

quick-takes

Street sweeping in effect. Really.

Street sweeping begins in the first week of March. Warning tickets will be issued for the first 60 days for violations. After this moratorium, violators will be cited and cars towed, with zero tolerance.

Note that cars must be off the street for the *entire* period of time specified by the sign. If you move your car back into the area after the street sweeping truck has passed but still within the no parking period, you may get a ticket because there is no way for an officer to know whether the street sweeping truck has already passed through that area.

Trees restored. Sort of.

We were surprised as most of you by the planting of 8 saplings in front of West Coast Motors on San Pablo Avenue, replacing the 8 mature trees its owners cut down, without City permission, last year. West Coast Motors paid \$60,000 for the trees and the pouring of a new sidewalk.

The work was undertaken under an agreement with the City. Although the ERNC had requested notification in writing before an agreement was finalized, we received none.

The species of tree is *Tristania Conferta*, commonly known as Brisbane Box. It can reach to 40 ft with a 30 ft. spread. Our botanical reference indicates it has smooth reddish brown bark that peels back to reveal light tan new bark. White flowers in summer. And fast growth — though maybe not fast enough for some.

Fiddling With Crestmont

Crestmont School invites the community to a Spring Gala Live and Silent Auction featuring the Irish and Scottish Fiddles of Robin Flower and Libby McLaren. Saturday, March 12th, 7pm to 11 pm at the Dunsuir Historic Estate and Gardens in Oakland. Tickets are \$20 for one and \$30 for two. All proceeds benefit Crestmont School's scholarship fund, science program and playground fund. Crestmont School

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Richmond Main Street looks to a new downtown

By Andy Pasternack

What do Ghiradelli Square and downtown Richmond have in common? Though separated by decades, both are part of the same general movement to breathe new life into urban downtowns. Through coordinated efforts of city governments, businesses, housing developers, and nonprofit corporations, flavorful cityscapes are rehabilitated while attracting new tenants and occupants to a formerly declining neighborhoods.

In 1964, the year Ghiradelli Square opened, many cities defined urban renewal as bland office towers, housing developments, and freeways. Ghiradelli bucked the trend, becoming one of the first successful mixed use urban redevelopments, not to mention a popular tourist attraction. Places like Fanueil Hall in Boston and the Fulton Market in New York soon extended the same idea. Other developments, such as Jack London Square in Oakland, or Fourth Street in Berkeley, showed that even an imitation of a downtown was a viable alternative to enclosed malls surrounded by seas of impersonal asphalt.

Now the Ghiradelli example is coming full circle with the Richmond Main Street initiative. The Richmond Main Street Initiative is a community-based nonprofit corporation dedicated to revitalizing historic downtown Richmond as a pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, arts and entertainment that reflect the community's rich and diverse heritage. The area of the Richmond Main Street Initiative stretches east from 8th Street to 19th Street, between Nevin and Bissell Avenues, encompassing Macdonald Avenue, which truly is the Main Street of Richmond.

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New vehicle laws now in effect

by Glenn Stephenson

Chances are you're not aware of some recent changes in the California vehicle code. You should be. The dollar cost of violations is high, but higher still are the possible consequences of ignoring laws that protect motorists, passengers, and pedestrians. Here's a summary of four important additions to the vehicle code.

Headlights must be on whenever the weather is bad enough to require the continuous use of windshield wipers, or when conditions prevent you from seeing an object 1000 feet in front of you.

Small motorized scooters zoomed into the market last year. Their small size and low cost made them popular gifts for children and teens. But for the same reason their use can pose significant hazards, both to those who use them and to other drivers. The users must now have a valid driver's license or learner's permit.

New child restraint laws went into effect on January 1, 2005. Children less than 6 years old or less than 60 pounds must be in a child seat and restrained in the back seat.

If you're smart, you won't even think about having "one more for the road." Studies show that the first DUI (driving under the influence) conviction costs the violator approximately \$7,000. Now a new law now keeps a DUI conviction on a person's driving record for 10 years, instead of the previous 7 years. This will lead to stiffer penalties for those caught driving while drunk — and makes the roads safer for us all.

Word has it that we're all getting older. The West County Adult Education Program to the rescue. The Program offers a class for drivers entitled "Mature Driver Improvement", or more poetically, "55 Alive". You can enroll in this class either at the Serra School or at Pinole Senior Center. The cost, \$10, is more than offset by a reduction in your insurance premium, and the discount is good for 3 years. Call 215-4666.

next meeting

Monday, March 7th, 7 PM at the Serra School. See back page.

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is a parent cooperative Kindergarten thru 5th grade located on Arlington Blvd. in Richmond. For tickets or info contact Scott Gelfand 510/235-4353 or e-mail scott@thebuddyclu.com

Down and dirty at MV Park

The native plant demonstration garden at Mira Vista Park, planted by Friends of Baxter Creek, is ready for a thorough weeding. If you are an FOBC member (or just like to play in the dirt) please come to the park and give a hand on Saturday, March 12, 9 AM to 12 PM.

Volunteers under 18 are welcome but must bring a waiver signed by a parent. For more information, call Nel at 237-2036. For directions or waiver, go to www.creativedifferences.com/baxtercreek/announce.html

West County more wired everyday

If you have Internet access, you can keep track of some important goings-on around the area. For instance, if you're interested in Mira Vista school construction, go to our school district's index of construction projects, at www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/sb/packets/february/021505_status_reports/feb_15_sr_index.htm.

Looking for a cheap date? Consider a play, movie, music or lecture at Contra Costa College. Aim your browser at www.contracosta.edu, and select Campus Calendar for a month-by-month calendar listing of activities.

And of course, for the latest on East Richmond activities visit our site at www.eastrichmond.org.

Adult School registration

Thinking of boning up on your needlepoint, auto repair, or cooking? The West Contra Costa County Adult Education Serra Campus, where we hold our meetings, probably can teach you what you need to know. Registration for Spring courses begins Saturday, March 19. For more information or directions, call 510/215-4666. The West County Adult Ed website is www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/ADULTED/.

Natives garden tour

The Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour is seeking volunteers who will spend a morning or afternoon greeting tour participants and answering questions at this native plant garden tour. More than 50 gardens located throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties will be showcased on this tour, which will take place on Sun-

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Community-Involved Policing kick-off at next meeting

Across the country, communities like ours are succeeding in reducing crime and disorder through an approach to policing called community-involved policing (CIP).

This approach focuses on *preventing*, not just reacting to, crime. That doesn't mean that under CIP, the police do not rush out to a crime in progress or arrest drug dealers, and so forth. It does mean that, in addition to those necessary responses, the police and residents work together to prevent crimes from happening in the first place.

That brings us to the second thing that makes CIP different from traditional policing: the police and the community work in *partnership*. In the CIP approach, a police officer works with a group of residents over months and years. Together they identify problems to address, analyze their causes, and then develop an action plan to reduce or eliminate each problem. The plan specifies things the police will do, things that residents will do, and often, things that other city departments and local agencies will do.

For instance, the community may agree to promote creation of more neighborhood watch groups and distribute flyers about preventing property crimes. The police agree to increase patrols at a particular time of day, and routinely visit store owners to make sure they promptly report loitering. And the public school administration agrees to a more proactive approach to truancy.

Officer Andre Hill, a 10-year veteran of the Richmond Police Department, has been assigned to our neighborhood council. Like his predecessors, Officer Hill will review the previous month's crime statistics at each ERNC meeting. But Officer Hill and Police Department management promise a new emphasis on CIP.

At our March meeting, we will work with Officer Hill to identify three classes of crimes or misdemeanors as being of top priority for our area. This will be the beginning of a process that will gradually reduce the incidence of car thefts and burglaries, home break-ins, or whatever other issues people feel we need to tackle.

January calls to the Richmond Police

These are calls to the Richmond Police Department, between Jan. 1st and Jan. 31st, provided by the Sergeant Austin of the RPD. This report shows calls made, not necessarily crimes committed. Calls for incidents at commercial establishments are not included here, only those made concerning possible crimes against persons or personal property.

Abandoned auto

10 reported

Stolen vehicle

10 reported

Hit/run property damage

01/14 8XX Amador

Calls concerning dogs

01/29 52XX Nevin

Robbery

01/22 52XX McBryde

Burglary from auto

01/02 53XX Zara

01/10 10XX Lassen

01/14 6XX Sonoma

01/17 54XX Carlston

01/17 121XX San Pablo

01/17 7XX Yuba

Burglary from Residence

01/13 53XX Zara

01/18 51XX Macdonald

01/31 50XX McBryde

01/31 54XX Clinton

Petty theft/stolen property

01/11 5XX McLaughlin

01/23 Nevin/Key

01/29 121XX San Pablo

01/31 123XX San Pablo

Vandalism

01/05 51XX Macdonald

Juveniles causing disturbance

01/04 52XX Esmond

01/24 7XX Kern

01/27 8XX Sonoma

contacts



You can find many more phone numbers for public services on our web site: www.eastrichmond.org.

Emergency 911
Crime in progress, medical emergency

To report suspicious activity
In city limits, Richmond Police
Dispatch: 233-1214
In unincorporated area 925/646-2441

Report anonymous tips 232-TIPS

East Richmond's primary beat officer
Offcr. Andre Hill: 620-6642

General security concerns, other police services:
RPD Watch Commander: 620-6643

Neighborhood Council concerns
Kathy Scharff 237-2297

Report blight or graffiti
Richmond blight abatement 231-3010
CalTrans (graffiti) 925-926-6112

this issue of Views

Contributors

Nel Benningshof, Nick Despota, Andy Pasternack and Glenn Stephenson contributed to this issue. Crime statistics are furnished by Sergeant Austin of the RPD.

Production and Mailing

Graphics and layout by Nick Despota. Duplication provided by the City of Richmond, City Manager's office. Glenn and Karen Stephenson fold and label the newsletters for mailing.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to Views are free but a donation is requested. To get on our mailing list, please use the form on the right.

Articles and News

The ERNC newsletter is a great way to publicize your neighborhood event. Our deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication. We will make every effort to include your information. Contact Andy at 233-6673 or via e-mail at levinack@hotmail.com.

View Views on-line

Want to see a recent issue of Views? Visit our web site at www.eastrichmond.org

Richmond Main Street, continued from page 1

Even as businesss have departed for Hilltop, a new downtown Richmond has sustained as a neighborhood that includes a commercial district that provides convenience and specialty retail and services to residents and office workers in the Iron Triangle and nearby neighborhoods. Downtown also has arts and cultural offerings that attract Richmond residents and visitors from the entire East Bay region.

What downtown Richmond doesn't have is much in the way of grocery stores, bookstores, cafes, movie theaters and other earmarks of a livable downtown. This is where the Main Street Initiative comes in. Unlike Ghiradelli, Richmond's Main Street Initiative doesn't portend a big glitzy development. Instead, its wants to cultivate a thriving and walkable commercial neighborhood to serve those who already live in the area. Accomplishing this will require strengthening downtown's economic base through business retention, targeted recruitment, social entrepreneurship and financing, trend monitoring and education, and new development. The initiative produces special events to attract shoppers, new businesses and employees from the local businesses. It is implementing physical improvements such as streetscape upgrades and building re-use, to spur broader rehabilitation downtown, striving to be a nice place to walk and just hang out. It also works with police and code enforcement personnel to promptly tackle blight and safety problems that impede commercial district usage and development.

Through the financial thick and thins of Richmond, the Main Street Initiative has plowed ahead. This past winter, one of the grimmest in the city's history, the Initiative sponsored a series of visioning workshops, in which local citizens had a chance to express what kinds of commercial development they would like to see. Most importantly, the organization provides practical advice to its members – now numbering more than 50 businesses – on ways to strengthen their presence in the community. For example, during the fall, the Main Street Initiative brought in a consultant to help its members understand how to leverage the holiday season. The consultant conducted a workshop on marketing design, and on how to decorate and set up a festive mood for holidays. The Main Street Initiative sponsored a free holiday festival for families. December also saw the Initiative launching a mural project at Macdonald and 8th street. The Initiative is in the process of replacing benches and trash receptacles in the area.

The newest sign of a changing downtown is the major residential center at the BART station, Metrowalk. This so-called transit village has the capability to catalyze development along Macdonald Avenue and rebuild the downtown as a lively, 24-hour neighborhood. According to Ramona Samuels, executive director of the Richmond Main Street Initiative, the first 100 Metrowalk homes sold quickly, and more are being contemplated.

Each year, the Richmond Main Street Initiative is taking new steps in the direction of true neighborhood renewal. You can participate, and should. The Initiative holds quarterly meetings in February, May, August, and November. In the coming months, the Initiative will plan the next Music on the Main summer concert series, as well as Carnival, both events that will be held in the downtown area, just a few blocks from the Richmond Bart station. The group is always looking for volunteers to help plan these and other events, and to represent the community's voice. For more information on how to get involved, call 236 4050. After all, it's your downtown.

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day, May 1st. Select the garden you want to spend time at by visiting the "Preview the Gardens" section at www.Bringing-BackTheNatives.net. For more information, contact Kathy Kramer at Kathy@KathyKramerConsulting.net or call 510/236-9558.

Pacific Academy

Shopping for a private school for your child? Pacific Academy is a Richmond coeducational, non-sectarian day school for students in Preschool-Grade 8. For more

than 40 years, the school has strived to prepare students for higher education and the responsibilities of community life. The academic program is balanced by courses in visual arts, music, drama, physical education, and computer technology. The average class size is 16. Extended care, field trips, and books are included in the tuition. The school has two campuses, on Carlson Blvd. And the other on Technology Court. For more information, call 510/262-2600 ex. 208, or visit www.pacificacademy.com.

at the next ERNC meeting

**Community-involved policing launches
New commercial developments on Macdonald and San Pablo avenues**

- ▶ We will work with Officer Andre Hill, our new community police officer, to identify three persistent issues that our group wants to address in the next 12 months. Please see article on page 2 for more detail.
- ▶ We also welcome back Judy Battle, of the Richmond Planning Dept., to update us on the status of the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise at Barrett & San Pablo, and the "I-80-Macdonald" shopping center slated for the former Wards site.

This is a very important meeting for those who want to learn more about, and help shape, the future of East Richmond. We encourage you to attend.



In consideration of residents around the school, please park on the Sonoma Street or in the school parking lot. Thanks.

Monday, March 7th, 7 PM

Serra Adult School
6028 Ralston Avenue

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