthony Norris, who have gone out of their way to make the Museum a part of the park improvement project, and to include the Museum enhancements in the general budget process.



When the park work began early in 2008, it was initially predicted that the project would be completed some time in July. This was later moved ahead to September, then November, and then to the new year. As of now, the park will officially re-open on January 31, 2009, and plans are being made for the celebration (of which we shall be a part). While park improvements include some changes to the Nevin Center building, the park proper has been thoroughly re-designed, with attractive walkways, tables and benches, a large children's play area, and a completely new landscaping plan. The Museum is now a much more integrated feature of the park, which should help to draw visitors.

Painting of the Museum took several weeks. The Parks Department crews were professional and courteous, and seemed to take a genuine interest in the Museum and the work they were doing. When they finished painting the flag pole, the crew insisted that we fly a flag, which we did. As we raised the flag, we and the crew spontaneously broke into a ragged chorus of the Star-Spangled Banner. It was a touching moment.

So as we enter the New Year, we are participating in the changes taking place all around us, and are hopeful that the changes made to the Museum, inside and out, will contribute to its ongoing success. If you have not visited the Museum recently, make that a new year's resolution. We think you will agree that the improvements being made make your Museum a much more relevant and pleasant place to visit.



The Parks Department crew giving a salute to the Flag and a rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT....

A GOOD YEAR FOR MUSEUM AND RED OAK

by Lois Boyle

Each year when goals are set for the Richmond Museum Association, the volunteers are challenged to do more and the organization's purpose becomes more clearly defined. The little museum that once was called "the Bay Area's best kept secret" has revealed itself to hundreds of guests at museum gallery events and *Red Oak Victory* programs. More than 5,000 people participated in our offerings this year.

The musical production "*RIVETS*" drew sold-out crowds throughout the month of October and is expected to return to the ship next fall. Busloads of guests visited the museum and ship where tours were provided by museum staff and volunteer docents. The final pancake breakfast of the season in October saw 310 happy guests enjoying the traditional pancakes, sausage, bacon, orange juice, fruit, coffee and tea, and even mimosas. This equates to 930 pancakes cooked on the galley stove by Chief Electrician Rich Chivers. What a feat! July 3rd where we celebrated the 4th of July with our annual barbecue saw 395 guests served. The letters that came to us after the event were unanimous in saying, "The food was great and the fireworks were awesome. Thanks!" We thank the City of Richmond for that grand fireworks display, which seems to be staged just for the folks on the *Red Oak*.

The museum had four temporary exhibits in the Seaver Gallery. The last, which opened in September, entitled "*Richmond at War, the Home Front Experience*," is now permanently installed in the Main Gallery. This required the removal of the parlour/bedroom/textile display and distribution of some of those artifacts to other areas in the gallery. Staff had one month to accomplish this feat and they did it. The exhibit incorporates modern display techniques adding an interesting new dimension to the museum.

Congressman George Miller visited us on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the move of the *Red Oak* to Richmond. He commended us for our work and vision in having saved the ship. Barbara Johnson, his congressional aide, brought his message to us on Veterans Day where we enjoyed music by the Albany Big Band and a Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers 1936 routine, "Dancing Cheek to Cheek," by Sue and Lee Coleman. Councilman Tom Butt

greeted the guests and served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. In proper form, Boy Scout Troop #149, under the leadership of Scoutmaster Steve Rudy, performed a proud flag ceremony. Chief Bill Jackson inspired all with remembrances of his seventy-plus years of service to this country. Assistant Chief Electrician Harold Wagner emphasized the role the American Merchant Marine has played in this country's maritime history with service dating back to 1775 in peace and war. The traditional *Laying of Flowers on the Bay* concluded the afternoon as guests disembarked the ship, with warm loving memories of veterans who served our country.

It was a delight to celebrate Richmond's Arbor Day with the planting of a California Oak in front of our freshly-painted building. If you haven't seen the new paint, the restored landscaping and the completed restoration of Nevin Park, please mark your calendar as a reminder to attend the official re-opening ceremony on January 31, 2009.

The year was good to the Museum, and the volunteers and staff were inspired to do incredible things. Thank you for continuing your membership in this great organization where your support makes it possible.



On October 15, we celebrated Richmond's Arbor Day by planting a live oak tree next to the flag pole. Lois Boyle and her granddaughter helped out, along with Marjorie Hill, Tony Norris, Lynn and Sandi Genser-Maack and Donald Bastin. The worker with his back to us in the picture is Steve DeLucchi, the City's Tree Guy.

PLAN TO ATTEND

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION MEMBERS:

Dear Members,

As of this writing, the *Red Oak* and Museum are now reviewing the closing tasks for a final bill from the *Red Oak* restoration contractor, the City continues to make progress on the park renovation and has completed exterior painting of the Museum, and we have engaged a grant consultant to raise funds to get the *Red Oak* into dry dock. Clearly, sometimes it seems the future can arrive faster than we can plan.

These developments, and others, have inspired your Board of Directors to expand the planning for the future to include a review of organization procedures and processes, so as to be better prepared for the future as well as increase our responsiveness and efficiency.

The first area to be reviewed was Museum Bylaws. A committee has presented its review and the Board is convinced the matter of electing Board members needed updating to prepare for leadership succession while maintaining Board awareness of ongoing challenges and operations.

The result of that review is the recommendation to the membership that the Bylaws be amended to (a) increase the authorized Board size up to 16 from the current 10, and selection of Museum Officers from those elected to the Board; and (b) to limit the term of office for President and Vice-president to no more than 3 consecutive terms, respectively.

We hope you will review and approve the proposed Bylaw amendments, included with the notice of the Annual Meeting you received in late December, and give your vote for a bright Museum future.

Sincerely,

Bob Moore
Director & Bylaw Committee Member

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE ANNUAL MEETING AT THE MUSEUM ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 25TH AT 2 P.M.

Annual Report, Election of Officers, Adoption of Budget and Calendar, Amendments to the Bylaws

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

President	Lois Boyle
Vice President	John Ziesenhenn
Recording Secretary	Sandi Genser-Maack
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Tom Coe
Treasurer	William Rochester
Financial Secretary	Lorraine Regier

Continuing Members of the Board of Directors:

Richard C. Chivers, Stephan Gilford, Marjorie Hill, Ray Sitton, Robert Moore, John Marquez, Jeffrey Wright, Phyllis Doering, Joe Fischer, George Coles

(There are no vacancies on the Board subject to election)

DONALD'S CORNER

2008: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

by Donald Bastin, Executive Director

Looking back, it is clear that the year 2008 will be remembered as unusually significant, not just on the national scene, but locally as well. Change is in the air, and your Museum Association is inevitably involved in the changes taking place all around us. See page 2 for a separate article describing the physical changes that have taken place in Nevin Park and to the Museum and its grounds. Let's review the year's activities.

In early March, the Museum hosted, in the Seaver Gallery, an exhibit titled "*Where I'm From*," showcasing the work of local high school students whose task it was to interview significant elders in their lives and to express, in poetry, the things they had learned about themselves and the world in which they find themselves. This was a partnership with "Community Works," a Berkeley-based organization concerned with helping at-risk youth. This partnership was itself something of a change for us, representing a reaching-out to the larger community and an expansion of our mission.

Partnering with the City's Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC), the Museum was pleased to host the Preservation Awards Ceremony in May. Revived after a period of eight years, we hope that the tradition of acknowledging significant historic preservation efforts will continue on an annual basis.



Receiving a Historic Preservation Award presented to the last few City Councils are current (2008) Council members Harpreet Sandhu and Tom Butt and Mayors Rosemary Corbin, Irma Anderson and Gayle McLaughlin.

Later that same month, the theme of historic preservation was somewhat echoed in the excellent presentation made by Professor Clare Fischer, called "*Re-Siting Public Memories*." Speaking in the Seaver Gallery to a very attentive audience, Professor Fischer explained how public memory changes with time and can be manipulated (with care) to serve public interests.

In August, after months of preparation, we opened our World War II exhibit, titled "*Richmond At War, The Home Front Experience*." This exhibit remained in the Seaver Gallery until the end

of October, when it was dismantled and re-assembled in our Main Gallery. This new, permanent exhibit opened on November 22, in a space that was previously occupied by the "Victorian Parlor" display. For the first time in over 30 years, the Main Gallery of our museum has seen a significant change. More changes will be made in the future, as we add presentations covering the post-war and modern periods in Richmond.



Quilt display at the F&P Cannery during the Home Front Festival with Lorraine Regier, Clem Diaz, Ray Sitton and Joe Fischer. All are RMA Board members except Diaz who is the Museum's Exhibit Coordinator.

During the two days of the Home Front Festival, the Museum was represented by two displays at the historic Filice & Perrelli Cannery. Lorraine Regier put together a lovely collection of locally-made quilts, while Joe Fischer hosted a display of our children's art from the war and post-war years. Both events were well-attended.

If anything, activity and change have been even more dramatic aboard our ship, the *S.S. Red Oak Victory*. Most importantly, the grant work has been completed. Most important of all, the toilets are working! A milestone has been passed this year on the *ROV*. But much more work remains. It is time to move on to the task of drydocking the ship and firing up the engines in anticipation of her moving under her own power for the first time in 40 years. Full steam ahead!

SHIP-SHAPE R.O.V. RESTORATION UPDATE

Farewell to the Porta-Potties! The *Red Oak Victory* now has three toilets working in the main deck house, flushing into the 3,000-gallon holding tank installed by Nautical Engineering, Inc. This is one of its many projects financed by the Transportation Enhancement Act grant (TEA), all of which have been completed. The work on the toilets themselves, and their valves and plumbing, were done by the ship's volunteer crew. The holding tank automatically pumps waste, sanitary and grey water into the city sewage system when the tank level reaches a certain point.

The most visible project completed by the firm was the repainting of everything from deck level up to the mast tops. The gleaming topsides make the *Red Oak Victory* look like a new ship!

Other Nautical Engineering projects include renovation of the fire main and CO2 systems, installation of fire-alarm and bilge-alarm systems, installation of an AC electrical panel and its accessories, reconditioning of the starboard generator turbine, and preliminary work on the boilers and fireboxes.

ENGINE ROOM PROGRESS

The emergency diesel battery room is in the process of being rebuilt by the electricians and carpenters. The plan is to have the emergency generator start automatically in case we lose shore power. This will activate all of the emergency lighting.

Engine department personnel have done major work on the port boiler and forced-draft fan, making it possible to light-off soon, and bring up a little steam pressure in the boiler.

A hole for a watertight door has been cut from the generator flat into No. 4 hold, giving access to the sewage tank and oily water separator. It also provides a second means of escape in case of an emergency.

DECK DEPARTMENT WORK

Main deck interior passageways have been repainted, and most of the cabins on the main deck have been refinished and refurbished. The bookcase in the galley passageway has been removed, and is undergoing restoration. Wood in the emergency generator battery-charging room is being removed so it can be refinished or replaced.

A big project completed by the Saturday deck crew is the installation of a new gangway with steps that remain parallel to the wharf regardless of the state of the tide. With the old landing platform at the bottom, and the upper end at deck level, it provides an easier climb onto the ship.

Come visit the ship and see it all for yourself!

SS Red Oak Victory

1337 Canal Blvd., Berth 6A

www.ssredoakvictory.com

Open for visitors on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.. For group tour and event booking information call Lorraine at (510) 222-0955

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE RICHMOND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Privileges:

- Reduced admission to events
- Discounts on services, books, and gift items
- Quarterly newsletter, "*The MIRROR*"
- Advanced notice of tours and events

Yes, I want to become a member

Enclosed is my check for

\$ _____ (payable to RMA)

Categories of Membership

\$15	Student
\$20	Senior
\$25	Individual
\$35	Family/Organization
\$50	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 IN THE MUSEUM COLLECTION NOT ON DISPLAY

by Lynn Maack

Here are a couple items from the basement that might be of interest. The first is an Aladdin kerosene table lamp. But this is not an ordinary kerosene lamp; it is a “mantle”-type lamp. Rather than burning a flat wick like most common kerosene or oil lamps that produce a candle-like flame, the mantle design uses a round wick that burns with a low, blue flame that is unseen in operation. Suspended in a wire frame above and surrounding the wick is a



fine mesh, bag-like piece, which is the mantle (not shown), that is heated by the wick’s flame. When fully heated and properly adjusted, the mantle glows white-hot, producing a light equivalent to a 60- to 75-watt, incandescent electric light bulb, easily bright enough to read by at night. (The lamp also produces enough heat to warm a small room!)

The mantle type of lighting system is commonly used today in camping lanterns using pressurized gas fuels. However, the kerosene mantle lamps made by Aladdin are pressureless, so require no pumping as do typical camping lanterns. (They also

produce no noise, unlike pressurized camping lanterns.) The mantle design produces “the brightest white light ever produced from kerosene.” (*Aladdin—The Magic Name In Lamps*, J.W. Courter, 1980, Intro. pg. x.) Clearly, these are the lamps to own during a power outage.

The Museum’s lamp was made by the Mantle Lamp Company at Alexandria, Indiana, in 1935 or 1936. It is a Model B, Style B-130, commonly referred to by collectors as “Orientele.” It is made entirely of metal, with an ivory lacquer finish and rose gold trim. The Orientele was made with other finishes as well. The Mantle Lamp Company later became Aladdin Industries, which still markets reproductions of its mantle lamps of old, in both electric and oil models, along with many other consumer products. *The lamp was donated by Mrs. Rioha Rizzio in 1958.*



The second item not currently on display is a four-foot-diameter, circular wooden emblem of the Elks Lodge of Richmond. The emblem consists of a cutout image of an elk surrounded by a blue circular band with gold lettering. It is a symbol of Elks Lodge No. 1251, which began in Richmond in 1911. This emblem was hung inside the Elks Building at 10th St. and Macdonald Ave. until around 1968, when the building and property were taken over by Redevelopment and the Elks Lodge moved to a location in San Pablo. The lodge currently resides at 3931 San Pablo Dam Rd. in El Sobrante, meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month. The Elks Lodge focuses on helping children with disabilities. *Donated by Alex Marchitiello in 1980.*



The Elks Building, 10th St. & Macdonald Ave. ca. 1916.

Richmond Museum Association, Inc.

Museum open Wed-Sun, 1-4 p.m.
400 Nevin Ave., P.O. Box 1267
Richmond CA 94802
(510) 235-7387
Richmondmuseumofhistory.org

Officers

Lois Boyle, President
John Zieshenne, Vice Pres.
William Rochester, Treasurer
Sandi Genser-Maack, Recording Secty
Mary Tom Coe, Corresponding Secty
Lorraine Regier, Financial Secty

Directors

Rich Chivers
George Coles
Phyllis Doering
Joe Fischer
Steve Gilford
Marjorie Roque Hill
John Marquez
Robert Moore
Ray Sitton
Jeffrey Wright

Appointed Chairs

Leona Derheim, Red Oak Tree
Lorraine Regier, Membership

Endowment Fund Board

Joe Bagley
Hank Covell
Ed Downer
Don Hardison
Margaret Morkowski

Museum Staff

Donald Bastin, Exec. Director
Clementina Diaz, Exhibit Coord.

The MIRROR Staff

Lynn Maack
Donald Bastin
Lois Boyle
Mary Tom Coe
George Coles
Sandi Genser-Maack
Helen Pence

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.

Join us in January

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(see page 2)



400 Nevin Avenue, P.O. Box 1267, Richmond, CA 94802

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
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DATED MATERIAL -- PLEASE EXPEDITE DELIVERY

The Museum is open Wednesday thru Sunday, 1-4 p.m.
Call (510) 235-7387 for information and tour appointments.
Visit us online at: **RICHMONDMUSEUMOFHISTORY.ORG**

Admission:

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