



MAIN LIBRARY ON CIVIC CENTER PLAZA [CORNER OF MACDONALD]

# FRIENDS OF THE RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY



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## Welcome to our Community

By Emma Clark

We are thrilled to welcome you to our first quarterly newsletter. In it you will find the latest information about our activities, plans and perspectives on the library. We hope this is another way of connecting with our many members and friends. We would love to hear what you think and suggestions you have to make our newsletter and organization even better.

Please note our Annual Meeting is on Saturday, May 31, with the board and members at 1:30 and open to the public at 2:00 PM for the program (See Page 4). We look forward to seeing you there!

## A Short History

By Martha Bielawski, Vice President

For more than thirty years, the Friends of the Richmond Public Library have funded programs and materials requested by the library. The librarians' annual "wish list" is targeted for needed programs that can do

the most good, but where the official budget has fallen short. Many of these help build all-important reading skills, for children, teens and adults. Programs cover all three libraries and the bookmobile.

The more money our all-volunteer non-profit can raise, the more the library can offer our community. So please encourage others to join or make a donation. Thank you!

## One on One

By Christine Volker, Membership Chairperson

*I had the pleasure of sitting down with Katy Curl, Director of Library & Cultural Services, to chat about library priorities, her activities, and what's up. In a few words: quite a lot! Here's what she told us:*

### Critical Missions

- **Tools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

We're providing tools for the citizens of Richmond so they can learn and compete in the job market as effectively as possible. This spans the gamut from working for internet access in the Iron Triangle, to obtaining grants for a digital literacy project on health disparities. Community health is an area that the leaders of Richmond have targeted as a key priority; we're contributing solutions in creative ways. We're also crafting a literacy program which creates curriculum modules and a "learner web" using audio/video and interactive programs.

- **Outreach is Key**

To drive success we need to be visible. That means engaging with the community. We do this by taking the "library" to people and participating at community center events. Our new book van, thanks to the work of the Library Foundation, and our existing bookmobile, are keys in achieving this goal. All our patrons need to feel comfortable and visiting their neighborhoods with books to lend really helps establish that trust. Many working families have little time off. We make it easier by going to them. Getting kids and others reading is a huge priority. We'll even be bringing carts of books to local senior centers once our van gets going.

### Proud Accomplishments

- **Taking Advantage of New Opportunities**

So much in technology is changing! We need to keep up in order to offer new resources to our community. Just in the last year we've converted notices and library fines to an online format, saving postage and increasing convenience for patrons, we're lending e-books and we've introduced Discover and Go, a program where via your library card you can obtain free or discounted admission to area museums and other attractions.

- **Growth in our Literacy Program**

Improving literacy remains a key mission of our Library, and fundamental for the future success of our populace. Richmond is a city where 20% do not have a high school or equivalent education. We're proud of the progress in our sponsored program, LEAP (Literacy for Every Adult Program), with its goal of universal literacy here in Richmond. LEAP has boosted adult basic literacy, provides English as a Second Language courses and also offers free GED preparation (the high school equivalency). These days literacy increasingly includes computer literacy.

- **Benefits of Reorganization**

I'm dedicated to providing support for the staff and enriching their job prospects. This is embedded in the new organizational design which offers specialization instead of burdening staff with multiple areas of responsibility. The staff accomplishments during the past year have been exceptional.

### What Worries You

How to achieve balance and wondering if we've got it entirely right. With limited resources, I'm trying to balance the needs (of the staff, the community, those vocalized by the City Council) and the priorities that we should pursue. For 2014 we'll be streamlining, adding staff and managing change.

### What You Would Do with More Resources

I would love to add to the library hours and to the staff. I'd put more into staff training and support in order to equip staff with the best tools for their development and success. Dollars for community surveys and a focus group would be welcome, so that we get greater certainty that we're addressing the true needs and desires of our community. That's who we're all here to serve.

### How the Friends of the Richmond Public Library help

I see the Friends taking an active role in marketing and advocating for libraries. Working through widening circles of influence is so important and in that way we can make a difference for our city. We look to them for offering some ideas that we might want to try. It's important to keep growing the membership in the Friends, increase fund raising so that we can enhance the experience for our patrons and citizens. I'm very excited by the restarting of the newsletter and the construction of the website so that members and other library supporters will feel the pulse of what's going on.

### A Little About Katy's Background

*Katy majored in education, taught and also led story times. She enjoyed working with children and through that experience, decided to get her M.L.S. (Masters of Library Science). Her library career encompasses a wide range of positions and places (starting in Idaho, Folsom, Sacramento and Southern California) which together have provided her with a 360 degree understanding of public libraries.*

## Transition among Friends

### Also Visit Our Branch Libraries!



**West Side Branch**  
135 Washington Ave.  
Richmond, CA 94801

510-620-6567



**Bayview Branch**  
5100 Hartnett Ave.  
Richmond, CA 94804  
510-620-6566



*Last May, Emma Jean Clark assumed the position of Board President, taking over from Jodie Lines (Emma is on left, Jodie on right). We're delighted to share highlights of Emma's background, accomplishments and perspectives.*

By Ken Solin

Emma's passion for public libraries and education began in Texas, where she was born. Attending public schools, then Texas College, she pursued doctoral studies at East Texas State University, Commerce.

Emma understands the challenges and missions of libraries, having enjoyed an impressive career including positions as the Head Librarian at Texas College, the Supervising Reference Librarian, the Interim City Librarian at Richmond Public Library, the Senior Librarian in the Oakland Public Library System, as well as a substitute teacher for the West Contra Costa Unified School District. She retired from the City of Richmond in 1996.

Emma has served for many years as a board member of the Friends of the Richmond Public Library, as well as a lifetime member of the NAACP, and other organizations. Widowed, Emma is the mother of two daughters, a stepmother, a grandmother, a great grandmother, and a godmother to many. She is also a licensed Evangelist Missionary and musician.

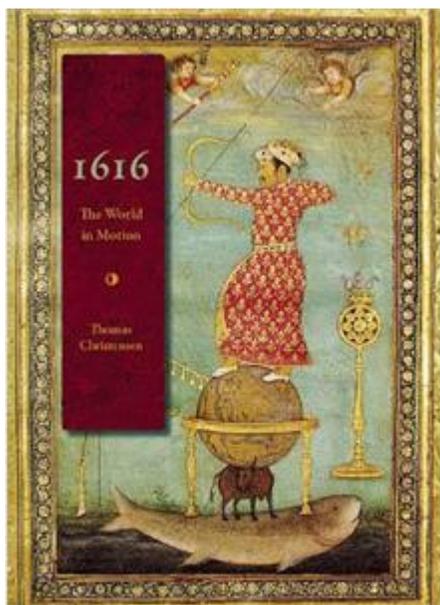
As Board President, Emma is tackling two key challenges: boosting membership and building strong relationships between the Library Administration, the Board and the Library Commission. She is especially proud of the Friends' book sales, its dues-paying members and donors along with the successful library programs sponsored by the Friends, helping the community.

2014 will bring website enhancement as the group strengthens its communication and ties to members, along with widening the circle of activity with the library and the community. Emma's belief in the importance of encouraging the community to make the public library a part of daily life has fueled her many contributions to our city.

*Through her seemingly inexhaustible energy and positive*

*outlook, Emma has made a difference in many ways. We are pleased to have her guidance.*

## Annual Meeting Speaker Tom Christensen Richmond Author



*"One of the best works by a northern California author published in 2012."*  
— *Northern California Book Reviewers Association*

*"Christensen shows how separate threads affected one another, transformed discourse, and contributed to the development of a truly global culture fully four centuries ago."*  
— *Emily Sano, director emeritus, Asian Art Museum*

*"One of the top ten history books of the season."*  
— *Publishers Weekly*

## And What a Time it Was

By Susan Merrill

Tom Christensen's book, **1616: The World in Motion**, portrays a world increasingly interconnected, brimming with change. From the death of Shakespeare and Cervantes, two literary geniuses, to shifts in East Asia, to the slave trade, Christensen transports the reader among countries and continents, with stellar prose and lavish illustrations.

When he is not fashioning his own writing, Tom is a prodigious translator of works by notable Spanish and French authors. A Renaissance man of the modern day, he is also an editor, graphic designer, photographer, typesetter, website designer and Mayanist. This doesn't even count his job as Director of Publications for the Asian Art Museum!

Come hear this Richmond author share more about his awe-inspiring work and learn how the times of 1616 were by turns very different, and very similar to our own, underlining what history can teach us.

## *Invitation to our Annual Meeting*

**Date:** May 31, 2014

**1:30 PM**

Board Meeting: *Open to all  
Members*

**2:00 PM**

Presentation by Tom Christensen:  
*Open to Members of the Public*

**Refreshments Following**

**Where:** Madeline F. Whittlesey  
Community Room (Conference  
room attached to side of Main  
Library)

## Selected Activities and Sponsorships: 2014 Year to Date

Monies for Two Teen Scholarships: **5/16 deadline** – see *Library website*

Library Program: The Physics of Skateboards

Library Program: Lego Club at Bayview Branch

Library Program: S.A.T. Workshop

Initiation of Company/Employee Membership Drive

Revamping of all Marketing Literature



**LEGO Club**

*Friends of the Richmond Public Library**Board of Directors**2013-2014*

President	Emma Clark
Vice President	Martha Bielawski
Co-Treasurer	Dianne Wightman
Co-Treasurer	Lucy Carland
Secretary	Marian Navarro
Director	Tarnel Abbott
Director	Betty Ann Barnett
Director	Lydia Goshay
Director	Mary E. McVittie
Membership Chair	Christine Volker
Director	Don Woodrow
Library Director	Katy Curl

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(510) 620-6555

FriendsRPLCA@yahoo.com

Website under construction, nested under  
Library's website:  
[www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=105](http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=105)  
"Support Us", then "Friends of the Public  
Library" on left menus (Or you can google it)

## Volunteers Wanted!

for

**Newsletter and Website**

**Contact Christine Volker**

via

**FriendsRPLCA@yahoo.com**