

# THIS POINT

in time

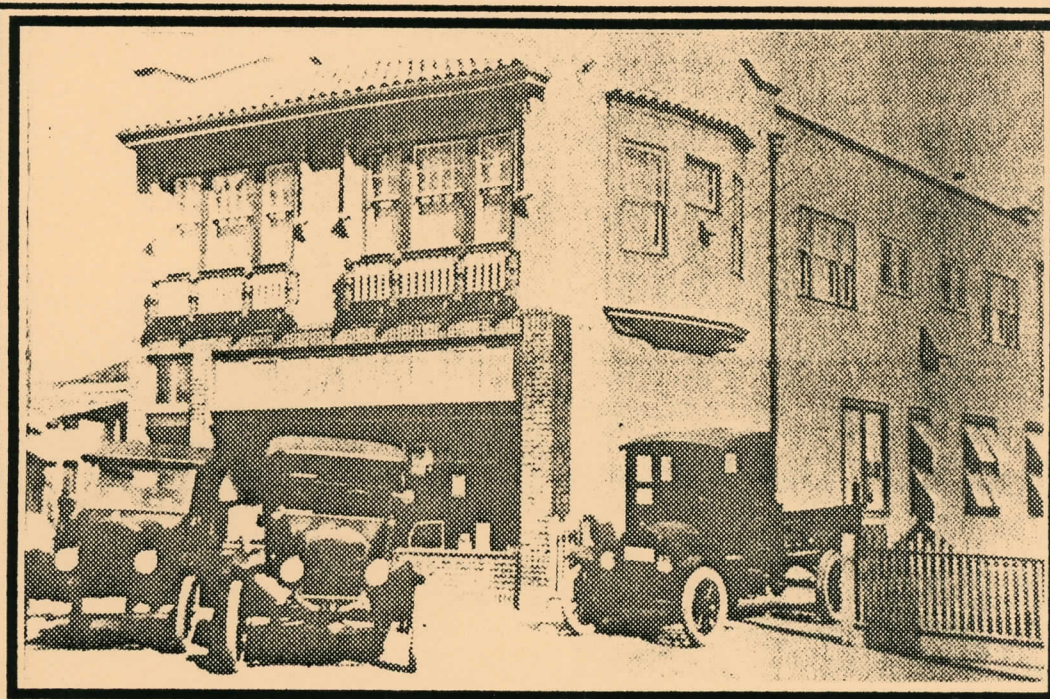
NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION

VOL X No 3

SEPTEMBER, 1991

\$1.00



## The Spiersch Brothers "FLEET"

in front of their business on Thirteenth Street

New Reminiscence Series:

*WHEELS; Transportation in the Point*  
from Willard R. Spiersch

see page 14

# **POINT MUSEUM WISH LIST**

## ***Can you help?***

---

- \*Wooden floor.....installed***
- \*Refinish four wooden chairs***
- \*Two small glass display cases***
- \*Planter box appropriate for  
front of building***
- \*Slanted table for viewing books***
- ~~\*Dead bolt lock installed in door~~***
- \*Point Richmond pictures and  
memorabilia***

***\*Dead bolt lock installed in door***

***Wish to be granted by  
Kevin Pryne  
of Pryne Builders....  
Thank You Kevin!***



# History Association Notes

## FROM THE PRESIDENT by Mid Dornan

Our historic building now has an identity, POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION. Founder Donna Roselius brought the eight foot sign down from her Oregon home where she painted it. Thanks to Fay Hawkins and Vic Highfill for mounting it on the front. Donna also printed identification for the rear of the building.

Electricity is still our first priority. We are hoping to have the floor in soon and a new lock installed. Does anyone have an electrical switch from around the early 1900's?

Letters and Memories from our readers make the newsletter special. How good to hear from Al Franco again. Don't be hesitant to send us your memories...we LOVE them.

Volunteers take vacations during the summer, too, but we hope to have landscaping, a planter box and needed furniture soon. Thanks for helping.

*continued on page 2*

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*'From the President' cont. from page 1:*

Thank you to the following members who have renewed their memberships:

JUNE BLACKBURN  
JERRY & THERESA DANIEL  
CARL & PEARLE WESTMAN  
JOSEPHINE PALENCHAR  
MURIEL CLAUSEN  
LUCILLE SMITH  
MARTIN & JANIS McNAIR  
LUCIANO & BONNIE FORNER  
TERESA MENEGHELLI  
ROBERT B. FREEMAN  
ANNA S. GAUMER  
BRUCE O. BEYAERT FAMILY  
MARJ BELLATI  
ALICE McMAHON  
VICTORIA SCHOLZ  
LLOYD N. BOGUE  
SARA EELES  
JANICE JONES  
KAY PINKERTON

And a warm welcome to new members:

VIRGINIA RIGNEY  
RICHARD & JUDY RIGNEY  
CATHE & GRIFF BRAZIL  
AL & GERRY HIGUERA  
BRUNO J. ROVEDA  
PAM HULSE  
MARILYN DARLING

Thank you to the following merchants who sell our newsletter for us with no personal profit:

SANTA FE MARKET  
POINT RICHMOND MARKET

## CONTRIBUTORS TO DATE OUR MUSEUM PROJECT

JERRY CERKANOWICZ  
BURL WILLIS & PHYLLIS SKAGLUND  
(PT. RICHMOND TRAVEL)  
ELIZABETH McDONALD  
SHEILA FOSTIAK & FAMILY  
RAMON & PATIENCE ZAMBRANO  
INTERACTIVE RESOURCES, INC.  
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THE MECHANICS BANK  
CHRISTOPHER PLONA  
STANLEY NYSTROM  
HANS & LORE SHAPER  
WILL & JEAN SPIERSCH  
(Given in Memory of Frieda Moyle  
Stephens)  
HOWARD S. ARNOLD  
AMERICAN ROCK & ASPHALT, INC  
BARBARA A. OLSEN  
CHARLES C. EELES  
THE DORNAN FAMILY  
HENRY A. FRANCIS  
JOAN MEISEL  
HORTENSE GNAGA McGEE  
(Given in Memory of Elizabeth F.  
Gnaga, Goldy Gnaga Shrewsbury, &  
Frankie Greenlaw)  
MURIEL & BERT CLAUSEN  
MARIE LOUISE OSTROM  
C. F. HOCHGESANG  
DORIS SILVA  
FRANK LOPEZ  
TOM McGOWAN  
ROSEMARY M. CORBIN  
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MAXINE MAYER  
ADELE CHASE HOLLANDER  
BERTHA MAY McCLOSKEY  
MARIE WILSON DIETZ  
ANNE HANZLIK



GRIFF AND CATHE BRAZIL  
TERESA NAVAS ALBRO  
MARY CROSBY & TOM PIAZZA  
GARY SHOWS  
CAROLYN & IRVING MOSKOWITZ  
THOMAS W. & MARGO TEDRICK  
TOM & LUCRETIA EDWARDS  
THOMAS E. WHITESIDES  
TOM BUTT & FAMILY  
JANICE A. HANTZSCHE  
RAIL & MARINE TRANSPORTATION  
CONSULTANTS, S.F. CROOK  
BETTY J. MARSHALL  
LUCIANA & BONNIE FORNER  
(Given in Memory of Bob Young)  
CHANNEL LUMBER  
EDWIN L. BEDFORD  
WOMEN'S WESTSIDE IMPROVEMENT  
CLUB  
GEORGE M. BATTEN  
(Given in memory of Virginia Batten)  
GRACE & JERRY CERKANOWICZ, SR.  
CHARLOTTE G. WOODS  
SONNY JACKSON ROOFING, INC.  
REMCO ROOF SUPPLY  
PT. RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD  
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BOB & MARIE PECKHAM  
(SANTA FE MARKET)  
JANICE CHAMBERLAIN  
(CHAMBERLAIN INSURANCE  
ASSOC.)

DAVID & CAROL MacDIARMID  
JOSEPH & SONJA DARLING  
BENA SALLE BOWLES  
(Given in Memory of Antone Salle)  
WILLIAM H. & ALYCE K. WILLIAMSON  
ROBERT HUBBART  
ANDREW JOHNS  
LYNN MAACK & SANDI GENSER-MACK  
PATRICIA L. MILANO  
JERRY & THERESA DANIEL  
TOM POWERS  
INDIAN STATUE DAY RAFFLE  
WM. & ALYCE WILLIAMSON  
(Given in Memory of Ronnie Roselius  
Turner)  
GERALDINE MANN PETERSON,  
DESIGNER  
PRYNE BUILDERS  
MARILYN CAROSELLA & MIKE  
CHARTOCK  
ERIC SCOTT  
MAE MANDL  
MOHAMED WARITH  
(POINT RICHMOND MARKET)  
NELLIE PASQUINI (BISIO)  
CHRISTY & RALPH JACOBSON  
ALEX & ROBBI BATTEY  
MARGARET & MAURICE DOHERTY &  
FAMILY  
(Given in Memory of Ronnie Roselius  
Turner)  
CARL & PEARLE WESTMAN

-----  
HERE IS MY CONTRIBUTION OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TO HELP FINANCE OUR OWN COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MAKE YOU CHECK OUT TO: PRHA BUILDING FUND  
POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION  
229 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE  
POINT RICHMOND, CA 94801

# editors notes.....

BY GARY SHOWS

This issue contains the last installment of Dr. Thompson's "Childhood Memories of The Point Richmond Triangle", but don't despair, I have a new series from him ready to go. It will be called "More Memories of Early Point Richmond", I know you will enjoy every installment, thank you Dr. Thompson!

This issue's cover features a new article from Willard Spiersch on transportation in the early Point, I think it will be interesting and fun to read. Will has promised more installments for future issues. With this one, he has even supplied the illustrations, thanks Will.

Pam Wilson has volunteered to transcribe the Nell Coward Brooker audio tape that I discussed in the last issue. You can look forward to reading those interviews in a future issue.

Thank you to everybody for being so respectful of my deadline, it really helps. The deadline for the October issue is September 20th.

And speaking of October, I have been asked by several people to express our deep disappointment that there will be no Indian Statue Day this year. Thanks to David

Vincent, this event has become an October tradition in Point Richmond, I have collected t-shirts commemorating every celebration.

This year David was unable to give the time and energy it takes to stage the event and no one volunteered to take over. Maybe next year some of you will step forward and rejuvenate this "tradition", as it has become one of the many things that make our little community unique. To volunteer to participate call the Point Richmond Business Association or attend their monthly meetings at the Hotel Mac.



~~~~~

## SUMMER ISSUE ASSEMBLY CREW:

Liz McDonald

Mary Highfill

Phyllis Scaglund

Pam Wilson

Jerry Cerkowicz

Gary Shows

~~~~~



# SENIOR NEWS

By Muriel C. Clausen

Have you been to the Point Richmond Community Center to participate in the new Senior Program yet? If not I would like to describe to you how it is helping Seniors as well as older teens and older teen disabled in a sometimes intergenerational way. Mostly, the center's activities are geared to Seniors and include such programs as "light exercise" (Wednesday mornings), "bridge" (Wednesday afternoons), "quilting" (Tuesday mornings), etc. and later will include Spanish lessons.

Teen's programs are generally held to integrate disabled teens with those who are able to assist and include them in such activities as theme dances, bar-b-ques, outdoor sports, arts and crafts and excursions. Later they will have a model making contest. The overlap between the two groups is in games held indoors such as card games, ping pong and skill games. Seniors are encouraged to come to any and all of these events to round out their own lives and to assist those of another generation who can us help and companionship.

The Richmond Community Center opens every day at 9 a.m. with Lisa Mc Mahan in charge. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday it closes at 5 p.m.; and on Tuesday and Thursday closing is at 3:30 p.m. Teen dances

are on Friday nights from 5 until 10 p.m. so there is surely a time during the week that you can drop in to observe and/or take part in some activity that interests you. If you can spend the day on Wednesday bring a bag lunch for the exercise class which starts at 10:30 and the bridge lessons start at about 1 p.m. In both cases more Seniors are welcome as both classes need more Seniors to participate; as do other events described above.

When you are sorting our storage items to donate please keep an eye open for any sporting equipment, that you might no longer use, to donate to the Center. For example, a tennis class can be formed for disabled teens if tennis rackets can be obtained. Other donations of goods centered around the above activities would be more than welcome: games, fabrics, crafts, tools, etc. And if you are in a mood to teach it is hoped that lessons in many arts and crafts can be obtained from volunteers: leather tooling, jewelry making, piano, guitar, drawing, anything for which you have a talent.

Now you can drop in on the Point Richmond Community Center and look forward to a good time. Please do come. It is a Community Affair to which we WELCOME you!



# A-MID TRIVIA

By Mid Dornan (234-5334)

It may not be any consolation to local students to know that they spend an average of 63 less days in school than Japanese Students who attend 243 days. USSR goes 208 days while our neighbor Canada goes 186. The 180 USA days can be as long for teachers as students!

\*\*\*

James McGuffey, American educator, was born September 23, 1800. His series of Eclectic Readers has sold over 100 million copies since their first printing. Did any of our readers learn to read from his books?

\*\*\*

**It's a big 5-1-0 ! A new area code for Contra Costa and Alameda.** (*Why the East Bay and not the West Bay?*) Pacific Bell is running out of telephone numbers because more people are moving to the area and more people have more than one phone line using, the lines for such things as fax machines and car phones. Until January 27, 1992 callers can dial either area code but after then, you will get a recording. It will inform you of the correct area code but you will have to redial. If nothing else, maybe it will motivate you to contact friends and relatives. However, a bit more complicated for businesses as they need to change cards, flyers, letterheads, brochures etc.

\*\*\*

In the summer issue of TPIT, Frenchie Bernes inquired about a scale model of an old locomotive that

Mr. Topping had built and that he and Will Spiersch stood and drooled over, wondering where it was now.

TPIT has been informed by Mrs. Topping that this model is now in the Sacramento Railroad Museum.

*(Since the East Bay Model Engineers Society has opened their Golden State Model Railroad Museum at 900 Dornan Drive, across from Miller-Knox Park in Point Richmond, doesn't it seem appropriate that at some time this be transferred here?)*

\*\*\*

If you attend movies frequently you might add the word 'coprolalia' to your vocabulary. Its the constant use of gutter language.

\*\*\*

A new flag for Russia? It is noted that President Boris Yeltsin restored the white, blue and red banner of pre-revolutionary Russia as the republic's new official flag to replace the hammer and sickle. The new Russian flag was brought here by Peter the Great, who copied those colors from the Dutch flag.

\*\*\*

Can anyone provide a purpose for "Skunks"? After Opposums, Raccoons, Deer, Red Fox and Squirrels, WHEW...

\*\*\*

If you are confused on what snack foods are being taxed and what is not you are not alone. Don't be surprised if, to end that confusion, all food is taxed!

\*\*\*

Congratulations to Lynn Ann Darling and John Patrick Rendler who will recite marriage vows at Our



Lady of Mercy Catholic Church on September 21, 1991 with a reception to follow at the Alta Mira Hotel in Sausalito. Carol is the daughter of Wally and Marilyn Darling. John is the son of Rose and Robert Rendler, Concord. After a honeymoon in Hawaii they plan to live in Concord.

\*\*\*

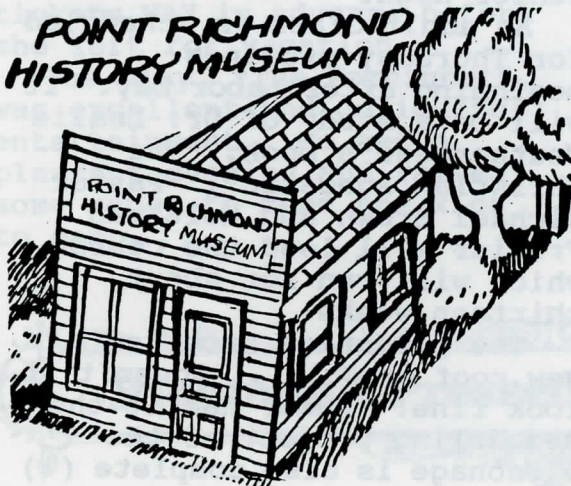
How often have you wanted to mail a letter in the sidewalk drop-box outside the Post Office on Washington Avenue only to find you couldn't get near the box because cars are parked in front? Or,... perhaps, been guilty of being the parked car!

\*\*\*

7 year old grandson, Clay, wanted "chicken like they had in the olden days." After inquiring, it was found he wanted chicken with a bone in it!

\*\*\*

Reba Downs and children, Colin and Julia, visited with her mother, Velma Slagle and brother, Larry and family. Lt. Col. Jim Downs retired from the Air Force, stayed in Florida to sell their house



as they will be moving to New Mexico.

\*\*\*

Kathy, Rich, Clay & Emily Barnes, Oxford, Mississippi; Roberta and Richard Palfini, Irvine, CA and Patricia Dornan surprised their Mom with a special birthday party on the Russian River. About 90 friends and relatives attended the watermelon themed affair.

\*\*\*

Donna Roselius stopped in the Point overnight after visiting with her grandchildren in Sonora before returning to Port Orford. She also stopped in Guerneville to be a part of the surprise birthday party..see above!

\*\*\*

A teacher was explaining to her third graders the importance of good penmanship. She advised, "If you can't write your name, when you grow up you'll have to pay for everything with cash!"

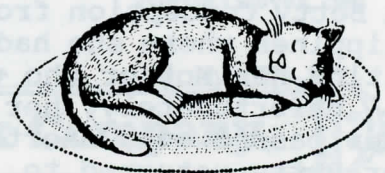
\*\*\*

Do you have videos you do not want? The Richmond Library has 1114 videos from which to choose and you may borrow two, free of charge, with a valid card, for a two-day period.

\*\*\*

An old-timer is someone who remembers when "on time" meant punctuality - not payments.

\*\*





# CHURCHES

## Our Lady of Mercy

*by Eleanor Hurley*

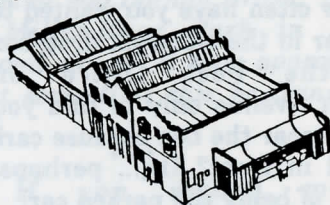
With the date of September 1st fast approaching, the committee for the steak barbeque are busy with last minute preparations. Mass on that Sunday will be 12 noon so those coming from outside the area will be able to come to Mass and then have an early dinner immediately following at 1:00. It will be nice to see old time friends and parishioners as always.

During the week of August 11, Father had a Priest guest from Milwaukee for his first visit to the West Coast. Needless to say, he wanted to see as much as possible so they did a lot of sightseeing in the immediate vicinity, particularly San Francisco, which they both enjoyed.

On Saturday, the 17th and Sunday, the 18th we had a Missionary from the Congregation of the Precious Blood say Mass and make an appeal. This group is a member of the Mission Co-op and operates in 17 countries along with many other missionary groups.

We were glad to welcome back Betty Conception from the Philippines where she had been visiting her Mother who was ill. Unfortunately, her Mother passed away shortly after Betty returned to Richmond.

Many of our men are involved with the Knights of Columbus and five of them will be installed in the third degree as officers. 4th degree officers will be installed on the 19th during a 6:30 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Mercy.



## Point Methodist

*by Jean Reynolds*

Sunday school will begin for the fall quarter on September 8th with a breakfast for students, parents and teachers. Classes will normally begin at 10 a.m. Sunday mornings and conclude at 10:45. Classes are for students aged 3 years through senior high.

An adult class is scheduled for Thursday evenings beginning after Labor Day. It will be a study of Dr. Leslie Weatherhead's book, "The Christian Agnostic". Pastor Michael Brown and Holtzman Frazier will lead the course, which will run for about thirteen weeks.

The parsonage received a new roof in July... doesn't it look fine! Rumor has it the remodeling project of the parsonage is also complete (!)



or at least so much as to allow our "first family" to shower again after a long dry spell.

A (tee-hee-hee) church picnic at Mid Dornan's Russian River Retreat on August 3rd was really a surprise birthday party for the same Mid Dornan. Watermelons were everywhere... there was a watermelon eating contest, a watermelon sculpting contest, and guests hung "seed" on a watermelon money tree to help send Mid to the Soviet Union (Do you still want to visit there, Mid?).

Seventy-two people attended our Masquers/Hotel Mac dinner-theater camp fundraiser event on August 22nd. Thanks to all who sold or bought tickets: Lloyd and Melba Farley received the "most sold" award and Helen Valentine the "most aggressive" salesperson award... she sold thirteen tickets WAY in advance before she left for vacation.

The play, "The Foreigner", was excellent and delightful entertainment. We had a pleasant evening and raised some money to send the kids to camp.

## POINT METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY

*Church history is rich with contributions of women. One of the church groups in the early 1900's was the Home Missionary Society of the First Methodist Church whose history is reflected in their minutes, printed below and taken from the stiff cardboard covered notebook purchased from "Shoen's Pharmacy in the Point". The minutes are printed as written. This is the 57th installment.*

Mar 16, 1917

The Woman's Home Missionary Society met in the church parlors. Minutes read and approved. Treasurers report read and accepted. The regular scripture lesson and devotional opening was given by Mrs. Adams.

The president then introduced Mrs. H. T. Fellers of Oakland, District President of the W.H.M.S. who addressed the meeting; followed by Mrs. Hugh Baker, District Secretary.

These Ladies gave helpful talks for the good of the Auxiliary.

After the meeting a social tea was enjoyed by all.

The rooms were decorated in St. Patricks colors and and "Irish" program as rendered.

Delicious refreshments were served by a competent committee. 33 friends and members were present.

Thank offering \$2.15.

Nettie Grover, Sec

**Richmond Pressed Brick Company**



# **Sports**

## **memories**

**By Allan Smith**

*This is re-printed from the "Spring, 1961 edition of a publication called "Landmark" which was published by THE WRITERS, a club sponsored by Richmond Union High School. The club sponsor was C.V. Lawson.*

*It was written by high school student Ed Lawrence. Eddie was raised in the Point on Idaho Street. He later became, and is very successful in the insurance business and presently lives on Lobos Ct. in the Point.*

*The article is about pro baseball player Jim Landis who is a Richmond native. Jim played against the Washington School teams in his younger years.*

*...Allan*

## **Profile of a Pro**

**by Ed Lawrence**

It was in the fourth game of the 1959 World Series between the Dodgers and the White Sox. The dodgers were up in the second inning and had two out and two on. The large, noisy, cowbell-ringing crowd in the Los Angeles Coliseum was naturally paying little attention to the lanky White Sox outfielder who roamed the vast cow pasture that is center field in the Coliseum. Eyes were on the pitcher and the batter...on the two base-runners moving off. There was a crack of the bat, a roar; and the partisan crowd began to count two sure runs off the looping line drive. But the fans had not reckoned with the speed of White Sox center fielder, who had broken sharply; and even as he dived, stretching out in midair and sliding

along on the turf, it seemed impossible that he had snared the ball. But he had, and the roar died away and the cowbells stopped jangling; and there was honest applause for the 'game saving' catch made by Jim Landis, pride of Richmond Union High and the class of '51.

Trouble was, the game saving catch did not save the game that day. The White Sox lost it, 7-2.

This spring, however, as Jim took time from his gardening chores in the backyard of his Tara Hills home to review his baseball career for us, he said that the Series catch was, beyond doubt, the greatest thrill that he could remember since breaking into baseball.

Jim's dad, though, feels that Jim's greatest play came when Jim won his own ballgame.

"It was at Colorado Springs," the elder Landis told us. "Jim had made an error in the first half of the ninth inning that had allowed the opposing team to score the tying runs. Jim was to be the leadoff batter in his team's half of the ninth, and when he strode to the plate, you could have cut the tension in the air with a knife. Jim relaxed, looked over a couple of pitches, and then knocked a home run so far, that when it left the stadium by way of the centerfield fence, it was still going up."

Jim's baseball career hasn't always been a bed of roses, though. After



graduating from Richmond Union, he played two years of baseball at West Contra Costa Junior College. After his second year there, he signed a contract with the Chicago White Sox, and has been playing in that organization since. Following a year of baseball in the minor leagues, Jim enlisted in the Army. He spent two years there, and just before his discharge in 1954, he was awarded a plaque which heralded Jim as the outstanding Army ballplayer in the West. The presentation was made by the Secretary of War.

Following two more years in the minor leagues, Jim was called up to play with the big club and has been there since.

All of Jim's time isn't devoted to baseball. "I've got a lovely wife, and two children, with one expected anytime," Jim confided to us in February. The newest addition to the Landis family, a boy, was born in March.

What about leaving the wife and kids at home while you are in Chicago playing baseball?

"Who leaves them?", Jim shrugged. "Sandy and I have rented an apartment in Chicago, and all of us are able to stay together, year-round."

Jim doesn't plan on spending the rest of his life as a baseball player, though. He has made some smart investments, and hopes to be able to quit baseball in another six years.

"That way," says Jim, "I will be able to spend all my time with the

family here in Richmond."

For his outstanding play during the 1960 season, Jim was awarded a gold glove and plaque by the sportswriters of America, praising him as "The Best Centerfielder in the American League in 1960."

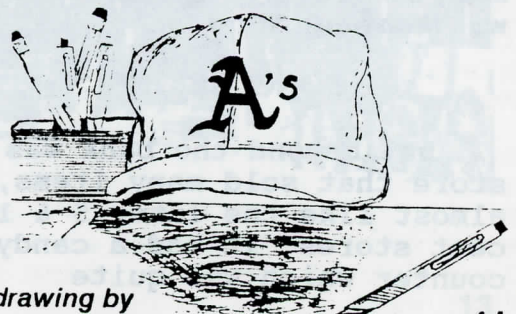
Jim's parents are quick to point out that Jim's success has been all his own doing.

"Sure, Jim and I used to play catch all the time," Landis confided, "but he was the one that did all the work. He always had a lot of spirit and determination that was the key to his success."

"Keeping the house clean was a losing battle when Jim was young," Mrs. Landis told us. "The place was always full of ballplayers."

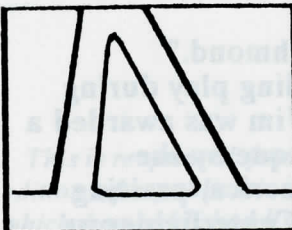
As we concluded the interview with Jim last February, we asked him the usual trite question. "Who's going to win the American League Pennant this year?"

"Why, Chicago, of course," Jim replied. He sounded serious, but just at that moment his wife was returning with the car and Jim was getting his golf clubs out. Apparently, golfers and not baseball players clutter up his wife's living room during the off-season months.



drawing by  
Curt Kruse





# Childhood Memories of The Point Richmond Triangle

By Wm. L. Thompson

*William L. Thompson, often called Louis by his friends, was born in Point Richmond on February 17, 1909, lived on Scenic Avenue, graduated from Richmond Union High School and was the first native Richmondite to go through medical school. Dr. Thompson began his practice in 1940 at 9th & Macdonald, later moving to 32nd & Macdonald until that building was sold at which time he moved to an office on Broadway. In 1979, at age 70 and after 39 years, he retired officially from medical practice. However, his many loyal, local patients continue to call him for advice.*

*Thanks to Dr. Thompson for his valuable contributions to our archives.*

~~~~~

*"The triangle formed by Washington Avenue, Park Place and Richmond Avenue was, from the beginning, the business center of Point Richmond. My early memories start about 1913. There are still many similarities but the personnel was then quite different."*

## CONCLUSION

Just beyond the bank was a store that sold many items, almost like the later 5 & 10 cent stores. It had a candy counter which was quite

intriguing to children. One looked for a long time to learn what would be the most one could buy for a penny. I believe the store was run by the Neals (possibly Neills). The lady that ran the store was most patient while we decided how much Fourth of July fireworks we could buy for a quarter. Fireworks then consisted mostly of packs of fire crackers, sparklers and occasionally roman candles and sky rockets.

Up the street a door or two was a low wooden building that held the office of Dr. Palmerton Campbell. He was the doctor that brought my brother and me into the world. Later I used to go there to have numerous small cuts sewed up. He was a fine understanding man and we got along well. He was a competent doctor for his time but not overly industrious.

Beyond here up Richmond Avenue and nearly to Santa Fe Avenue was Charlie's butcher shop run by Charlie Riegert. As children we enjoyed going there with our mother. Seeing my brother and I, old Charlie or one of his helpers would cut a weeny sausage (now a hot dog) and give each of us



half. It was a real treat. The only thing was that pieces were rarely equal in size. Later when I was older and going to the Washington School, I often had to stop there after school to purchase the meat for our dinner.

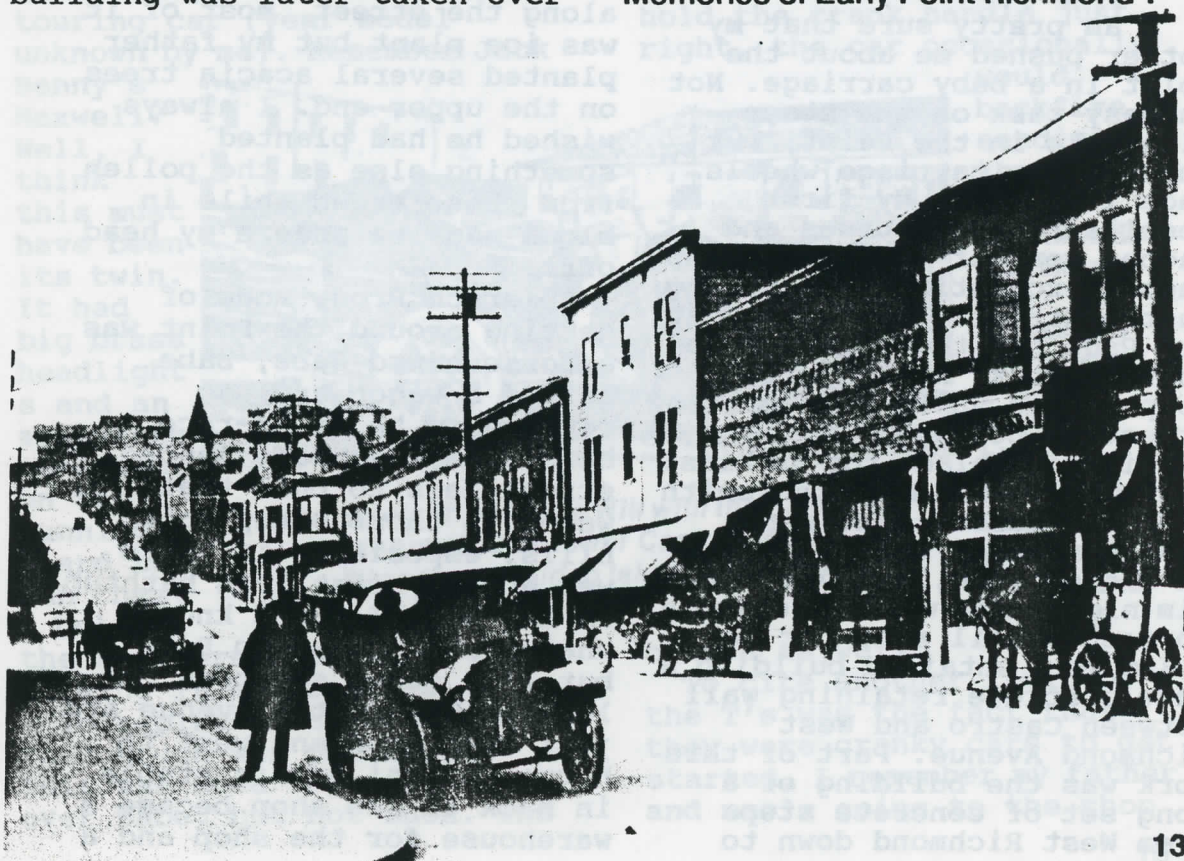
The only other building of importance close to the triangle was the old city hall on lower Washington Avenue. City business was done here after the meetings were removed from the old Critchett Hotel. Later this was abandoned when the population of Richmond required a larger quarters more centrally located. This old building was later taken over

by the Point Masonic Lodge.

Yes, the triangle has been from the start the heart and soul of Point Richmond and we hope that it will continue to be for years to come!



*This concludes Dr. Thompson's "Childhood Memories of the Point Richmond Triangle". Next we will feature the series, again from Dr. Thompson, "More Memories of Early Point Richmond".*





# WHEELS

## *Transportation in the Point*

by Will Spiersch

Willard Spiersch's father, Fred moved to the Point in 1902. Fred and brother Dick ran the Spiersch Plumbing and Sheetmetal business for many years and are important to the development of the Point. Thank you Will for sharing these memories of those early times.

I am pretty sure that my mother pushed me about the Point in a baby carriage. Not an easy task on the steep sidewalks in the Point, but surely, the carriage wheels made it easier! My first recollection of horses and wagons were of teams and dump wagons excavating and grading Castro Street. I believe that Mr. Page had the contract to do this work, he had his corporation yards down Castro Street by Cottage, it was a fascinating place for us kids. You could watch the blacksmith shoe the horses that were stabled there, and if he was in a good mood, and you asked him nicely, he would fashion a horseshoe nail ring for you.

His work entailed building a huge concrete retaining wall between Castro and West Richmond Avenue. Part of this work was the building of a long set of concrete steps from West Richmond down to

Castro Street and a retaining wall all along West Richmond Avenue. This wall had a 2" pipe railing extending between Martina and the upper end of Castro Street. This railing was installed by my Father, I believe it has been removed now. Anyway this work made a planting strip all along the street, most of it was ice plant but my father planted several acacia trees on the upper end. I always wished he had planted something else as the pollen from these trees while in bloom made me sneeze my head off!

Spiersch Bros. mode of getting around the Point was a horse named Babe, Babe pulled a wagon and was reputed to be an ex-race horse! Anyway, Babe needed strong legs to pull that wagon up those steep Point hills, especially if there was a heavy cast iron bathtub in the bed! I don't know whatever happened to Babe, but I'll guess she took one look at Washington Avenue and just laid down and went to horse heaven! Babe's stable in back of the shop became a warehouse for the shop and a



two car garage complete with a pit to work under the cars, if necessary, was built.

The stable was an interesting place, with the smell of fresh hay and oats Babe was well taken care of. She also liked carrots, which we bought by the sack full, I quit feeding them to her after my fingers were nipped. Over the stable was a pigeon cote. One day because of my size I guess, I was sent up to pass down some squabs for one of the policemen. I didn't understand why someone would want to eat one of those fat little birds!

Anyway, the Spiersch Bros. later bought a Maxwell touring car (year model unknown by me). Remember Jack

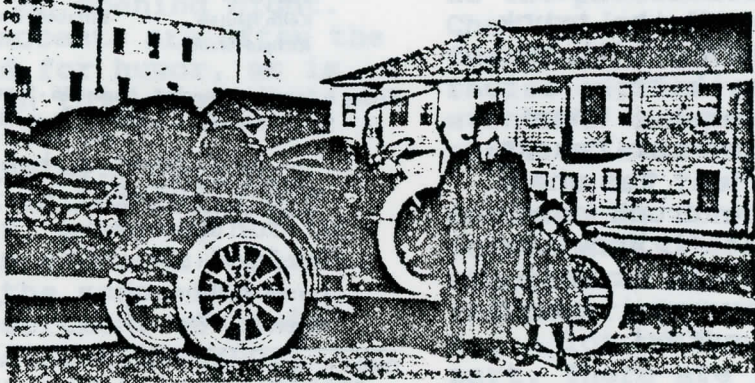
Benny's Maxwell? Well, I think this must have been its twin. It had big brass headlight s and an acetylene generator on the running board to run them. I believe the Brothers book turns driving it on weekends.

To replace Babe, a 1914 Ford truck was purchased. This was some improvement over Babe, but not much. The

transmission was operated by foot pedals that compressed bands, like brake drums to go into neutral, low or reverse. These bands were forever wearing out. The gas tank was under the seat and the gas ran by gravity to the carburetor. The Point hills were so steep that if the tank wasn't full, the car would stall. If you were lucky enough to be able to turn around, you could then make the hill by backing up! Eventually they accumulated a fleet of three model T trucks until the Model A's came out.

Another nasty thing about the Fords, was that they had to be cranked. If you didn't hold the crank handle just right, the car occasionally

would backfire, sending the handle around backwards striking and breaking your arm, I know because this happened to Dick Spiersch once, and to many



*Fred Spiersch and little Will with their Maxwell,  
about 1912 on lower Castro Street.  
Were they afraid to take it up the hill!*

others as well.

To cite another fault of the T's was the fact that they were cranky cars to get started. I remember my father and uncle going to the shop



early to heat water to pour over the carburetor and radiator to get the car warmed up before cranking your head off! You had to be sure the spark lever and gas lever were set just right and while you were cranking, you also had to pull out the choke wire under the radiator! Also they had to gas them up be straining the gas through a chamois skin over a funnel to train the water out!

We lived on Castro Street, which is very steep. One day, my father drove home in one of the T trucks and attempted to park in front of our house. My mother and baby sister, Pauline, were in the car. The axle chose that time to break, and the truck went down the hill, with me chasing it on my bike expecting the worst. When the truck hit the car tracks on Standard Avenue, the wheel came off and the truck came to a stop! I don't know who was more shaken, me or my parents! Believe me, modern cars are a lot safer!



THE MASQUERS

Playhouse, Inc.

105 Park Place, Point Richmond

PROUDLY PRESENTS

# THE FOREIGNER

By: LARRY SHUE

Directed by: STEVE HILL

The unknown in our midst can be a source of fear—or bring adventure and a renewed zest for life. Shue's hilarious play depicts these and more, proving it ain't what you don't know that's the problem; it's what you know that ain't true!

## THE CAST:

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Ron Anderson   | Steve McLaughlin  |
| Eric Hayes     | Dorothy Rands     |
| Keith Hautala  | Elizabeth Rodgers |
| Richard Krabbe |                   |

Friday & Saturday evenings — August 16 - September 28, 1991  
Sunday Matinees — August 25, September 8, 22

**RESERVATIONS: 232-4031 (24 hours)**

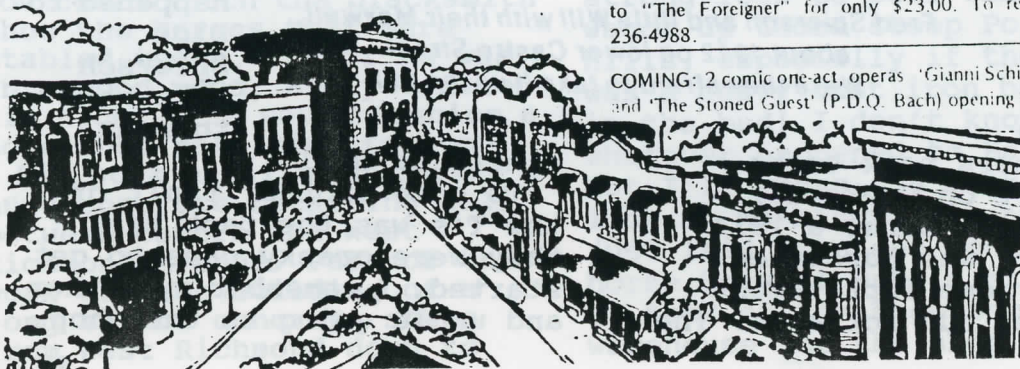
Reservations held until 10 minutes before curtain.  
Group Rates Available

Box Office Opens at 8:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. for matinees.

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Curtain: 8:30 p.m.  | } Admission: \$7.00 |
| Matinees: 2:30 p.m. |                     |

DINNER & THEATRE benefit for our building fund at HOTEL MAC, Thursday evening, Sept. 26. Dinner and ticket to "The Foreigner" for only \$23.00. To reserve, CALL: 236-4988.

COMING: 2 comic one-act, operas 'Gianni Schicchi' (Puccini) and 'The Stoned Guest' (P.D.Q. Bach) opening Oct. 25, 1991.







*by Anne Hanzlik*

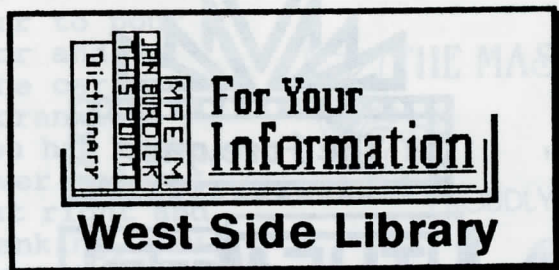
The introduction of the foreigner, the Englishman, Charlie Baker to Tilghman Co., Georgia creates a tried and true setting for plenty of laughs that kept the Masquers' audience chuckling, and sometimes screaming with merriment on opening night. Southern accents are often the background for humor, as is the case in this light but enjoyable farce.

The premise that the foreigner, a painfully shy Englishman, pretends not to understand or speak English provides the scene for a varied assortment of comic situations, for instance, Charlie is unwillingly privy to very private conversations among others present at the lodge. The reaction of his host landlady to the shy visitor is to supposedly compensate for his lack of understanding the language by resorting to shouting all of her remarks to him is one all have often observed. The consumption of a considerable

number of drinks among them all helps loosen their tongues. Richard Krabbe as Owen Musser, 'the good ole boy' has several good lines, and to top it off the KKK is brought into the plot with a humorous scene. Ron Anderson as the practically speechless Charlie is endearing and funny with his wonderful facial expressions as well as eventual emergence from his shell of silence.

As usual the setting designed by John Hull is convincing with its down home atmosphere. Dorothy Rand as the proprietor of the resort has a lot of fun with her part. There are four newcomers to the Masquers in the cast which once again emphasizes the wide area from which our company draws their talent. Also the crew, under the direction of Steve Hill are as competent as the actors.

THE FOREIGNER is a pleasant and satisfying light summer theater fare.



by Jan Burdick  
**New books at the West Side.....**

**LEE GROVE**

**Drowning**

This novel traces the fortunes of a family over some 40 years after the father leaves it, in 1946, as his midlife crisis turns permanent. The story, framed by a gathering for the father's (Eric Downer) 85th birthday, is told from various points of view building momentum as it cuts back and forth in time, offering a satisfying panorama of types. When Eric first left, he pursued a new career as a sculptor. The story goes on to follow his daughters, Roo and Dana, Son Denis and his former wife.

**JOEL BARR**

**Chapters and Verse**

The sub-title of this novel is - "fiction from behind the counter", and lets you in immediately to the setting, a bookstore. If you liked "84, Charing Cross Road", you're sure to like this sweet-tempered, low-key story. Chapters and

Verse is the name of the bookstore - a name arrived at, after much pondering, by one E. Baker, a woman of some years who has now decided to retire. She sells the store to Matthew Mason, former social worker and necktie salesman, whose story is then alternated here with the letters he receives from E. Baker on her retirement journeys. Though there's a plot of sorts, the novel is mainly an excuse for a series of anecdotes and local-color vignettes that, at their best, are Vonnegutian.

**HUGH LEONARD**

**Parnell and the English Woman**

This first novel by the acclaimed author of the memoirs "Home Before Night" and "Our After Dark" and the Tony Award winning play "Da", is based on the true story of Charles Stewart Parnell, who led the struggle for Irish Home Rule during the Victorian reign, and his romance with an Englishwoman, Kitty O'Shea.



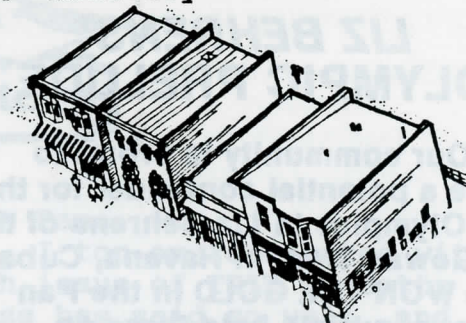
The book, which sparkles with Irish wit, offers a perceptive exploration of characters and a plot no less gripping for its twists and turns.

**RALPH PETERS**

## **The War In 2020**

Peter's best-selling "Red Army" (1988), written just before the world turned upside-down, was a thoroughly realistic "what-if" about a Soviet preemptive strike. Now he presents a plausible Soviet disunion, a demoralized central government wielding a crippled Red Army against rebellious Islamic republics that have been armed with the absolute latest in weaponry courtesy of their new best friends, the Japanese. It is not a nice world. It is not a nice year. The new millennium has seen a disastrous war between the Americans and the South Africans, a worldwide plague called Runciman's disease that was far worse than AIDS, and shooting wars in South America. The U.S. nearly foundered. Japan made no missteps. Now the resurging Americans have sent the Seventh Cavalry as a last-ditch effort to preserve their old enemy the Soviets against the Muslim horde and their computer-controlled, laser-equipped helicopters. Powerful stuff and wonderfully timely. Full of futuristic military gadgets,

but always interesting to non-military readers.



## **New Videos at the West Side**

Ten video cassettes will be borrowed from the Main Library on a regular basis. Currently ten titles have been transferred to West Side and will remain here until October. At that time they will be returned and exchanged for ten others. The titles for this period are:

1. A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers...Post War Hopes, Cold War Fears
2. A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers...The 30-second President
3. Blade Runner
4. The Patient (Beverly Cleary's Ramona)
5. Cities of Coral
6. Monterey Bay Aquarium
7. Savage and Beautiful (Wild Animals)
8. Yosemite Seasons & Splendor
9. Wizard of Oz
10. Raiders of the Lost Ark

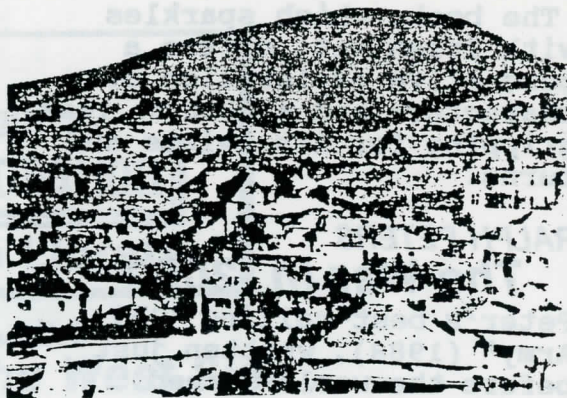


# LIZ BEHRENS' OLYMPIC PRELUDE

Our community is proud to have a potential contender for the '92 Olympics in Liz Behrens of the McGowan clan. In Havana, Cuba she WON THE GOLD in the Pan American trials held there on August 11th. She came in first in the women's rowing trials among a field of seventy. It was a vindication for her as the U.S. had lost to the Canadians the previous year. After the first of the year she will go on to further elimination trials in Seattle where she hopes to be on of twenty-four picked to train for the '92 Olympics to be held at Barcelona, Spain.

We extend our congratulations and wish her the best of luck in Seattle.

.....Anne Hanzlik



## THE KNOB

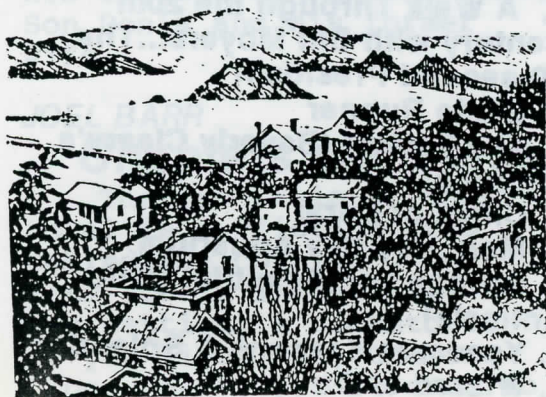
by Jeff Ward

*The Knob was once a barren sight;  
Devoid of growth, close to blight;  
When with a vision, a-pumping for oil,  
(Salt water produced as results of toil  
Expende and money thrown about  
To the consternation of a local stout-  
Hearted entrepreneur called Nichol  
Who had dreams most grand  
But went on to expand  
Leaving the Knob his name, some of his fame  
and*

*A swimming pool far from the bland.  
(A weird change of meter  
But it will not deter)  
Settlers perched, the earth lurched,  
And trees began to abound.  
Pines were planted,  
Although much slanted;  
And poison oak covered the ground.  
Today its quite filled  
With gardens most tilled  
And berries and cover for critters  
New crops are grown  
Yielding veggies full blown  
And we're up to our ears in corn fritters.*

#####

Hmmmm.....





# Cards & Letters

Dear Gary:

In reply to "Frenchy" Bernes question (Summer, 1991; pg. 14) as to where George Topping's model locomotive is.....

It is prominently displayed in Sacramento at the State Railroad Museum. It was restored by Howard Topping and presented to the state as a gift. In the lobby is a plaque acknowledging the donation. She's a beauty and was when I admired it in "Old Man Topping's" shop 65 years ago!

Everytime I recieve your publication it "blows by mind". Keep up the great work!

Ed Garrard  
Sonoma, CA

Dear Pam:

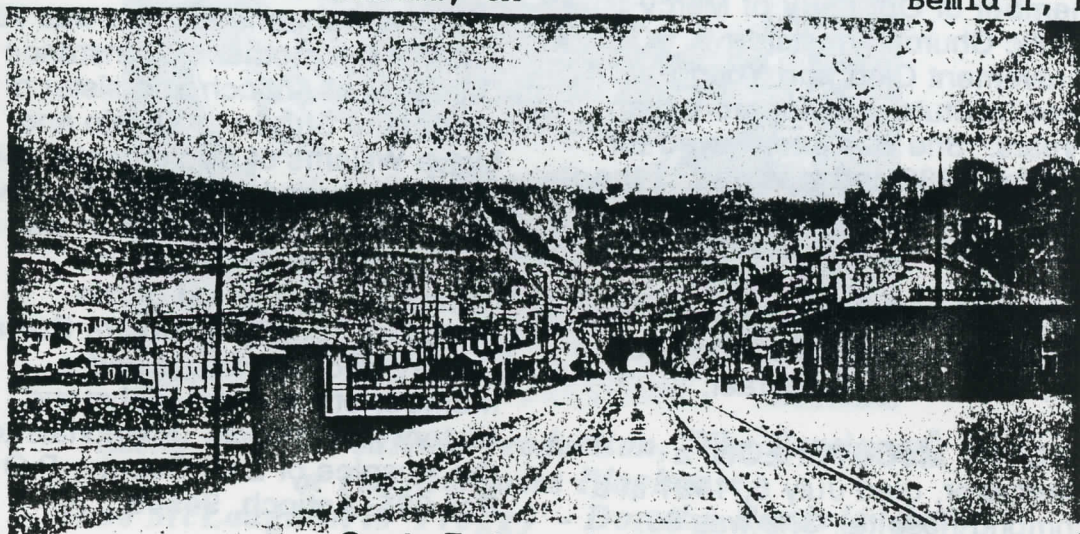
I too am fascinated with each issue of TPIT as Betty Glass has said so well, and yes I remember you Betty!

It is great to read of the history of places and people I know or knew of.

I'll be in Point Richmond for a few days in October for my 50th class reunion. It will be fun to walk the streets & hills and to remember and to see the changes and to see the people that I know.

Please renew my membership.

Sincerely,  
June Kunkel Blackburn  
Bemidji, MN



Santa Fe tunnel about 1905



## Deaths.....

**MARY B. CASEY** on July 8, 1991 in a San Pablo hospital. She celebrated her 98th birthday on April 20th and was the Point's oldest resident.

A native of Australia, Mary, arrived in the Point in 1906, where the family moved into a house on Golden Gate Avenue where she continued to live for the rest of her life. When she was going to school she said kids called the Point, "Nanny Goat Hill."

Her father operated a newspaper store next to what is now the Hotel Mac. She was in the first graduating class from the Richmond Union High School when it was located on Twenty-third Street where Grand Auto is now.

Mary was a cashier for the city of Richmond for 37 years. She was a member of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Westside Improvement Club and Young Ladies Institute #61 for more than 75 years. She was interviewed for TPIT May 1982 and was part of the Oral History Project for the Eagle Scout Award of Gary Darling, BSA Troop 111.

Mary is survived by her cousins, June Ennis of San Francisco and Monica Ennis of San Rafael.

**DOROTHY McCUTCHEON**, a homemaker, died July 6, 1991 in a Richmond hospital. She was 80.

A native of Berkeley, she lived in Richmond for 40 years and was a member of the Ham Radio Operator's Club. Her husband, William, preceded her in death on June 13, 1991.

**M. 'TOM' U'REN** died July 6, 1991 at age 76. A native of Minnesota, Mr. U'Ren lived in Richmond 48 years and was a self-employed building contractor for 45 years. He was a member of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church and is survived by sisters, Dorothy U'ren of San Pablo, Evelyn Ericksen of Richmond, Marian Nelson of Franklin, Minn., and Thelma Barthel of Gardnerville, Nev.; and brothers, Edsel U'Ren of Pinole and Corky U'Ren of Temp, Ariz. Memorials to the Seirra Club, 41 Christopher Court, El Sobrante.

**EDITH A. WHETSTONE** died on July 1, 1991 in San Pablo. A native of Sacramento, she was 76. Edith is the mother of Constance Dameron of Antioch and sister of Josephine Strode of Vallejo and Melva Williams of Sacramento. She has three granddaughters and two great grand children. Edith was a member of the First Baptist Church, on the board of the Historical Society of Contra Costa County and San Pablo and a member of the Point Richmond History Association. Memorials to the Hospice of East County, P.O. Box 285, Antioch, 94509.



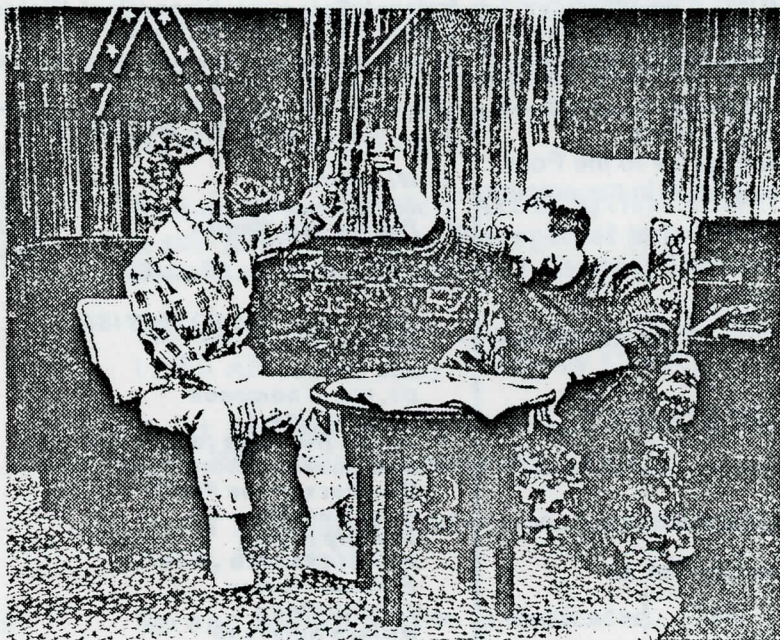
**DORIS C. RASMUSSEN** died July 4, 1991. A native of Richmond she was San Pablo city clerk 10 years and in 1973 Doris was 'San Pablo Woman of the Year'. Interested in local history, Doris was a founding member of the Richmond Museum, a member of the San Pablo Historical Society, Point Richmond History Association, San Pablo Manzanillo Sister Cities Organization and the First Baptist Church of Richmond. She often attended the Point Richmond History Association meetings. Memorial gifts may be sent to the American Cancer Society, El Cerrito.

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Doris Maske       | Susan Armstrong  |
| Ivar Elle         | Daniel Butt      |
| Sara Warren       | Joann Busby      |
| Smith             | Will Spiersch    |
| Emily Anne        | Al Frosini       |
| Barnes            | Shane Eastman    |
| HattieBelle Potts | Mary Forbes      |
| Roberta Wilson    | Ingvar Elle      |
| Bernard Dietz     | Roxanne Trudeau  |
| Stephen Berman    | David Reynolds   |
| Gayle Kaufman     | John Hadreas     |
| Donna Roselius    | Nancy Eardley    |
| Phyllis Glass     | Jerry Cerknowicz |
| Ackerman          |                  |

*Anyone observant enough to guess  
your age correctly will probably  
annoy you in other ways.*

*Mid 234-5334*



*Scene from the current production, "The Foreigner"  
at The Masquers Playhouse,  
Steve McLaughlin is 'Froggy' - Dorothy Rands is 'Betty'*



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Type of membership (check one)

- |                          |                   |         |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SINGLE            | \$18.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SENIOR (65+)      | 12.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FAMILY            | 25.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | HISTORY PRESERVER | 50.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CORPORATE SPONSOR | 75.00   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | HISTORY MAKER     | 100.00  |

Membership in the Point Richmond History Association includes a one year subscription to "This Point" newsletter (nine issues). Please make your check payable to the Point Richmond History Association and mail it to:

**PAM WILSON**  
521 WESTERN DRIVE  
POINT RICHMOND, CA 94801

If you would like to have Birthdays noted in the newsletter, please include names and dates.

Articles for each month's issue are due on or before the published deadline in the calendar section of this issue.

Please mail articles and items of interest to:

**GARY SHOWS**  
229 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE  
POINT RICHMOND, CA 94801

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Enclosed is my check payable to the Point Richmond History Association in the amount of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ In Honor \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory

of \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tributes will be acknowledged in the newsletter

#### PHONE NUMBERS

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mid Dornan</i>       | <i>234-5334</i> |
| <i>Gary Shows</i>       | <i>235-1336</i> |
| <i>Phyllis Skaglund</i> | <i>232-2280</i> |
| <i>FAX</i>              | <i>232-0842</i> |

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*Don Church (photo collection)*  
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*Anne Hanzlik*  
*Jean Reynolds*  
*Muriel Clausen*  
*Eleanor Hurley*  
*Jan Burdick*  
*Willard Spiersch*  
*Jerry Cerkowicz*  
*Allan Smith/Ed Lawrence*  
*Ed Garrard*  
*June Blackburn*

.....thanks



# CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER

- September 2**      **LABOR DAY**
- September 3**      **Women's Westside Improvement Club Meeting,  
11:30 AM, Our Lady of Mercy Church**
- Point Richmond Neighborhood Council Meeting,  
7:30 PM, Point Community Center**
- September 4**      **First Day of School, RUSD**
- First Indian Statue is dedicated, 1904**
- September 11**      **Point Richmond Business Association Meeting,  
5:00 PM, Hotel Mac**
- September 20**      **DEADLINE FOR TPIT OCTOBER ISSUE**
- Richmond Parkway Committe meeting, Community  
Services Bldg., Conference Room One, 329 Twenty Fifth  
Street, 8:30-9:30 am**
- September 29**      **Richmond Art Center "Art & Artists Private Home Tour"  
A self guided tour of five special private homes, 1pm-5pm,  
Benefits the Richmond Art Center, Call 620-6772/details**
- October 1**      **Women's Westside Improvement Club Meeting,  
11:30 AM, Our Lady of Mercy Church**
- Point Richmond Neighborhood Council Meeting,  
7:30 PM, Point Community Center**
- October 9**      **Point Richmond Business Association Meeting,  
Noon, Hotel Mac**
- October 20**      **Second Indian Statue is dedicated, 1984**
- October 27**      **Fifty Years Ago, First Liberty Ship Launched, 1941**
- October 31**      **Halloween**