

Views

Richmond Heights Neighborhood Council

Visit us at www.richmond-heights.org Jovanka Beckles, President • P.O. Box 5253 • Richmond, CA 94805

quick-takes

Postal Service Changes

For the Bulk Mailing that we use to mail out this newsletter the Postal Service has made two changes recently. The first began in November when we were informed that we need to allow the Postal Service more time to get the newsletters out to all of you. The second began March 18th when all bulk mail is supposed to have "any name or current resident" or just simply "current resident" above the address so that they are not returned to sender.

Gina is updating our labels with the current information that people send to her, so if your name needs to be corrected on the mailing list you can e-mail her at gdm2win@aol.com or mail a request to P.O. Box 5253, Richmond, CA 94805.

CCCT's 50th Anniversary

This invitation from the Theatre Management and staff is the Kick off Event! On April 25, 2009 from 2-4 pm.

Price: \$20 (includes wine and hors d'oeuvres).

Tickets Online: www.ccct.org

Tickets by phone: 510/524-9012.

Be among the first to hear about the shows to for the next season, and meet the directors. Mingle with board members, staff, and members of the CCCT. Be entertained with numbers from past and future musicals.

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Shotspotter in Richmond

By Katherine Tam, West County Times

Richmond police are adding a new tool to their crime fighting arsenal: acoustic sensors that can pinpoint the location of a gunshot in a matter of seconds.

Officials are bringing the Shotspotter Gunshot Detection & Location System to a troubled 3 square mile area that includes the North Richmond, Iron Triangle, Santa Fe, Coronado, Pullman and Stege neighborhoods.

Officers, who tested the product last year, say it will help them respond to shootings faster, catch shooters and reduce injuries or deaths.

But officials acknowledge that the Shotspotter is not a cure all for crime.

Richmond will be the first city in Contra Costa to install the Shotspotter, and the fifth in the Bay Area. The city is paying \$728,250 for the system.

The Shotspotter uses up to 20 sensors per square mile to capture the sound of a gunshot. It determines the location, plots it on a map and routes it to dispatchers, who alert officers. The system is exact enough that it can provide a building address or even say if the shot is fired 10 feet from the back of a building.

The sound of gunfire is recorded and can be replayed to determine how many shots were fired. This information officers use to figure out whether they are dealing with a single shooter or multiple shooters as they approach a scene.

Officials can also use the audio and forensic evidence in their investigations and prosecutions. And they can use the database to track where shootings occur and where patrols should be focused.

Thirty five cities across the nation have used the system. Redwood City was the first in the Bay Area in 1996. In San Francisco, the Shotspotter has led to a number of arrests at the scene, said Mikail Ali of the mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. And in one case, where the site of the shooting was different from where the victim was found, police were able to collect evidence from the first site because the Shotspotter gave the location.

The system notifies officers of shootings that otherwise would go unreported. "Dispatchers at 911 receive calls on about 20 percent of the shootings popping up on Shotspotter," Ali said.

"The location of gunfire is delivered within 10 seconds," Ali said adding, "I've seen it as accurate as 5 to 10 feet, if not more accurate than that."

Ali suggested cities use fiber optic lines and a wireless system for greater speed. San Francisco plans to install the mapping tools in police cars so officers are notified immediately when a shot is fired; Ali said he recommends the same for other cities.

"This is not going to stop crime in and of its self, but it's an incredible tool in that effort," Ali said.

next meeting

See back page for agenda

quick-takes

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CCCT's 50th Anniversary

And learn about all of the festivities planned for the golden anniversary, including the unveiling of a very special piece of artwork created just for CCCT.

Order your tickets NOW. They'll go fast! And these 50th Anniversary events will have specific dates posted as the information is available:

March/2010 - Grand Gala

July/2010 - Cast Reunion Party

For more information about the Contra Costa County Theatre go to the web site www.ccct.org or call 510/524-9012

Crime Prevention Meeting

The following items were brought up at a crime prevention meeting in March.

Residential burglaries are up in our city. These burglaries are happening mostly during the day time and are committed by truant youths. Please be aware of your surroundings and take the appropriate precautions. If you see any youth behaving suspiciously during school hours please call the police at 233-1214 to report them. Try to give a good description of the individuals.

Recycling theft is up. If you choose to give recyclable items to others it should not be in or cause a mess around the blue bin.

If you see any street lights that are out, please get the pole numbers and report them to the Public Works Department by phone at 307-8091 or you can use Cor Connect on the City of Richmond website at <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/>.

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.

New Fish Eating Guidelines

State officials released new safety guidelines for eating fish caught at the San Pablo Reservoir.

The report from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment relied on studies by the California Dept. of Fish and Game and the EBMUD to replace previous guidelines issued by Contra Costa County.

The new guidelines recommend that women from the ages of 18 to 45 and children can eat up to five servings per week of rainbow trout or up to two servings per week of black crappie, and should not eat any of the bass from the reservoir. Men over 17 and women over 45 can eat up to five servings of black crappie or rainbow trout or one serving per week of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass or spotted bass. Everyone should avoid eating catfish and carp caught in the reservoir.

Fish taken from the reservoir contain mercury, as well as other contaminants, including dieldrin, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Although both chemicals are no longer used, they can persist in the environment and are still found in some fish.

Federal stimulus and Homelessness

Richmond leaders welcomed federal stimulus money in March 2009 aimed at preventing homelessness as more and more residents fight to keep their jobs and houses.

The aid will go toward housing assistance, keeping people in their homes or quickly getting them in different housing. It marks the third federal boost to homeless and housing programs in the past year for Contra Costa County, largely focusing on families facing homelessness for the first time.

Philip Mangano, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness executive director at a Concord news conference said "Let's stop the human tragedy before it begins."

The money comes as the number of known homeless people has declined but a less visible group is thought to be growing. Despite the poor economy, Contra Costa's biennial homeless count dropped 8 percent from two years ago, from 4,157 individuals in 2007 to 3,830 in 2009.

In February 2009, the Department of Housing and Urban Development increased its homeless assistance award to Contra Costa by almost 20 percent, providing \$9 million. The increase in funds, the largest for any county in California, will go to existing programs and two new ones: housing for chronic homeless with disabilities and rapid rehousing for families. The latter, a pilot project introduced to two dozen sites across the country, will offer 18 months of housing and supportive services to families who have recently lost their housing.

Over the summer of 2008, President Bush signed the Neighborhood Stabilization Program allotting \$3.3 million for Richmond to purchase blighted foreclosures.

Fourth of July without Fireworks

Richmond city leaders are trying to determine if they need to nix the July 3 fireworks show and switch to a laser light show, to avoid disturbing endangered brown pelicans roosting on nearby Brooks Island.

contacts



You'll find many more phone numbers, as well as e-mail links for public services at our website, www.richmond-heights.org

Emergency 911

Crime in progress, medical

To report suspicious activity

Richmond Police 233-1214
Unincorporated area 925/646-2441
Anonymous tips 232-TIPS

Community Police Officer

Officer Tim Gard 621-1212 ex 7099
e-mail tgard@richmondpd.net

General security concerns, other police services

RP Watch Commander 620-6643
Michelle Milam 620-6538

Neighborhood Council issues

Jovanka Beckles 813-7008

Report blight and graffiti

Richmond Graffiti 231-3010
Volunteer to remove 231-3031
CalTrans 925/926-6112

Report abatement issues

Auto on Private land 621-1278
Auto on Public land 620-6644
Alma Munguia 621-1279
Pot Hole Repair 231-3011

As always we are looking for community events for the newsletter. If you know of an event coming up, let us know at five weeks before the beginning of the month of the event. E-mail owenlmartin@earthlink.net with your articles. Contributions and articles are most welcome. This is your newsletter.

Neighborhood Meetings

The meeting schedule below may change July 6 for August 3 depending on the schools schedule.

4-May-09

1-Jun-09

Calls for service to the Richmond Police

Calls made to the Richmond Police become Statistics provided to us each month by Crime analysis of RPD, whose support and assistance we continue to appreciate.

Suspicious person 22
Suspicious vehicle 10
Abandoned auto 5
Recovered stolen vehicle 5
Vehicle tampering none
Disturbance 23
911 Disconnect 6
Dogs 2
Dumping 2
Stolen vehicle 5

2/24 10XX Lassen
2/25 123XX San Pablo
2/26 126XX San Pablo
3/08 54XX Clinton
3/09 9XX Humboldt

Hit/Run property damage

2/18 121XX San Pablo
2/27 McBryde / Lassen
3/04 54XX Clinton
3/05 Solano / San Pablo
3/09 49XX Macdonald
3/10 Solano / San Pablo
3/13 126XX San Pablo

Burglary from auto

2/16 52XX Garvin
2/20 8XX Humboldt
2/20 9XX Humboldt
2/23 8XX Lassen
2/27 6XX Humboldt
2/27 53XX Clinton
3/12 5XX Key
3/12 5XX Key

Burglary from business

2/25 127XX San Pablo

Hold up alarm

2/26 122XX San Pablo
3/05 48XX Macdonald

Robbery

3/15 Macdonald / San Pablo

Petty theft/stolen property

3/08 48XX Macdonald
3/15 49XX Macdonald

Grand theft

3/12 McBryde / San Pablo

Battery

2/19 Barrett / San Pablo
2/25 McBryde / San Pablo
3/09 121XX San Pablo
3/11 125XX San Pablo

Assault w/ deadly weapon

3/13 45XX Barrett

Shots fired

2/17 9XX Kern
2/18 55XX Esmond
3/07 6XX Sonoma
3/08 Solano / Yuba
3/09 55XX Esmond

Calls related to juveniles

2/19 49XX Roosevelt
3/04 9XX Kern
3/05 8XX Kern

Vandalism

2/24 122XX San Pablo
2/24 53XX McBryde
2/28 121XX San Pablo
3/09 4XX Key
3/15 50XX Barrett

Burglary from residence

2/19 8XX Humboldt
3/09 6XX Ventura
3/10 7XX Amador

Amendment to Graffiti Ordinance

At the January 20, 2009 City Council meeting there was a reduction to the amount of time that property owners have to abate graffiti on their property from seven days to three days. If the graffiti has not been abated within three days of notification, the Public Works staff may abate the graffiti and bill the cost to the property owner. For more info <http://bpc.iserver.net/codes/richmond/index.htm>

Wastewater Agency Has New Solar Array

Like a field of giant robotic butterflies 89 dual-axis sun-tracking solar panels grace the West County Wastewater District Treatment Plant, just off Richmond Parkway in Richmond.

The solar project, which came on line in December after about two years of planning and five months of construction, allows the agency to produce and use 35 percent clean solar power to process water for the 100,000 customers of the district that encompasses San Pablo, unincorporated communities and portions of Richmond and Pinole.

The installation, the largest group of dual axis trackers in the country, according to Shalaby, general manager of the wastewater district, is the result of a partnership with North Bay based Solar Power Partners, which owns and maintains the system of interconnected panels, and Sacramento based Premier Power, which built and engineered the installation. Dual axis trackers move east to west, tracking the sun's daily journey across the sky, and tilt north to south to match the seasonal angle of the sun. The system was more expensive than one using fixed panels, but the dual axis panels produce about 40 percent more energy than fixed panels.

The panels' concrete bases can move up to 15 degrees without affecting efficiency, important, since most of the panels are positioned on Bay mud, which shifts constantly.

The panels and bases can operate for years and then be dismantled with no trace of environmental impact, according to Solar Power Partners Marketing Communications Manager Sierra Fong.

The arrays produce extra power in the summer when it's sunnier, and the wastewater district gets meter credit for what it doesn't use. That makes up for winter demand, when the installation does not produce as much, Shalaby said, and it allows the district to send power back to the grid.

A contract that the district and Solar Power Partners signed in the fall guarantees power for 20 years at a fixed rate comparable to what Pacific Gas & Electric charges now.

This makes it easier to predict the yearly budget, Shalaby said. The district sets wastewater rates according to the previous year's prices, so if the cost of power spikes, the agency must pass the increase on to customers. A stable price of power helps prevent rate increases.

Solar power was an obvious solution, Shalaby said, but the cost of building and engineering a system was prohibitive, particularly because the district, a public agency, did not qualify for a tax credit from PG&E. The power purchase agreement with Solar Power Partners enabled the district to receive the credit and use it to lower the cost of the project. The district, and therefore ratepayers, did not have to pony up for the installation; Solar Power Partners footed the bill. Shalaby said the agreement between Solar Power and the district does not detail the exact price.

At the end of the 20 year contract, the wastewater district can renew, buy the system for a predetermined price of \$3.5 million or have the panels removed at no cost.

The system produces 1 megawatt per day, enough to power three average homes, according to EPA comparisons.

"It was actually quite a feat," said Al Orozco, project manager for Premier Power. "We had a small army working out there tirelessly to get this done by the deadline."

Connecting the several small groups of panels electrically took 10 miles of conduit and 30 miles of wire, Orozco said.

The wastewater district is no stranger to environmental stewardship, operating as one of the top 100 treatment plants out of about 6,000 across the nation. Last year, it was awarded the platinum award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, which goes to plants that have treated water above state standards every day for five consecutive years.

The district also has paired with the East Bay Municipal Utility District, which built a facility that filters out more impurities from the already processed water from the district, and then sends this reclaimed water to Chevron to cool pipes in its processing plant. Previously, Shalaby said, Chevron used drinking water for this purpose.

Richmond Teen Weight Lifter Grabs More Accolades

A record setting 15 year old weight lifter named Freddy Boza, a sophomore at De Anza High School who has Down syndrome, still came away with a gold medal March 14 at the AAU Western United States Bench Press/Dead lift Championships at San Jose City College.

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Richmond Teen Weight Lifter Grabs More Accolades

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Boza, who stands 4 feet 11 inches tall, weighs 110 pounds and has the build of a gymnast, could compete in the handicap division at tournaments, but instead enters the open division competition. On Feb. 28, he set a state mark for boys in his age and weight class, which he equaled with a 135 pound lift in the San Jose meet. Boza bench pressed 141 pounds on his final try at the meet but was disqualified because he started the lift before the judge's signal.

The teenager's success has made him known both in local weight lifting circles and at school. Since an article appeared in the Times this month about his accomplishments, "People have asked for his autograph and come to congratulate him," said Salvatore Morabito, Boza's special education teacher.

At the AAU tournament, "Everybody was happy to see him there and was very supportive," said Philip Crawford, the meet director and a professor at San Jose City College. "He's a great kid, and he did a wonderful job."

Boza hopes to next compete at an upcoming contest at the famed Muscle Beach, the weightlifting capital in Southern California's Venice, said Morabito, who trains with his student daily in the weight room at De Anza community college. Boza's goal is to work his way up to 175 pounds and attempt to set a world record in competition before he turns 16 in September.

West County Community High School Seeks New Home

West County Community High (WCCHS), a recently opened charter school, is petitioning the City of Richmond for permission to relocate to 770 Sonoma Street at Solano Ave. in the Richmond Heights Neighborhood. WCCHS, midway through its second year of operations, is a 9-12 high school currently serving 100 students with plans to expand to between 150 and 200 students.

"WCCHS is small because our core value is community," explains Gary Einhorn, co-founder and Educational Director of WCCHS. As Mr. Einhorn describes it, the goal of WCCHS is to function as a community where everyone is valued and attention and direction is given to resolve conflicts, help students listen to one another, reduce bullying, and help students connect to their own passions."

"This goal has been more challenging than we expected, and we expected it to be tough," Einhorn continues. "All students have a desire to connect to one another and to be accepted, but they also have fears and likes and dislikes and, in the pursuit of security, they form alliances and alienate others. It isn't easy." Adding to the challenge is the tough realities of school economics, where schools are paid based on their enrollment, so small schools are automatically at a disadvantage.

WCCHS operates on a shoe string budget with dedicated teachers who often work for less than they would at other schools. Many, like Einhorn who teaches Geometry along with being a co-director, assume multiple roles at the school. Kristin Kirkman, the Administrative Director, also teaches a yearbook class and manages the school finances. "I like working here because we have a great group of kids and our staff is creative and exciting," Kirkman explains, "It's always a challenge to try to meet every goal we set for ourselves, but it is never a dull moment!" The school has no formal Sports Program, and all parents volunteer 5 hours a month to help keep the school clean and functioning properly. By moving to the site on Sonoma, WCCHS will be able to expand and thus, offer a little more, and take advantage of a full size gymnasium and several large multi-purpose rooms. Still, WCCHS will never have the resources of a district school.

However, according to Einhorn, the benefits of a small school outweigh the hardships. By working together, the feelings of community thrive, and students, no matter how much they may dislike the rules or wish they had newer books, always point to the close relationship they have with their teachers and how much they appreciate them. Visiting WCCHS at their current location in Richmond Annex, one immediately gets a sense that this school is different. Gone are metal detectors and tension in the hallway. Instead, there are hugs and smiles. There is no "corporate" mentality either. The school staff and students have a down to earth feel where everyone feels welcome.

Much of this stems from the school's associations. The philosophy of WCCHS came, in large part from a nonprofit, Peace key, which continues to support the school with curriculum and financially, and from Challenge Day, an anti bullying program which touts the importance of forming real relationships in school. There aren't many places where an administrator can give a student a 3 day suspension followed by a hug, but WCCHS hopes that such a school will soon be in the Richmond Heights Neighborhood.

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Richmond, CA 94808

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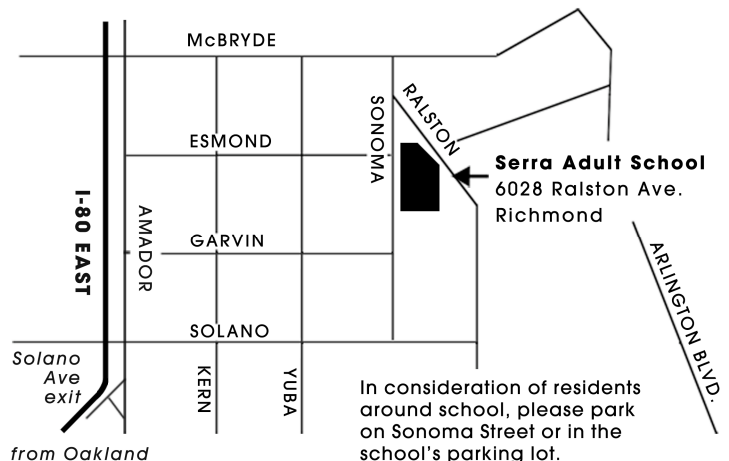
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at the next RHNC meeting

Disaster Preparedness Program

Phil Machell is the WCCC Red Cross Public Relations person and will discuss things to do and not to do to be prepared for any disasters that might happen.

Last year we talked about the Shore Line and the General Plan Update and will continue to discuss a possible resolution to be sent to the City Council concerning the Richmond Shore Line as parks and open space or as a mix of development and other uses.



Monday, May 4th, 7 PM
Serra Adult School
6028 Ralston Avenue