

quick-takes

Not a cliffhanger

In keeping with a time-honored tradition for our October elections, none of the slots for ERNC board was contested: four candidates for five open positions, all current board members. The one open slot was filled by Gina Swirsding, who volunteered to be vice-president despite her hectic schedule. Gina has helped us in many ways in the past year, so it's nice to have her officially on board.

The ERNC officers are:

Kathy Scharff	President
Gina Swirsding	Vice-president
Nick Despota	Secretary
Janette Russey	Treasurer
Andy Pasternack	Views editor

Credit where credit's due

Bob Sutcliffe has decided to step down from the ERNC president's role this year. We thank him for an exceptionally productive 12 months. He focused on important topics; for example, he organized the very successful "Challenger's Forum" of City Council candidates in August.

We appreciate all of Bob's hard work and look forward to the day when he decides to rejoin the ERNC board.

Sidewalks are for walking

Hard to challenge that claim, right? Well, not really. Too many residents challenge it every day by parking their vehicles in their driveways in a way that block sidewalks, forcing people into the street. While that's inconvenient for most of us, it's absolutely dangerous for people in wheelchairs, the elderly, and anyone with young children in tow. For that reason, it's against Richmond law.

Police Chief Bennett recently said that he would direct officers to start enforcing that law. If someone on your block is doing this, you can politely inform them that what they're doing inconveniences others and that they risk getting a \$30 fine; or you can call the Richmond Police, give the

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Respite on the Path to Success

Aristotle, the personal tutor of Alexander the Great, made sure his student had time to recharge his brain and body. For the homeless, however, that respite is hard to come by. The constant search for food, shelter, protection, and medical care—things most of us can take for granted—preoccupies homeless people to the point that they have little left to meet the challenge of changing their conditions.

Last month, those attending the ERNC meeting learned about an effective program run by Richmond resident Susan Prather, a nationally acclaimed advocate, called Fresh Start. Fresh Start is a respite and service center where people come to tend to both their minds and their bodies. Only then can they move on in a positive way to employment and housing, and achieve what they are capable of. And for the Libertarians among us, rejoice: not one cent of government funding goes into this program.

Fresh Start serves people in the Walnut Creek area. It partners with St. Paul's Episcopal Church, which donates its facility. This keeps costs low and community involvement high. The service provides a homelike atmosphere, with lunches and snacks (and a generous Thanksgiving dinner!), phones, showers and a bathtub, a washer and dryer, personalized case management, and advocacy in dealing with the tangle of agencies that distribute benefits. Fresh Start also pays union dues and buys work clothes and tools (when funds are available). In the past year Fresh Start has helped people rejoin the Carpenter's Union, Painter's Union, Laborer's Union, Operating Engineers, among others.

There is some consideration to establishing a satellite of Fresh Start in Richmond. Any President looking for a way to get people back to work need look no further than Fresh Start. For more information about this remarkable program, to make a donation, or to get involved in establishing a Richmond branch, contact the program at (925) 935-8446 or, via e-mail, at FreshStartWC@comcast.net.

Make a Woman Happy: Vote

By Andy Pasternack

Soccer moms. Security moms. Unmarried women. What do they have in common? They're all recently coined categories of voters, being courted by more suitors than Prince Charming, the Bachelor and Alfie combined.

How women vote is now the subject of intense scrutiny and analysis, as politicians come to appreciate the great diversity of interests and positions within half our population. So it's hard to believe that in the first few presidential elections of the 20th century, American women of all stripes were sidelined. Not until the fall of 1920 could women in America vote. So let's take a moment and wish a happy eightieth birthday to our nineteenth amendment, which recognized women's right to vote. It was born August 26, 1920, and is still kicking after all these years.

This is also a good time to reflect on the progress made on voting rights. The Founding Fathers intended that only landowners could vote. The amount of progress since that time is impressive but we still have a way to go. As we all saw in Florida four years ago, things can and do go terribly wrong if people aren't vigilant. Since then, many new procedures have been put into place, some of which may be as complicated as the problems they are intended to solve.

In addition to the new federal reforms, election rules and procedures vary from state to state, and even county to county. While some districts will have new voting machines, a majority of this fall's voters will use the same machines they did in the 2000 election. There is a new federal identification requirement for first-time voters who

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next meeting

Monday, November 1st. 7 PM. Serra School. 6028 Ralston Avenue. See back page.

address, and ask that the vehicle's owner be ticketed. Either way, you're helping to make our pedestrian friendly.

New Library Director

After more than a year and half under the able supervision of an acting director, Kathy Haug, the Richmond Library at last has a new permanent director.

Monique LeConge, former director of Benicia's public library, comes to us with a wealth of experience. That experience will be used to the maximum as Richmond's library continues to struggle under a 50 percent reduction in hours and more than 50 percent cut in staffing since 2003.

Monique knows well the reputation Richmond once enjoyed for having one of the best libraries in the East Bay. She is dedicated to restoring that reputation. We welcome her and will support her efforts.

Street sweeping – perpetually coming soon

Many residents are confused, some annoyed, about the City's street sweeping procedures. Signs were posted stating the day of the month when sweeping would occur and people dutifully moved their cars to the other side of the street — but there was no sweeping. What's up?

Street sweeping will begin in November. The City will place "warning tickets" on cars that are not moved on the specified day of the month. There is *no fine* — they are only warnings. However, after the first of the year, cars not moved will be issued citations, and fines will apply.

Redistricting in spotlight

The board of the West County Unified School District will hold a study session on pending redistricting decisions, on November 4. This public hearing will offer the chance for an in-depth discussion on the implications of school consolidations and changes to current elementary and middle school boundaries.

Redistricting is a method for making sure that all school buildings are run efficiently and effectively. This means keeping schools at or near capacity, which saves tax dollars in the school system's budgets.

When the county opens a new school or shuts an old one, redistricting is inevitable, but it makes for strong community feelings. The board study session on redistricting will begin at 6:30 on Thursday, November 4, in the El Cerrito High School Cafeteria.

Council candidates respond to resident survey

A coalition of Richmond residents recently released responses from City Council candidates to questions on how they would improve resident involvement in decision making about city issues.

Twelve of the fifteen candidates responded to Residents for Community Involved Government, which represents seven neighborhoods. Some candidates described in detail how they would make Community Involved Government come to life in Richmond. A summary of the responses and the full responses are available at www.cig-richmond.org and at the Richmond Public Library.

The coalition asked candidates to comment on involving residents in hiring key positions, improving community policing, making city documents and meetings more accessible and strengthening the system of commissions and advisory boards.

Legal self-help available

The Contra Costa County Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service and the Small Claims Advisor Program of the Contra Costa County Superior Court offer a variety of workshops for the public in specific areas of the law.

On November 4, 2004, there will be a workshop on Family Law from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. There will be two sessions on Guardianship Law, on November 10 and December 8, each starting at 6:30 p.m.

All workshops are in Contra Costa College Library, Room 1. Many of the clinics require advance registration, others are administered on a first come, first serve basis. For information call 877-320-8889.

"Truth, far from being a solemn and severe master, is a docile and obedient servant."

- Nelson Goodman
New Ways of Worldmaking, 1978

September calls to the Richmond Police

Close readers of the monthly crime report may notice something very unusual this month. Before reading further, scan the stats and try to spot it.

Give up? No house burglaries reported! That doesn't mean there were no burglaries because these are *calls* to the RPD between Sept. 1 and 30, not necessarily crimes committed during that period— buy it's a welcome indicator. Calls for incidents at commercial establishments are not included here, only those made concerning possible crimes against persons or personal property.

Abandoned auto

Twelve cars were abandoned in East Richmond in September.

Stolen vehicle

9/07 6XX Amador
9/07 6XX Key
9/08 4XX Carlston
9/22 5XX Key

Recovered Stolen Vehicle

9/10 6XX Sonoma
9/10 7XX Kern
9/11 Macdonald/San Pablo
9/14 11XX Amador
9/16 124XX San Pablo
9/23 124XX San Pablo
9/27 12XX Amador

Hit/run property damage

9/07 123XX San Pablo

Shots fired

9/20 122XX San Pablo

Battery

9/02 Clinton/McLaughlin
9/06 6XX Ventura
9/06 52XX McBryde
9/20 6XX Yuba
9/23 3XX Wilson

Burglary from auto

9/05 9XX Amador
9/06 49XX Macdonald
9/14 51XX Macdonald
9/16 23XX Humboldt
9/25 4XX Mount

Grand Theft

9/22 5XX Dimm

Petty theft/stolen property

9/03 49XX Humboldt
9/09 6XX Sonoma
9/21 49XX Macdonald

contacts



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. Krug, RPD: 620-6642
 Sgt. McClain: 309-3213

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

Neighborhood Council concerns
 Bob Sutcliffe 235-0908

Abandoned vehicles
 Richmond Police Dept. 233-1214

this issue of Views

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Subscriptions: Subscriptions to Views are free but a donation is requested. To get on our mailing list, please fill out and mail the form to the right.

Beginning in 2005, only those who have returned the subscription form will receive this newsletter.

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.

Make a Woman Happy: Vote, continued from page 1

register by mail, but some states have broadened this to apply to all voters. In addition, all states must provide provisional ballots for voters who find themselves not on the list of registered voters.

The League of Women voters, a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that promotes voting rights for all, says that there are five key things we all can do on Election Day so that in the event of any voting problems, you can personally be sure your vote will be counted.

- Don't go without I.D.: You may need to show I.D. To be safe, bring your driver's license, or a paycheck, utility bill or government document that includes your name and street address.

- Your ballot, your vote: Don't panic if you registered to vote but your name is not on the list. Get help from a poll worker to make sure your vote is counted. You may be directed to another polling place or given a provisional ballot.

- Writing on the wall: Look at the signs at the polling place for directions on how to use the voting machines, a list of your voting rights, and instructions for filing a complaint if your rights have been violated.

- When in doubt, ask: Poll workers are there to help you. They'll show you how to work the machines and give you a provisional ballot if you need one. If you're at the wrong polling place, they should tell you how to get to the right one.

- In and Out: You probably won't have to wait too long. But even if the line is long, don't leave without voting. The outcome of this election will be important!

Here are some additional tips: Call the elections office or board of elections for your county, city or state to make sure you're registered to vote and to find out where your polling place is. Or check their web site. Avoid crowds by going to the polls during off hours, such as 10 AM -11:30 AM and 1:30 PM.- 3:30 PM. And take a friend to vote. Why go alone? (Talk about cheap dates!)

The best way to protect our voting rights is to exercise them. Don't take our greatest and most basic right of citizenship for granted. Vote this year on Election Day.

VIEWS SUBSCRIPTION FORM

If you wish to continue receiving Views in the mail but have not yet returned this form, please complete and mail to ERNC, P.O. Box 5253, Richmond 94805 CA. Beginning in 2005, only those who have returned it will receive Views.

- Please continue to send me Views in the mail.
- Don't mail Views but notify me when the your web site is launched.

A donation is *not* required to receive Views but we do request a yearly contribution to support the work of the neighborhood council. Your tax-deductible donation will be recorded and a renewal request will be made in June 2005. Make checks payable to ERNC. Thank you.

- \$10 \$15 \$20 Other _____

 Name

 Address

 City, ZIP

 Telephone (optional)

 E-mail (optional, or for web site notification)

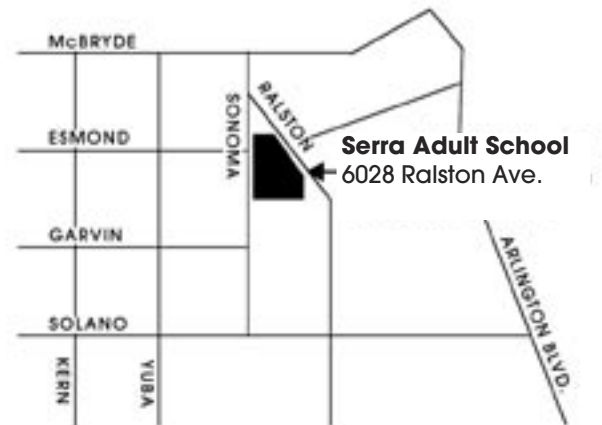
at the next ERNC meeting

the richmond main street project

If you haven't learned about the Richmond Main Street Project, here's your chance. Funded by the Redevelopment Agency, the project aims to revitalize the city's historic downtown along Macdonald Avenue.

We've invited a representative of the project to tell us about its current status, how the public has been involved, and what we can expect to see in 2005.

Don't miss this informative meeting!



Please park on Sonoma Street side!

Monday, November 1st, 7 PM

*Serra Adult School
6028 Ralston Ave.*

RICHMOND NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATING COUNCIL
P.O. Box 485
Richmond, CA 94808

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