

North & East Newsletter

May 2006

Newsletter of the North & East Neighborhood Council

P.O. Box 254, Richmond, CA 94808

(510) 237-5670

www.northandeast.org

Dear Neighbor.

I hate to start an article with sad news, but I need to tell you that the neighborhood lost a great friend last month when Hazel Braaten died.

Hazel never came to meetings; like many others here, she no longer went out at night. But her help was invaluable to us.

For the last several years, Hazel folded and labeled the monthly newsletter. That's more than 800 copies of the newsletter. And in August, when we fold and label 4,000 -- 5,000 newsletters at the monthly meeting, she always checked our work and did the count for the mailing.

Hazel was also dedicated to the Library and worked on the Friends of the Library book sales once a week or more for years. She was on the Friends Board for a long time.

We miss her already.

But besides missing Hazel, we need to find a replacement -- a kind soul who has time once a month to fold and label newsletters. This usually happens the first weekend of the month, but a lot depends on the City Print Shop. They are wonderful and sometimes get our job done in a day or two, but the official arrangement is that they fit newsletters in around other work, so we have no control over the timing.

Please call me to talk about stepping into Hazel's shoes. 237-5670.

ELECTION TIME

May is the month the North & East elects its officers and starts a new year. The Nominations Committee (Jeffrey Dickemann and Martha White -- and thank you both for volunteering) has come up with a slate of officers for 2006 -- 2007:

President: Sandi Genser-Maack

Vice President: Bessanderson McNeil

Treasurer: Renate Siman

Co-Treasurer: Kokoye Sande

Secretary: Julie Freestone

Co-Secretary: May Barbano

If you are interested in serving as an officer, please give me a call before the May 18th meeting. Otherwise, please come to vote.

We thank Darrell Hoh
of Marvins Gardens Real Estate
for sponsoring this issue of the
N & E Newsletter.

Thank you, Darrell.

GENERAL PLAN COULD HELP FIX PROBLEMS

The city is beginning an ambitious revision to its General Plan, which looks at many things that make for a good quality of life in Richmond - ranging from noise and traffic to street repairs and trees. As part of the revision, there will be many opportunities for community input.

Why do we care? What do we want this Plan to include?

Meet a Planner from another city who knows the answers at the May 18 North & East Neighborhood Council meeting.

Meanwhile, to be notified about the events and receive other General Plan information, go to the website at cityofrichmondgeneralplan.org

Also on the May agenda is a report from Elisa Scarborough, our representative to the Parks & Recreation Commission's hearings on the future of several Richmond Parks, on the plans for Humphrey Playlot.

Sandi Genser-Maack

President

(510) 237-5670 northandeast@comcast.net

N & E Calendar

Thurs., May 18 -- N&E Meeting, Senior Center, 7 p.m.,

Sat., May 20 -- Good Neighbors Delivery Day, 10:30 a.m.,
950 32nd St., (510) 235 -5696.

Mon., May 22 -- Planning & Zoning Committee, 7 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: THURS., MAY 18, 7 P.M., AT THE SENIOR CENTER

CALLING ALL EASTER BASKETS

Our Good Neighbors project -- delivering baskets of goodies and information to newcomers in the neighborhood -- needs baskets. Now is the time to donate any baskets you have around from Easter. Call Ronnie Marty at (510) 235-5696 for drop-off information.

The next Good Neighbors delivery day is Saturday, May 20. It's a great way to meet new N & E residents and see the neighborhood. It only takes one hour. Call Ronnie for more information or to volunteer.

SUPPORT LIBRARY BOND MEASURE

There's a new measure on the ballot for the June election: Proposition 81 -- the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2006. It will provide \$600 million to construct and renovate public library facilities in order to expand access to reading and literacy programs in California's public education system and to expand access to public library services for all residents of California.

Local library supporters say if it passes, Richmond has a good chance of getting matching funds to build a new main library. According to Richmond City Librarian Monique le Conge, our library is very out of date. It should be on one level and include many things it doesn't have. More information is available online at <http://www.smartvoter.org/2006/06/06/ca/state/prop/81/>

.....
● **Elsie McManigal**, who brings ●
● plant cuttings to sell at our annual ●
● picnic and runs our Book Sale, ●
● turned 94 on April 29th. ●
● Happy Birthday, Elsie. ●
.....

LOCAL ADVENTURER SPEAKER AT FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING

Tina Olton, local author and world traveler, will share her amazing adventures at the annual meeting of the Friends of Richmond Library on Monday May 22, 2006.

Using slides, Olton will recount her experiences sailing around the world with her husband on an 8-year odyssey in a 40-foot sailboat.

Her book, "Always Another Horizon, A Journey Around the World", chronicles traversing 45,000 miles, visiting 61 countries, crossing 3 oceans and countless waterways. You won't want to miss this lively and engaging speaker.

The meeting will be held in the Whittlesey Community Room, Richmond Public Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza. The program begins at 7:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. For information, call (510) 644-4296.

(There will be a brief Friends business meeting at 6:30 p.m.).

EXHIBIT INTRODUCES LATINO HISTORY IN RICHMOND

The latest exhibit presented by the Richmond Museum of History is "Siempre Aqui" (Always Here), introducing the Californio-Mexican, American-Latino presence in greater Richmond from the days of Mexican California to the present.

Richmond Museum of History
400 Nevin Avenue
(510) 235-7387
(Exhibit ongoing for several months)
www.richmondmuseumofhistory.org
Maria Sakovich, Guest Curator
Admission \$5 members; \$7.50 general.

Regular Museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Group tours may be arranged at other times.

GRANT TEACHER A 2006 TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER

A veteran of over 30 years with the district, Grant kindergarten teacher Akila Binhajji lists Langston Hughes, John Coltrane and Zora Neale Hurston among her educational influences.

She studied speech therapy and elementary education at Arizona State University, and followed up with a Master's degree at the University of San Francisco. She did administrative coursework at Cal State Hayward, where her mentor was Dr. Robert Blackburn.

Ms. Binhajji previously taught at Woods Elementary School (since closed) and has been at Grant for over 20 years. "I don't concentrate on accolades, because the students are always my focus," she said. "I thank people for honoring me, but I'm standing on the shoulders of a lot of individuals who came before me, and they're the ones who should really be recognized."

Ms. Binhajji recently completed the process of applying for National Board Certification, and will receive final notification in November 2006.

The award was presented at the 18th Annual Ed. Fund Teaching Excellence Awards Banquet, Saturday, May 6, 2006. For more information please contact the Ed. Fund at (510) 233-1464 or edfundwest@sbcglobal.net, or go to the website at www.edfundwest.org.

.....
● **Wilson School Flea Market** ●
● **Saturday, May 13** ●
● **8 a.m. to 4 p.m.** ●
● **42nd St. and Roosevelt Ave.** ●
.....

ARE YOU POLLUTING THE BAY?

If you have ever washed your car in your driveway, neglected to pick up your pet's waste, lost a plastic bag to the wind or driven a car that leaked oil, then you have likely polluted the Bay without realizing it.

Since we all enjoy San Francisco Bay as the defining feature of the Bay Trail, TRAC (Trails for Richmond Action Committee) invites you to visit www.ikeepitclean.org/ to take "Save the Bay's Keep it Clean!" survey. Run-off flowing into the Bay from our homes, cars and neighborhoods is one of the greatest threats to San Francisco Bay. Take this survey and learn how you may be polluting the Bay and how to make some easy changes to help keep the Bay healthy and beautiful for future generations.

Experts agree on two things: Pollution is one of the greatest threats to the Bay. And one of the essential ways to tackle the Bay pollution problem is to change the behavior of the Bay Area's seven million residents.

We hope you will take a few minutes and take the Keep It Clean! survey today. You'll learn how you may be polluting the Bay and the simple actions you can take to protect it.

Thank you very much.

TRAC Steering Committee: Donald Bastin, Bruce Beyaert, Bruce Brubaker, Jay Corey, Whitney Dotson, Jerry Rasmussen & Nancy Strauch. Contact us at tracbaytrail@earthlink.net

NORTH & EAST PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT

April 24, 2006

The Committee convened at 7:05 p.m. with members Sandi Genser-Maack, Dolores Hembree, James Johnson, Jerry Rasmussen (Acting Chair), Martha Seymour and Michael Warren present.

1. Second story addition at 2638 Garvin Avenue — conditionally approved.

Claudia Falconer, architect, presented the proposal to add 1050 sq. ft. over the 1520 sq. ft. single-family dwelling, within its existing footprint. A few other two-story dwellings exist in the neighborhood. To reduce the visual impact of this new second floor, it is to be stepped well back from the current front facade and broken into two smaller volumes. The low-profile hiproofs will be retained. Existing wood siding will be replaced with stucco to match the new. Also, the old windows will be replaced to match the new.

All of the yard areas and setbacks (sides 20' - 7" and 6' - 2" and rear 25') of the 68' x 92' lot will stay as they are.

After a short discussion, the Committee voted 6 - 0 to approve, subject to the condition that one or more street trees shall be planted in accordance with City specifications.

2. Six-foot fence in corner front yard, at 2886 Lincoln Avenue, and
3. Second dwelling in rear yard at 445 29th Street

Both these projects were no-shows, so the Committee deferred any action pending further contact with the applicants.

The Committee adjourned at 7:30 p.m., to reconvene on 22 May, the fourth Monday.

GRANT APPLICATION FILED

The Neighborhood Council has applied to The First 5 Contra Costa Commission for funding to support our annual September picnic and conduct a survey at the event about how best to celebrate future Cinco de Mayos. The Neighborhood Council has been funded by the First 5 Commission twice in past years - once for a community-building picnic and park improvement project and again for traffic calming workshops and other pedestrian safety activities. To volunteer for the Picnic Committee, contact Sandi Genser-Maack at (510) 237-5670 or northandeast@comcast.net.

THANKS FOR DONATIONS

Generous donations to the North & East Shoes That Fit Project we do with Grant School were sent by:

**Italian Catholic Federation,
#154 St. Raymond Branch
Amy & Bud Berner**

Thanks for more donations from:

**Regina Bucher
Gerri Cull
Victoria Lewis
Emile & Edythe Pleau
Lena Sale
Eli Williams**

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Councilmembers Jim Rogers and Richard Griffin, two of the four members of the City Council's Finance Committee, attended April's N&E Neighborhood Council meeting to hear how residents think this year's budget should be allocated.

They got an earful. Many residents complained about potholes and the two Finance Committee members said they thought funds for improving streets could be taken from the city's redevelopment funds. So far, there isn't agreement among all Council members for that strategy.

Rogers and Griffin commented that although the Council has focused much attention on violence, as the Finance Committee holds these input sessions in various neighborhoods, they are hearing much more about quality-of-life issues like street lights, improving parks and recreation centers and opening libraries for more hours.

At our meeting, residents asked how the City Council is improving fiscal oversight. They answered that the City Council now has its own auditor reporting on the state of the city's finances; they are increasing revenue by enforcing the collection of business license fees and landlord fees.

The input sessions were being held this year in various neighborhoods to give more residents a chance to make their views and concerns heard in advance of the development of the formal budget. Contact Finance chair Jim Rogers at (510) 867-5725 or elirapty@aol.com.

GAS PRICES UP, REFINERY TAXES DOWN?

In case you missed the local newspaper reports, three refineries in the County, including Chevron in Richmond, have filed appeals to a county assessment appeals board to reduce their property value by a combined \$7 billion for the past two years. The Contra Costa Times reported that 146 public agencies, including cities, schools, emergency services and hospitals, may have to return \$70 million to the three refineries and shave \$30 million a year from future budgets if the appeal is successful.

East Bay Regional Parks would have to return \$2 million to the refineries for property taxes collected over the last two years and cut future budgets by \$1.1 million a year. County libraries would have to return about \$1 million and reduce future budgets by \$319,000. Richmond would have to return \$1.7 million and reduce next year's budget by \$5.2 million. The West Contra Costa school district would have to return \$3.6 million and reduce next year's budget by \$5 million. County Supervisor John Gioia was quoted in the Contra Costa Times, saying, "This will have huge implications for local government in West County. "Brookside (Doctors) Hospital in San Pablo stands to lose \$312,000 a year, a loss that could mean the hospital will have to close."

A Chevron spokesperson said the Richmond refinery is the county's largest taxpayer. In 2005, the refinery paid \$33 million to the county in property taxes and another \$16 million to Richmond in utility users and sales taxes. Chevron also contributed more than \$1 million in 2005, mostly to Richmond agencies such as the library, youth jobs programs and police activities league. "It just doesn't seem right that while Chevron is experiencing some of its largest profits ever, they are also trying to lower their tax base," Gioia said

CITY HALL TO RETURN - EVENTUALLY

The City Council recently approved four resolutions intended to advance a plan for moving City staff back to the real City Hall and construct a new Hall of Justice, all at a cost of \$78 million. The Project's design-build team is Richmond Civic Center partners, LLC.

The first phase of the project will be rehabilitation of the City Hall Building and reoccupation by the City Staff that currently is at 1401 Marina Way South - to the tune of over \$1 million a year in rent.

Also in this phase are construction of a new hall of Justice on Barrett Avenue, remodeling of the south side of the Memorial Auditorium for use as a City Council Chamber and meeting rooms; seismic retrofit and some upgrades to the remainder of the Memorial Auditorium and rehabilitation and upgrade of Civic Center Plaza. The project will be paid for by a combination of bonds and cash from various sources.

NOISE TIP SHEET DEVELOPED

Acknowledging that noise is a problem in many neighborhoods, the Richmond Police Department has drafted a tip sheet about loud car stereos. It was designed to be given to drivers whose stereos are cranked up too loudly. The tip sheet, one of a series of informative handouts to be created by the Police Department, aims to improve quality of life in our community.

Several suggestions were made at the North & East Neighborhood Council's monthly meeting about improving the tip sheet, especially adding a phone number for people to call if they are having noise problems and describing the penalties for violating state and local noise ordinances. N&E Neighborhood Council president Sandi Genser-Maack promised to forward the suggestions to police department staff.

HOME SALES IN NORTH AND EAST FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

We have seen a fewer number of sales during the past month, largely due to the rainy weather that occurred during the month of March. Buyers appear to have taken a slight break in looking for homes during the inclement weather. With warmer weather towards the end of April, I have seen a noticeable change in how people have started looking at homes again. Look for a larger amount of sales that will occur in the next few months.

<u>Address</u>	<u>List Price</u>	<u>Sales Price</u>	<u>BR/BA</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>	<u>Lot Size</u>
800 block of 31 st St.	\$399,000	\$410,970	2/1	760	2500
2900 block of Barrett	\$410,000	\$415,000	2/1	746	4000
800 block of 37 th St.	\$419,950	\$419,950	2/1	1016	4815
2900 block of Barrett	\$425,000	\$440,000	3/2.5	2376	4500
2800 block of Humphrey	\$435,000	\$445,000	2/1	969	5000
800 block of 31 st St.	\$449,950	\$465,000	3/1	1124	5000
3500 block of Cerrito	\$459,000	\$459,000	2/1	1045	5250
2900 block of Andrade	\$476,900	\$500,000	3/2	1113	3750
800 block of Wilson	\$478,988	\$490,000	3/2	1365	4400
2400 block of Garvin	\$479,000	\$485,000	3/2	1105	2576
700 block of 30 th St.	\$549,000	\$555,000	3/1.5	1953	6350

Darrell Hoh and Marvin Gardens Real Estate believes all material to be correct but assumes no liability for its accuracy.

CIVIL LIBERTIES FILM SERIES AT LIBRARY; FREE

The ACLU and the Richmond Public Library are co-sponsoring a series of film nights dealing with Civil Liberties issues. These films, with speakers and discussions, will be shown on the 2nd Tuesday for 3 consecutive months at 7:00 p.m. Free.

Tuesday June 13, 7:00 p.m.

THE EXONERATED

[Starring Danny Glover, Delroy Lindo, Adian Quinn, Susan Sarandon]

SPEAKERS: Natasha Minsker, Director, ACLU-NC Death Penalty Project; **Barbara Becnel**, journalist and co-author with Stanley "Tookie" Williams of *Life in Prison*; **Aaron Owens**, Exoneree

Tuesday July 11, 7:00 p.m.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM [From the ACLU FREEDOM FILES] **SPEAKER: Reverend Phil Lawson**, retired minister from Easter Hill Methodist Church, President, Greater Richmond Interfaith Project (GRIP)

Tuesday August 8, 7:00 p.m.

DISSENT [From the ACLU

FREEDOM FILES] **SPEAKER: Jim Chanin**, Long-Time Civil Rights Attorney (recently successful Attorney for Port of Oakland Demonstrators)

Richmond Library, Madeline F. Whittlesey Community Room, 325 Civic Center Plaza at Macdonald Ave. Convenient parking in the lot in front of the Library or Bus #72M. Wheelchair accessible. For more information, call (510) 525-9223 or (510) 620-6561 or email rsaclu@earthlink.net

NORTH & EAST GARAGE SALE WEEKEND COMING

- Labor Day Weekend
 - Friday, Sept. 1 to Monday, Sept. 4
 - Watch this space for more information.
- Addresses will be listed in the September issue which goes to all homes in the N & E.

Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council

P.O. Box 485
Richmond, CA 94804

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 253
RICHMOND, CA

Dated Material -- Please Expedite Delivery

The North & East Newsletter

The North & East Neighborhood: West to 23rd St., East to San Pablo Ave., North to the City limits, South to Macdonald Ave.

<p>I support my Neighborhood Council! <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose dues (voluntary) of \$10 for the 06-07 year. <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a donation of _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a donation for the newsletter _____ Name _____ Address _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____ email _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I do not want to remain on the mailing list</p>	<p>Mail to: Renate Siman 2559 Clinton Av. Richmond, CA 94804</p> <p>make checks to: N & E</p>
--	--

North & East Neighborhood Council Meeting

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Third Thursday

7:00 p.m.

**Richmond Senior Center
2525 Macdonald Avenue**

**May 18: What is a General Plan
and why do I care that Richmond is doing one?**

**June 15 : The “hottest spots” for collisions are in
the N & E. Why? What can we do about it?**

**July 20: Is Target really coming? What is
happening on Macdonald Avenue?
When are they starting work on City Hall?**