

Richmond CHAMBER NEWS

A Richmond Chamber of Commerce Publication
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1924

80th Year

2004

“A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH”

by Mark Howe, Chair

As our family walked along the Seine after leaving the Louvre last summer, I gazed into the distance and saw the symbol of France that Mr. Eiffel built ages ago. “What is it that makes Paris the most popular attraction in the world?” I asked myself? Before sunrise, as I looked out of the third-story window of our charming hotel in the Latin Quarter, the answer came to me. I saw an army of city workers in bright green jumpsuits washing the streets and tidying up. Alongside them, the street cart vendors and storefront merchants were busy arranging their wares for the start of a new business day. The flower vendors, especially, captured the flamboyant mood of this romantic city.

Obviously, this city cares. They clean up every morning without fail. The city’s guests feel cared for as they emerge from their hotels in search of a croissant and an inviting cup of coffee. This city learned long ago that sincere caring for their customers pays dividends far in excess of the costs.

This is an idea that I think escapes us in Point Richmond. Point Richmond, of course, will never be Paris, France – **but it could be the Paris of West County.** It certainly can be more than it is. I think it can be a district this city can be proud of, a district where we can entertain our guests and where they will be safely cared for.

Our city, especially today, desperately needs symbols of pride. More importantly, for those looking from the outside, we need to have community symbols that say loud and clear that we care about something.

Many subtle impediments stifle the development of this vision:

1. The North of 580 folks feel that the Point is *largely white and rich* and thus doesn’t racially and financially represent the city. I ask them, “Would we have a better chance of establishing a district like this in the Iron Triangle?”

2. Many of the *larger business folks* feel that Richmond should and will never be a tourist destination. To these people I say: look at our parks, especially our new Rosie The Riveter National park; look at our Bay Trail — the longest completed segment of any city in the Bay Area, and of course our smorgasbord of eateries in the Point which serve your em-

ployees. Large industry and the hospitality industry can and do already co-exist. Please put your heart where your money is – our community needs the positive symbol.

3. The Point Richmond Business Association and the Richmond Chamber are spearheading a group that is responding to a city-issued RFP to move and rebuild the historic Santa Fe “Trainmaster’s Building” and develop the BNSF parcel across from the Plunge. Our group believes that this 1.35 acres is the last large parcel that could possibly solve the Point’s parking problem, but fears it falling into the hands of a conventional developer who likely will not build parking. A failure to keep this property in the family will cast into eternity a parking problem that has plagued the Point for decades – a problem that will become acutely worse as the 400 units of housing now being built at Brickyard come online. While conducting outreach to develop support for our proposal, many Point merchants voiced the opinion that there is no parking problem in the Point. I say to these folks, “Look at the new building-code-compliant Longs Drugstore development in Marina Bay. This development is barely two years old, thriving, and is almost full. Contrast this with the Point, which is experiencing a terrible bout of vacancy and a host of merchants complaining of poor business conditions. *Fragmented community opinions cloud our vision of the problem.*”

4. Normally “old downtowns” are depressed and thus qualify as blighted, which enable them to become part of a redevelopment district. Unfortunately the Point, like much of America’s struggling middle class, is too rich to qualify for the benefits redevelopment status would offer, but still suffers from the same problems that plague many old city centers — *which means we will have to solve our problems*

by private means.

On this count, I am happy to report that our community-inspired effort submitted a response to the Plunge Parcel RFP. In just two days we raised \$700,000 toward our \$1,000,000 development budget goal – mostly from local property owners who know that a final solution to the Point’s parking problem may at last be in hand. Pretty impressive, I think.



General Manager Barbara Obele at the Chamber table at the Point Richmond Stroll. We had maps and cookies and were very popular.

events

CALENDAR

July

July 5 -- All Day
Office Closed

July 8 -- 5 to 7 pm
Mixer, Richmond
Main Street

July 28 -- 7:45 am
Networking Breakfast
Courtyard by Marriott

August

August 12 -- 5 to 7 pm
Mixer

August 25 -- 7:45 am
Networking Breakfast
Courtyard by Marriott

chamber

MEETINGS

July

July 8 - 9 am
Website Task Force

July 13 -- 7:30 am
Education Committee

July 14 -- 7:30 am
Executive Committee

July 15 Leadership Day
Graduation

July 20 -- 3 pm
CVB

*All meetings at the
Chamber Office
unless otherwise
noted.*

Toastmasters meets
every Monday at
noon in the
Chamber
Boardroom.

August

August 3 -- 8 am
Government Relations

August 3 -- noon
Ambassadors

August 5 -- 7:30 am
Board of Directors

August 10 -- 7:30 am
Education Committee

August 11 -- 9 am
Website Task Force

August 17 -- 3 pm
CVB

August 18 -- 7:30 am
Executive Committee

August 31 -- 8 am
Government Relations

August 31 -- noon
Ambassadors

The Farmers Market is open every Friday,
11 am to 5 pm, at Civic Center Plaza

flyer deadline!

The flyer deadline for inclusion in the August issue is July 16. Reach almost 800 businesses! Call (510) 234-3512 or email: newsletter@rcoc.com

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Richmond Chamber of Commerce



3925 Macdonald Avenue, Richmond, CA 94805
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www.rcoc.com

WELCOME **NEW** MEMBERS

Distinctive Skylights

Mr. Fred Morgan, Owner
535 A Street
Richmond, CA 94801
(510) 235-5125
fmorgan@distinctiveskylights.com

5/06/04 to 6/04/04



Wednesday, July 28, 2004
7:45 a.m.

WELCOME THE SUPER 8!

The El Cerrito Best Inn at 6009 Potrero Avenue is now a Super 8 Motel open for business with extensive renovations and upgrades in service.

Changes include high speed internet, microwaves and refrigerators in the rooms and new carpeting throughout the motel. Other innovations are free local calls, complimentary continental breakfast and free cable and movie channels on the 27-inch TVs.

The Super 8 is near both the El Cerrito BART Station and the Potrero exit on I-80, so it is convenient for commercial and leisure travel.

For more information, call owner/manager Kanti Patel at (510) 232-0900.

NEWS FROM THE VALLEY... YELLOW PAGES

Valerie Akcam of the Valley Yellow Pages says they had a good time at the Chamber Trade Show and were pleased by the turnout.

"We had a drawing at our booth for a free ad in the West Contra Costa directory, and the lucky winner was Radston's Office Plus!" she announced.

The Chamber is pleased to announce that Rikita Robinson, also of the Valley Yellow Pages, is our newest Ambassador.

Business Sp

If you have a business strongly about and want the *Chamber News*, please write an article to newsletter@rcoc.com, 3925 Macdonald Ave., Richmond, CA 94801. c/o Business Speaks.

CAN WE TALK? BUSINESS THAT IS

by Judy Morgan, President

What happened to those many businesses that are no longer here? I raised these questions a few days ago after reading an old publication of this Chamber.

I don't know how many of you know that Sandi Genser-Maack and her husband Lynn collect everything that has the name Richmond on it. Especially old postcards and promotional items from businesses here in Richmond. The depth of their collection is really amazing, including dishware from a former El Cerrito company called TEPCO. Well, I tell you a little of her personal life, because last week she came in with a "Hand Book of Richmond California," published by the Chamber of Commerce from their location at 332 Tenth Street, telephone number Beacon 4-3512 (we still have the same phone number). It was dated 1955-56.

It is a fascinating read. The Chamber did a great job. There is all kinds of information in there from total Bank Deposits and Debits for the local banks, Weather Data (average temperature was 62.5), and information on the Richmond & San Rafael Ferry and Transportation Co. (Crossing time was 17 minutes and it was noted that the ferry system would discontinue operation when the Richmond San Rafael Bridge opened in 1956.) All kinds of info from County Services to Federal Services. It lists the names of prominent people who governed this City. Some of their names pop up in many different capacities in this book. Names like **Carl Rehfuss, E. M. Downer Jr., W. T. Helms, Fred D. Parr.** I was a young thing, but this book brought back many memories of those days and those people. It listed our favorite place for hamburgers and pie, Cow Wow, and Moo's, our favorite ice cream parlor. When we could afford it, my Mother would take us to the movies. It listed the Theatres: Fox-West Coast Theatres at 710 Macdonald, the United Artists at 823 Macdonald, Nasser Brothers Uptown Theatre at 2525 Macdonald and the Rio Theatre at 412 Macdonald Ave. I am sure some of you remember all of this.

But what struck me the most was the business listings. First came the Chamber Classified Membership listing. It was fun to look through. We have most of those categories today. But then came the Directory of Industries. I was pretty shocked. The list included 192 different industries. The Council of Industries today lists 40 members. As I read the list, I immediately thought of our members who have been shouting about issues that are affecting them. Issues such as encroachment, parcel taxes, the permitting process, workers compensation insurance. I was shocked at how many companies and business categories we no longer have here in Richmond. Some names may be familiar to you: **Weigman and Rose**, 15 employees; **American Radiator and Standard Company**, 250 employees; **Butler Mfg. Company**, 200 employees; **Dorward and Sons**, 29 employees; **GarWood Industries**, 109 employees; **Quaker Container Corp**, 43 employees. Those were just a few. Lots of jobs gone.

Now I know there are many different reasons businesses are no longer here. Some move for real estate reasons, some are bought out and may have changed names and some just close because of poor management. But this is a huge number. When we speak about issues effecting business, politicians need to listen; when we talk about the affects of more parcel taxes, or an increase in the Utility users tax or, heaven forbid, a gross receipts tax, our city leaders need to think again. They need to adopt the motto "**We are the companies we keep.**"



**Featured Chamber Benefit:
RCOC.COM Survey**

Some of you have already received emailed surveys about improving our website. The Chamber Web Site is a great promotional tool. We have an online directory of members listed alphabetically and by business category. We also include information on events and timely issues that we think our members should know about. Our website also has a calendar, the most recent newsletter and back issues. We update information weekly.

Now that we are starting our Convention and Visitors Bureau, we are redoing our website to improve service to our members and the general public.

Please take time to fill out the survey that we emailed to you or fill out the one in this newsletter and fax it to (510) 234-3540.

We value your input.

Our Business is Your Business.

*Deirdre Cerkanowicz
Director of Member Services*



SIGN UP NOW FOR LEADERSHIP RICHMOND 2004/05

The next class begins in September. Call for a brochure.

ANNUAL CHAMBER TRADE SHOW A BIG SUCCESS!

THANKS TO THE BUSINESSES WHICH PARTICIPATED:

AC Transit
 Amigo Environmental
 Armor Locksmith Services
 Bianco's Deli & Catering
 CC Green Business Program
 Contra Costa Marketplace
 Chevron Richmond Refinery
 City of Richmond Community & Economic Development
 Connor's Overhead Door Co.
 Courtyard by Marriott
 Calif. State Automobile Association
 Draper & Esquin Wine & Spirits
 EBMUD
 The Inner Cook
 Malvern Wilson Alumni Association
 The Mechanics Bank
 Metro One Credit Union
 Morrison O'Hara
 PG&E
 Postnet
 Pure Mountain Spring Water
 Quality Inn
 Radston's Office Supply
 ReliaTech
 Richmond Sanitary Services/Republic Services
 Rolling Hills Memorial Park
 Sandra's Goodies
 SimsMetal
 State Farm Insurance, Gloria Crayton
 UPS
 Valley Yellow Pages
 WCC Adult Education
 WCC Integrated Waste Management
 WCC Transportation Advisory Comm.
 West County Times
 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage
 YMCA

SPECIAL THANKS TO A GREAT COMMITTEE:

Betty Cockayne, West County Times
 Steve Etter, Chevron Richmond Refinery
 Rodney Hiram, Hiram Design Group
 Melissa Sylver, Courtyard by Marriott
 Darlene Williams, Postnet



THANKS FOR DONATING GREAT PRIZES:

Bobby's Cajun Barbeque
 California State Automobile Assoc.
 Chevron Richmond Refinery
 CJ's Barbeque
 Courtyard by Marriott
 Fresh Choice
 Hiram Design Group
 Oscar Lugo Fine Jewelry
 Hotel Mac
 J.C. Penney Co.
 Rosamaria's Cafe
 Super Car Wash
 Su Zhou Chinese Cuisine
 West County Times
 Zoe's cookies and other delights



RICHPAC CHOOSES BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CANDIDATES

by John Ziesenhenn, Chair

RichPAC, the Richmond Chamber Political Action Committee, is currently interviewing candidates running for Richmond City Council in November. RichPAC promotes Commerce & Industry and works to advance economic growth and the quality of life in Richmond by supporting candidates who share our same goals and objectives.

The November Presidential election should promote a higher than normal voter turnout than in past years. The minimal qualities required to be endorsed by RichPAC are honesty, trustworthiness, and a business-friendly attitude. A major RichPAC Fundraiser is also being planned for the candidates after they are endorsed.

Because of the timing of this newsletter, the results of the interviews were not available at press time. The committee will identify business-friendly candidates and their recommendations will be posted on our website, www.rcoc.org, in July and in the next issue of Richmond Business News. Stay tuned and please support with your vote and with your check-book the candidates that are supported by RichPAC.

Measure D passed, but Doctors Hospital still needs your support. Send your donation to: Committee to Save Emergency Care in West Contra Costa County, One Campbell Lane, El Sobrante, CA 94803. (510) 758-7077



From top, left: Rodney Hiram runs the Wheel of Prizes; The Inner Cook serves goodies; Ferdinand Bueno discusses the Enterprize Zone and Jane Del Simone, adult education; Josh Genser and Steve Duran, Director of Community & Economic Development Dept. This column: booth-holders visit each other. All photos courtesy of Ellen Gailing Photography.

MUSIC ON THE MAIN...AND IN THE POINT

This summer there will be music in Richmond! Several series are planned and concerts will be all over town. And everything is free!

"Kickin' It At The Point", the Point Richmond concerts, will be behind the Baltic Restaurant on Railroad Avenue; Music on the Main, sponsored by the Richmond Main Street Initiative, will be on the corner of Macdonald and 12th Street:

Thurs., July 8	5 to 7:00 p.m. Main/Chamber Mixer
Fri., July 9	5 to 7:30 p.m. Point
Sat., Aug 14	12 to 7:30 p.m. Point
Sat., Aug. 21	12 to 4:00 p.m. Main
Fri., Sept. 10	5 to 7:30 p.m. Point
Sat., Sept. 18	11 to 5:00 p.m.
	Festival by the Bay
Fri., Sept. 24	5 to 7:30 p.m. Point

For more information and to hear who is playing when: Point info: (510) 236-1401 or www.pointrichmond.com/prmusic

Main info: www.richmondmainstreet.org or (510) 236-4050



Thank You!

President Circle members for your continued support of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.









REFORM OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

by Josh Genser, Chair, Education Committee

The Chamber's Education Committee has been instrumental in two initiatives: a new foundation for the support of local public education, and the development of a plan for the reform of high school education in the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

West Contra Costa Business and Education United, Inc., is a conduit for business support of the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Governed by a nine-person Board of Directors, seven of whom are representatives of local businesses and two of whom are representatives of the School District, the new foundation is designed to make better use of corporate donations to education and to leverage business support with major foundation grants. Thus, instead of being deluged with requests for donations, and making donations on an ad hoc basis, local businesses may funnel their educational assistance through the foundation, where it will be spent on programs designed for maximum impact and to complement the efforts of the School District itself.

The School District already applies for and receives substantial support from various charitable foundations, but some foundations prefer to give their money to private institutions, rather than to public entities like the School District. Also, many foundations want to know that their grants are going to programs that have significant local private-sector support. We hope, therefore, that the establishment of this foundation will increase the availability of grant money to our students.

There is an existing foundation, the West Contra Costa Education Foundation, popularly known as the Ed Fund, and many have wondered why we need another. The answer is that the two organizations complement one another. The Ed Fund is a community foundation, governed by a large Board of Directors with representatives from a range of community organizations. The Ed Fund supports a variety of wonderful projects, most of which are germinated at the level of individual schools or teachers. West Contra Costa Business and Education United, Inc., in contrast, is governed by business interests, and is designed to support larger programs consistent with District-wide policies, and to provide the governance and accountability required by large foundations.

Just such an example of the work that might be done by West Contra Costa Business and Education United, Inc., is the current effort to create a plan for high school reform. Our School District has received a \$100,000 grant from the State Department of Education, matched by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, all to be used to create a plan for high school reform. The Gates money is required to be handled by a private foundation, and is being managed by the Stupsky Foundation from Marin County. In the future, such grants could be managed by West Contra Costa Business and Education United, Inc.

High Schools have changed little in the past 100 years, while all around us has occurred enormous change. In recent years, however, school districts across the nation have experimented with alternative ways of organizing high school education, and researchers have quantified the results. That means that there are proven means of improving high school education, but it also means that there are many ways of getting to that improvement, and we must choose among them.

The high school reform initiative, therefore, requires that we educate ourselves about these alternatives, and that we engage the community in a discussion about them. This process started only a few months ago with the creation of a committee, including business persons, educators, parents and community activists, that is just beginning to educate itself. The next step in the process is to inform the community about the existence of this effort, and begin discussions about the various ways in which we might change our high schools. The end of the process will be, we hope, a general plan for reform of our high schools district-wide, that is flexible enough for each high school to enact in a way that meets its particular needs.

The grant money, unfortunately, comes with a very tight time schedule: the plan is supposed to be complete by September 30, 2004. Of course, that is unrealistic, in part because the process of educating non-educators about high school education takes longer than that, and in part because it is difficult to engage the educational community over the summer. That means only that we cannot let the effort flag even after the grant money runs out; that we'll have to find our own local resources to continue the effort.

chamber

Congratulations!

ANNIVERSARIES

and happy anniversary to the following businesses
for their continuous years of Chamber membership:

4/30/04 to 6/03/04

16 TO 20

Bowser Construction Co., Inc.
Concentra Medical Centers
Park Florist
Party Time Catering Corp./Rockefeller Lodge

11 TO 15

Eckman Industries
Professional Finishing
Vali Cooper & Associates

6 TO 10

Exchange Club of Richmond & San Pablo
McCloskey Painting
Nancy Nielson
Support Systems International Corp.
U.S. Financial Mortgage Corp.
Walgreens, Macdonald Avenue

1 TO 5

Center for Integrated Wellness
Connors Overhead Door Company
Heritage Park at Hilltop Apartments
Kaiser Permanente Optical Services
Keefe Kaplan Maritime, Inc.
Radston's Office Supply Company
Richmond Main Street Initiative, Inc.
UFCW, Local 1179
Valley Yellow Pages
W.J. Robinson & Associates, Inc.

Please patronize these businesses



The Chamber helps welcome the Kaiser Regional Laboratory to Richmond.

Richmond Chamber of Commerce Board Members

Michel Bureson / Doctors Medical Center
Helen Carr / Contra Costa College
Sharon Craig-Carter / Chevron Richmond
Carla Della Zoppa / Security Pacific Real Estate
Michael Fenley / Hilltop Mall
Virginia Finlay / Signature Realty
Joshua G. Genser / Attorney-at-Law
Barry J. Gordon / The Mechanics Bank
Karl Gramm / UPS
Gretchen G. Grover / EBMUD
Peter A. Hass / Watson, Hoffe & Hass
Jerold Hatchett / SimsMetal
Sherie Hickman / Kaiser Permanente
Mark Howe / MSH Management

Ivonne Inurritegui-Folster / Orton Develop.
Larry Landry / General Chemical
Richard McCombs / MBA Polymers, Inc.
Judy Morgan / Richmond Chamber
Peter Nuti / Richmond Sanitary Service
Carl Overaa / C. Overaa & Company
Mark Quilici / California Casting Inc.
Will Rigney / SBC
Melanie Shelby / P.G. & E.
John Ziesenhenn / M.A. Hays Co.

Ex Officio
Gloria Johnston, Ph.D / WCCUSD