

# Richmond CHAMBER NEWS

A Richmond Chamber of Commerce Publication  
Richmond, California • March 2004

1924

80th Year

2004

## MEASURE J MUST PASS

by Joshua Genser, Chair  
Education Committee

Measure J must pass. State budget cuts threaten our school district's ability to offer small elementary school classes, to provide secondary school guidance counselors, and to offer Advanced Placement classes to our best students. We can prevent that by voting Yes on Measure J.

To arguments against Measure J, I offer the following:

1. What about the \$450 million in bond issues we've already given the District? That money was only for building new schools and repairing old ones, not for operations. None of that money goes to pay teachers or to buy textbooks.

2. What about all those developer fees collected by the District? Those are one-time payments and can be used only for construction of facilities. They do not pay for on-going operations.

3. What about past wasteful expenditures by the District? All governments are inefficient, and I've no doubt that some of the Measure J funds will be spent inefficiently. But, so what? Depriving the District of money doesn't make it efficient, it just deprives our children of the proportion of the funds (the vast majority) that would have paid for their programs.

*continued, p. 4*

## NORTH OF 580

by Mark Howe,  
Chair

### Scene: Mark and Harry at Point Richmond Starbucks

#### Mark:

It was a hot summer day in North Richmond; not the type of day when you expect to be going to a funeral. Willie Spears, father, small business owner, deacon of his church, tireless community activist and long-term Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) member, had passed away. My wife and Willie served on the MAC together and Willie was the first person we met in North Richmond. He made us feel like we had been friends for years. He owned Spears Glass and we used his company to help fix up the Rheem Plant where we lived at the time.

Shiny limousines dotted the streetscape in front of the First Missionary Baptist Church on Market Avenue that day. My wife and I stumbled quickly into the church, hoping not to be noticed, and were hurried through the huge crowd into two waiting seats behind the podium facing the congregation.

What did we do to deserve this, I asked myself. I sure would feel less conspicuous in the cheap seats where the newly elected John Gioia, his chief of staff Rayne Martin, and County Sheriff Warren Rupf were sitting. John and Sheriff Rupf spoke to honor Willie's lifelong contribution to the community.

North Richmond taught me something that day.

The pastor, a lifelong friend of Willie's, initiated his sermon in bellowing Martin Luther King style. He of course, listed Willie's community achievements

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## events

### CALENDAR

#### March

Mar. 3 -- 11:45 am  
State of the City Luncheon  
Bermuda Room

Mar. 11 -- 5 to 7 pm  
Mixer  
Courtyard by Marriott

Mar. 18 -- 7 pm  
Symphony, Free  
Convention Center

Mar. 19 thru 21  
Rakasa Festival  
Convention Center

Mar. 24 -- 7:45 am  
Networking Breakfast  
Courtyard by Marriott

#### April

April 8 -- 5 to 7 pm  
Mixer: Malvern Wilson  
Assoc. at the  
Richmond Art Center

April 25 -- 2 pm  
Symphony, Free  
Convention Center  
Family Day

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

## chamber

### MEETINGS

#### March

Mar. 2 -- 8 am  
Government Relations

Mar. 2 -- noon  
Ambassadors

Mar. 4 -- 7:30 am  
Board of Directors

Mar. 9 -- 7:30 am  
Education Committee

Mar. 17 -- 7:30 am  
Executive Committee

Mar. 18 Leadership Day

Mar. 30 -- 8 am  
Government Relations

Mar. 30 -- noon  
Ambassadors

#### April

April 1 -- 7:30 am  
Board of Directors

April 13 -- 7:30 am  
Education Committee

April 14 -- 7:30 am  
Executive Committee

April 15 Leadership Day

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

Toastmasters meets every Monday at noon in the Chamber Boardroom.

## flyer deadline!

The flyer deadline for inclusion in the April issue is Mar. 12. Reach over 700 businesses! Call (510) 234-3512 or email: newsletter@rcoc.com

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**1/04/04 to 2/06/04**



**Wednesday, March 24, 2004**

**Business Speaks**

If you have a business issue you feel strongly about and want to be heard in the *Chamber News*, please submit an article to newsletter@rcoc.com or mail to 3925 Macdonald Ave., Richmond, 94805, c/o Business Speaks.



photo by Ellen Gailing Photography

Retiring City Manager Isiah Turner with Mayor Irma Anderson and Richard Poe of Virtual Development.

**CHAMBER EMBRACES CORE VALUES**

by Judy Morgan, President

Your Chamber Board worked very hard at its annual retreat in January. We discussed the four core values of the Chamber Business: Representation, Election of Business-Friendly Candidates, Networking and Communications and Promotion of the Community.

We talked about what has worked well in the past and what has not worked well. We came up with ideas on how to improve on our mission. Each Board member has assumed responsibility for one or more of the action items discussed. All of this will insure a better chamber for our members.

**Business Representation**

The Government Relations Committee is chaired by Gretchen Grover of EBMUD. This committee helps decide whether or not to endorse measures or issues and writes letters to top public officials in support or opposition of issues representing business opinions. Gretchen does a great job. If you are interested in serving on this committee, it meets the Tuesday before the Board meeting, which is usually the first Tuesday of the Month, at 8:00 a.m. at the Chamber. Check out our Events section on rcoc.com for more information.

**Electing Business-Friendly Candidates**

The political action committee (RichPAC) is chaired by Mr. John Ziesenhenné of M.A. Hays Co. RichPAC chooses business-friendly candidates to endorse and raises money for their support. 2004 is an important election year for Richmond -- we have five council seats open. You will be hearing a lot more from this committee this year.

**Networking and Communications.**

This is probably the most important function for the Chamber. Certainly it is the reason most of our members joined. Chamber Mixers, Networking Breakfasts and Luncheons are great ways to meet people and to find out what is happening.

Then there are our annual events, the Crab Feed, the Trade Show and the Golf Tournament. Each event has a committee and hardworking chair who always welcome new committee members with new ideas.

Our Ambassadors, this year chaired by Chris Phipps of the Bay Area Rescue Mission, are the cheerleaders for the Chamber. You will see them at all of our events. Being an ambassador is a great way to meet important people in the local business community, to find new customers or to just network and have fun. Ambassadors meet on the first Tuesday of the month at noon at the Chamber office. Why not become one this year? It is very rewarding.



**Promoting the Community:**

We do the usual Chamber stuff, maps, award-winning directory, answering questions from the public, sending relocation packets, introducing the business of the month, encouraging business to locate here. We are proud of all of that work.

We are especially proud of **Leadership Richmond**. In our second year we have 23 participants learning all about Richmond. This intensive 10-month training covers land use to business, education to medicine. Our participants graduate encouraged, enlightened and enthusiastic.

This year we are starting our Convention and Business Bureau to really promote our city. Watch for more of this in our next issue. Also watch for a new, improved Website.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we encourage you to actively participate in your chamber. If you are interested in working on any of the above we welcome you; if you have comments for us on ways to improve or just do things a little better, we welcome your ideas. It is your Chamber and we are here for you.

**THANKS TO TURNER RECEPTION SPONSORS**

A great party was held to send retiring City Manager Isiah Turner off to new things. The Reception was open to the public and was sponsored by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Industries who thank the following businesses for their support:

- Chevron Richmond Refinery
- EBMUD
- Kaiser Permanente
- The Mechanics Bank
- Levin-Richmond Terminal Corp.
- P G & E
- Republic Services/Richmond Sanitary Services
- SimsMetal
- USFilter

Proceeds from the dinner go to the Richmond Police Activities League (PAL), of which Isiah was an active Board Member.



photo by Ellen Gailing Photography

Presentation to Mr. Turner from Housing Authority Director Dan Nackerman

**North of 580 continued**

and accolades, but one thing he said sticks in my mind: "A man's entire life is relived the day of his funeral." I didn't know what he meant until afterwards.

The keyboard player, who was the pastor's wife, erupted into spontaneous song and the party began – you see, a funeral in this community is *a joyous affair that celebrates the life of a person*. This was in contrast to the protestant version of the death ceremony that I grew up with that means tears, big hugs, black veils, sadness, and genuine mourning. I liked the North Richmond version better.

And so the ceremony began in unbridled song and uncontrolled eruptions from the crowd chanting "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord". Participants would come to the microphone, tell wonderful stories of Willie, and then break out in song. Most of us were crying tears of joy – honestly, you just couldn't control yourself – Willie must have been there, too – it sure felt like it. And so the ceremony continued with testimonials and song celebrating this wonderful man's contribution to this small community.

As we were walking out of the church, John Gioia turned to me and said, "I'll bet you have never been to a ceremony like that before!" He was right.

**Harry:**

Mark, Mark, Mark, dude you are way off on a tangent – what the heck does this all have to do with the Richmond Small Business Community – we are supposed to be writing your March article for the Chamber newsletter! I hate to give you the bad news, but North Richmond is nasty; I don't go there unless I have to – even if they do have creative funerals!

**Mark:**

Harry, the Chamber has opened Pandora's box. You see, the hospitality segment of our membership has requested that we form a Convention and Visitors Bureau to market the city to potential visitors in the hopes that they will sell more hotel room nights and restaurant meals, which raises the million dollar question – what do we have to sell? May I suggest the obvious: the waterfront, refinery tours, the World War II Home Front story (Rosie the Riveter) or the latest front yard compliant fence design. Of course I am kidding a bit here, but this is a serious dilemma the Chamber faces. We have signed up to

be the cheerleader for the city and we need to find a solid answer to this problem based on the city's cultural assets as well as its physical assets.

Harry, at the recent Chamber planning conference, we attacked the problem head-on by asking the board members, some of whom have lived here all their lives, what they like most about Richmond. Will Rigney, our past chair, among others, talked about Richmond's compassion, its ability to hear all voices – often to its detriment; its flexibility in accommodating physical growth and cultural assimilation. The recent debacle over the homeless shelter in Orinda was held up as an example of a community that has become hardened and no longer remains flexible. Richmond is still growing; its future is in front of it, which is exciting.

Harry, Richmond is a community that can put its arms around its poor people, its immigrants, its downtrodden. Richmond is a story about its people. It's a story of migration from the south in WWII, it's a story of its faith community and their customs, it's a story of Rosies building ships that heralded the introduction of women into the workplace, it's a story of Mien Laotians being moved here after the Vietnam war, and more recently it's a story of Latinos moving here to find work. In addition to our obvious physical marketing assets, for example our waterfront, we need to find a way to incorporate these cultural elements as well – they are the heart and soul of this community.

Harry, I worry we are living in a community that is becoming physically stratified: our poor live North of 580 and our rich live South of 580. This is not healthy and the chamber can help to shape policy by adopting marketing values that expose our cultural history and the unique customs of our people.

In practical terms, this is all part of the Richmond story and needs to be told as part of the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park: the Rosies, their immigration from the south to satisfy Kaiser Shipyard labor requirements and, believe it or not, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, which assisted Kaiser in marketing job opportunities in the south during World War II. The Richmond Chamber, celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, is naturally woven into this story as well.

This is American history and people will find it interesting. It can be a point of community pride that helps to unify our city in these divisive economic times.

**Open House**  
 You are invited to meet the  
**Toast of Richmond**  
 Toastmasters Club  
 Sponsored by the  
 Richmond Chamber of Commerce  
**Monday, March 1, 2004**  
**12:00 noon**  
 at the Chamber Office  
 This is the place to overcome the  
 fear of public speaking and have a  
 really good time while you're doing  
 it. Come find out what all the  
 laughter is about.  
**Light refreshments**  
 will be served.



photos courtesy of Street Tech

The Chamber helps kick off Relia Tech, a new service from Street Tech.



# Leadership Richmond

Now is the time for you to think about joining us for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual **Leadership Richmond** class starting this September. You may register by calling the Chamber at (510) 234-3512. The registration fee is \$800, and includes all printed materials, meals, transportation, certificate of completion, and promotional items.

There is no better way to learn about the greater Richmond area, develop invaluable contacts in the public and private sectors, and better equip yourself to successfully operate in your professional calling than to become a **Leadership Richmond** graduate.

*Measure J continued*

4. Does the District spend too much of its money on administration? Wait a minute, aren't you the one who demanded more accountability? Every time you demand a report on how a program performs or an audit of expenditures and every time you place controls on how money must be spent means that there must be administrators to gather the data and write the reports, and whole layers of bureaucracy to manage them. Accountability isn't free, and you who mistrust our public officials with our money shouldn't complain about its cost.

5. Will the money be spent wisely? Some will think so, and others will disagree. That's democracy. Just because the final decision on priorities may not match yours is, again, no reason to deprive our students.

6. Will the money be spent fairly? That is, will Hercules get its fair share? Whoever thinks Hercules hasn't received its fair share of local educational resources hasn't been paying attention. Hercules has a new Middle/High School, and two new Elementary Schools. What other portion of the District can say that?

7. Don't we already pay too much in taxes? Maybe, but we sure don't pay enough of them to our schools. Teachers are underpaid, enrichment and extracurricular programs are cut, maintenance is spotty and now core programs are threatened by funding shortages. Moreover, better schools mean higher property values and greater economic development, so they are an investment, not an expenditure.

The bottom line is, if we're not willing to pay for the basic operation of our own schools, who is? To all those who oppose Measure J, what's your solution? Don't complain if you don't have realistic answers. In the meantime, vote Yes on Measure J on March 2.

chamber  
**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Congratulations!**

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

**1/04/04 to 2/04/04**

**Over 45 Years**

Bank of the West  
The Mechanics Bank  
Richmond Rotary Club  
Wilson & Kratzer Mortuaries

**36 TO 40**

Westaff

**26 TO 30**

Hilltop Mall

**16 TO 20**

Commercial Support Services

**11 TO 15**

General Chemical Corporation  
Graphix Depot Signs

**6 TO 10**

Armor Locksmith Services, Inc.  
Shields/Richmond Nursing Center  
United Teachers of Richmond, CTA/NEA  
Workforce Development Board/EastBay Works

**1 TO 5**

Margi Cellucci Real Estate

*Please patronize these businesses*



photo by Ellen Gailing Photography

Isiah and Penny Turner surrounded by family after the event.



photo by Ellen Gailing Photography

Waitpersons for Turner's Retirement Dinner were youth from the Richmond Police Activities League, here with Crpl. Larry Lewis, PAL Director, and Ofc. Jim Corr.

**Richmond Chamber of Commerce Board Members**

Michel Buleson / 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  
Sheri Hickman / Kaiser Permanente  
Mark Howe / MSH Management

Ivonne Inurritegul-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  
Jay Corey / City of Richmond  
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