

### quick-takes

#### Extreme makeover, hometown style

Is Richmond the next Emeryville? Nah — but even so, from one end of Macdonald to the other, and from San Francisco Bay to San Pablo Bay, Richmond is in the midst of an astonishing number of redevelopment efforts. Some seem to start and stop at such irregular intervals, it is easy to forget that little by little, and for better or worse, much of our city is getting a makeover.

There are currently eight major initiatives, many of them clusters of smaller initiatives. These are the Ford Plant, Campus Bay Business Park; Campus Bay Residential Village; East Macdonald Avenue Streetscape Improvements; Macdonald 80 Shopping Center; Macdonald Avenue Economic Revitalization Plan; Marina Bay Westshore; Marina Northshore Village Square; and the Richmond Main Street Initiative.

Reading technical specifications may not be your idea of a good time, but for an overview of the individual projects, set your browser to [www.ci.richmond.ca.us/~CED/redevelopment/projects.html](http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/~CED/redevelopment/projects.html).

Speaking of development, we should be seeing a new Target at Macdonald near 80 — in about 18 months. Demolition of the old Wards building is scheduled to start this spring, and a store should be going up by the fall, 2006. Among the store's neighbors will be a new 30,000-square foot Ross store. The City is pitching in with \$3 million in streetscape improvements: new lighting, new sidewalks and curbs, benches, some landscaping, and so forth.

In related news, the planned start for a cultural plan and public art master plan that is part of the Macdonald Avenue revitalization has been withdrawn due to ongoing budget repair. The Art Commission's intention is to re-issue it when the City's financial status improves, says commission head Michelle Seville. We will keep you posted.

*(continues on p.2)*

#### Protecting our water without leaving your home

**W**ater: we bathe in it, drink it, cook with it. It is a source of both winter and summer recreation. It is the main component of our bodies. Doesn't it make sense to keep it clean? While we think of ourselves as consumers of water, there is in fact much we can do to protect it. At a recent ERNC meeting, we hosted Lynn Scarpa, from Richmond's Pretreatment Program, pointed out that everyday activities such as driving, yard work and washing your car can have an impact on our water quality. She offered some easy suggestions to avoid contaminating our most important resource.

Never put yard waste in storm drains. Although leaves and organic waste are biodegradable, their breakdown process robs valuable oxygen from the water, stressing and killing fish and other aquatic life. Compost grass clippings, yard waste and other biodegradable materials (e.g., banana peels and eggshells), and you will return valuable nutrients and moisture to the soil. Another alternative: put yard waste in your green recycling bin.

Over use of pesticide products is not healthy for your garden or the environment. Use these products sparingly, follow the instructions on the label, and avoid applying these products on rainy or windy days. Better yet, use less toxic alternatives. This will help prevent run-off into storm drains and our waterways. When the pesticide container you're using is almost empty, rinse it and your application equipment at least three times and pour that diluted mix on your lawn. If an accidental spill happens, cover the area with sawdust or kitty litter, sweep it into a plastic garbage bag and take it to a household hazardous waste facility.

*(continues on p.3)*

#### What the crime stats tell us — and don't

By Nick Despota

**M**any neighborhood councils publish newsletters and most, if not all, include monthly crime statistics. It's not surprising. A 1999 survey of our own readership determined which of all the columns and story types we routinely carried people most preferred. Top-ranked content: crime data.

Never mind that the perennial popularity of TV law and order shows confirms the preferences of 172 East Richmondites. Given our survey results, you should understand what our crime statistics do and do not indicate.

There are four features of this data to keep in mind: the difference between calls and reports, the time frame, the geographic area, and the distinction between residential and commercial incidents.

#### Calls versus Reports

The Richmond Police Department furnishes neighborhood councils with a monthly report, broken out by day, of all *calls* made to the Department concerning actual or suspected incidents. This is not the same as *reports* filed by police officers. There may be a fewer or greater number of calls than reports because not all crimes prompt phone calls, and not all phone calls report actual crimes.

Obvious question: Why then doesn't the RPD provide data on police reports rather than calls from the public? Answer: the City's statistical software can only generate summaries on crime reports that are aggregated citywide, not according to neighborhood boundaries. This, we're told, is a defect of the software purchased a couple years ago at a cost of some \$2 million.

*(continues on p.2)*

### next meeting

Monday, May 2nd. 7 PM. Serra Adult School. See back page for agenda.

**quick-takes***continued from page 1***Another Reason to Shop Online**

ShopfortheLibrary.net is an exciting new web site that makes it easy for you to support the Richmond Library by simply doing your usual online shopping. Over 750 online retailers have signed on to donate a percentage of purchases to the public library of your choice.

It's easy to participate in this program. First, go to the web site and register to direct the share from your purchases to go to the Richmond Public Library. Second, either continue with your regular shopping from the web site or download Library Autotrack. Autotrack is a small piece of software that will alert and registered retailer to set aside a commission for the library. This software is not spyware and is completely safe to use. Visit the website and read the FAQ to find out more.

**When she says "Shhh," people listen**

Friends of the Richmond Public Library are sponsoring a talk by Susan Hildreth, California State Librarian, on May 23 at 7 PM. The event will be in the Madeleine Whittlesey Community Room adjacent to the main library at 325 Civic Center Plaza. All are invited to attend. Find out how Ms. Hildreth became State Librarian, what the State Librarian does and more!

**Throw the book at them**

The Friends of the Richmond Public Library are seeking book donations for their book sales. If you have books that are in good condition please drop them off in the donation bin in the main library 325 Civic Center Plaza. If you are unable to take your books to the library, contact Ellen Liebman at 644-4296.

**Richmond's past, on exhibit**

From its earliest beginnings, the history of Richmond has been characterized by a succession of dramatic changes: native peoples, Spanish colonists, Californios, gold-rush driven immigrants, land-grabbing and farming, pre-war development, Kaiser era industrialization, social upheaval in the 1950s and 60s, blight, and the promise of renewal. The ripples of time still reverberate. Explore this history at the Richmond Museum of History. With both permanent and current exhibits, whatever your interests or attachment to our city, you will learn something and be pleasantly surprised. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 1 - 4 PM. For more information, call 235-7387.

*(QuickTakes continue on p.3)***Crime Stats, continued from page 1**

Our community police officer, André Hill, now brings to our meetings a map showing actual reported crimes in the previous month. He extracts the data manually.

So here's a lesson: If you want to know the actual incidence of crime within our neighborhood's city boundaries, come to the meetings. But as we always report, crime is relatively low in East Richmond, marked by occasional spikes that prompt a flurry of preventive steps by residents and an occasional start-up of a block watch group. In March, there were no house break-ins reported, a welcome piece of news.

**Time frame**

What you're reading now was written about 2 weeks ago (unless you're reading it at [www.eastrichmond.org](http://www.eastrichmond.org), posted on April 18th). It takes about 2 weeks for newsletter duplication, folding, labeling, and delivery — not exactly hot-off-the-press — to your mailbox.

Because we like to report the data by month, not by the previous 4 weeks, we go back to the month prior to the time of writing. So this month, May, we are publishing March crime data.

Again, want more current crime data? Come to the meetings.

**Residential v. commercial incidents**

Check cashing fraud, theft from supermarkets, loitering around liquor stores: these and similar incidents at commercial establishments are more or less constant. Because we assume that our readers are most interested in residential property and personal crime, we exclude from our statistics property incidents at locations along the east side of San Pablo and the 4900 block of Macdonald.

**Geographic area**

Our statistics *do* include the area between San Pablo Avenue and I-80, including the few blocks north of McBryde within city boundaries. (We were unsure about this and confirmed that the current stats, below, now include these areas.) The statistics also includes the area east of I-80 between McBryde and Barrett within city boundaries. The data does *not* include areas of our neighborhood outside of Richmond city limits.

*(continues on p.3)***incidents reported to Richmond Police**

Crime report for March 1 – 31, 2005. These entries represent calls for service, rather than reports. We have begun to include additional reporting districts in the monthly crime report (see story, above) which explains what seems like a spike in calls — especially on abandoned cars. These statistics were furnished by Perry Austin of the Richmond Policy, Crime Statistics Department.

**Vehicles**

- 31 abandoned autos
- 11 stolen vehicles
- 4 recovered stolen vehicles

**Hit/run property damage**

- 03/04 Clinton/San Pablo
- 03/06 57XX Solano
- 03/25 San Pablo/Macdonald

**Battery**

- 03/09 Macdonald/San Pablo

**Burglary from auto**

- 03/01 9XX Ventura
- 03/18 55XX Yuba
- 03/21 7XX Lassen
- 03/28 129XX San Pablo

**Petty theft/stolen property**

- 03/10 51XX Solano
- 03/22 6XX Lassen
- 03/05 49XX Macdonald
- 03/08 54XX Sierra

**Vandalism**

- 03/08 122XX San Pablo
- 03/28 Lassen/Clinton
- 03/14 6XX Ventura
- 03/15 124XX San Pablo
- 03/26 6XX Humboldt

**Juveniles causing disturbance**

- 03/30 8XX Sonoma
- 03/30 5XX McLaughlin

## contacts



Find many more phone numbers, as well as e-mail and web links for public services at our web site [www.eastrichmond.org](http://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 and Sergeant**  
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:** Nick Despota, and Andy Pasternack contributed to this issue. Crime statistics are furnished by Sergeant Austin of the RPD.

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**Subscriptions:** Subscriptions to Views are free but a donation is requested. To get on our mailing list, please mail a request to ERNC, PO Box 5253, Richmond, CA 94805. Be sure to clearly print your name and address on your request.

**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](mailto:levinack@hotmail.com).

## Protecting our water, continued from page 1

Do you doubt that your own use of small quantities of pesticide can make a difference? Consider this: Up to 80 percent of all stormwater pollution is the result of improper residential practices. Many home gardeners use pesticides at 20 times the rate farmers do. About 90 percent of the insects on your lawn are not harmful. Pesticides can be harmful to your children or pets. One ladybug may eat as many as five thousand aphids in a lifetime. One hundred percent of stormwater that runs off into creeks, the Delta and the Bay is untreated.

Enough said about that – for now.

Remember what you did with that empty spray paint can or bleach bottle? Hmm. Allowing household hazardous waste (HHW) to get into storm drains can cause harm to the environment, pets and your children. Putting it down the storm drains, on the ground, in the trash or down the sink or toilet can contaminate our water. Next time, take it to a household hazardous waste facility. Never put HHW in storm drains.

Now, lets talk about your car. We're not pointing fingers, but in the last few years, thousands of gallons of used motor oil have been dumped into storm drains by Contra Costa County residents. Take used oil, antifreeze, filters and other automobile fluids in a sealed container to a gas station or oil changing site with a recycling program. Recycled oil has an astonishing number of uses. It takes 42 gallons of crude oil, but only one gallon of used oil, to produce 2.5 quarts of new, high-quality lubricating oil. But dumped into the water supply, that gallon of used oil destroys as much fresh water as 50 people use in a year.

The bottom line is, even if you hate organic food and won't go near a hybrid car, there is so much you can easily do to keep the water clean. Simply properly dispose of pesticides, hazardous household waste, oil, and other substances, and you are most of the way there. For much more information about implementing these suggestions, Contra County has a site dedicated to providing information and advice about clean water, at <http://www.cccleanwater.org>.

## Crime Stats, continued from page 2

### Credit where credit's due

Andy Pasternack, our newsletter editor, assumes the thankless (until now) job of sorting through the many pages of crime data he picks-up from the RPD each month, translating the numeric codes to plain English crime categories, re-listing the incidents by those categories, and finally e-mailing that compilation to Nick Despota before calm-on-the-surface Nick throws a deadline fit. So thank you, Andy. We also thank Sergeant Perry Austin, who provides the monthly data and has always been prompt and more than cooperative.

And the last thank you to you, readers, for taking the preventive steps that protect your home and car, and will help keep East Richmond among the safest neighborhoods in our city.

## quick-takes

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### Education Fund honors teachers

The WCCUSD Education Fund will honor six teachers and two community members at the 17th Annual Teaching Excellence Awards Banquet, on Saturday, May 14. The recipients of the 2005 Teaching Excellence Awards are: Wendy Gonzalez, Ford Elementary School; Gay Grieger-Lods, Wilson Elementary School; Linda Reimann, Nystrom Elementary School; Saveth Soun, Adams Middle School; Linda Takimoto, Castro Elementary School; and Victoria Tukeva, Richmond High School. The recipients of the 2005 Distinguished Citizen Awards are Tammera Campbell and Tom Carson.

The Awards Banquet will be held at

the Richmond Convention Center, Civic Center Plaza, Richmond. There will be a silent and live auction and hors d'ouvres reception at 5:00 p.m., followed by dinner, entertainment, and awards presentations at 7 PM. Tickets are \$50 for adults, \$20 for presently enrolled WCCUSD students, and \$500 for Table Sponsors (seats 8). Proceeds will benefit annual Ed. Fund programs for WCCUSD teachers and schools. Ticket requests must be made by May 4. Make checks payable to Ed. Fund Banquet and mail to: The Ed. Fund

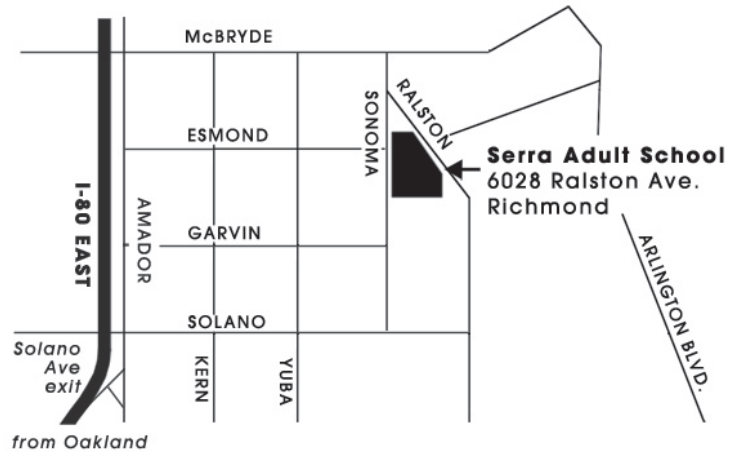
5 Alvarado Square, San Pablo, CA 94806. To view the Banquet flier, go to [http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/news/Apple\\_Bites/2005/EdFundBanquet2005.pdf](http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/news/Apple_Bites/2005/EdFundBanquet2005.pdf)

at the next ERNC meeting  
**the Macdonald 80 Project**

*In case you've been trapped in a cave during the past year, let's take this opportunity to inform you that the former site of Montgomery Wards is on its way to becoming a major shopping center, expected to bring new life to our end of the Macdonald Avenue corridor.*

*At our next meeting a representative from the Planning Department will update us on the ambitious plan. (If you missed the meeting 2 months ago when this presentation was slated, no problem. Due to a mistake on our part, the presenter did not appear.)*

*Mark your calendar. This project will dramatically change the local commercial landscape; take this opportunity to learn about it.*



**Monday, May 2nd, 7 PM**

Serra Adult School  
6028 Ralston Ave.

RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATING COUNCIL  
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Richmond, CA 94808

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