

What is Foreseen for 2013?

2012 Year End Review Prediction and Wishes for 2013

[Tom Butt, Richmond City Councilmember](#), January 1, 2013

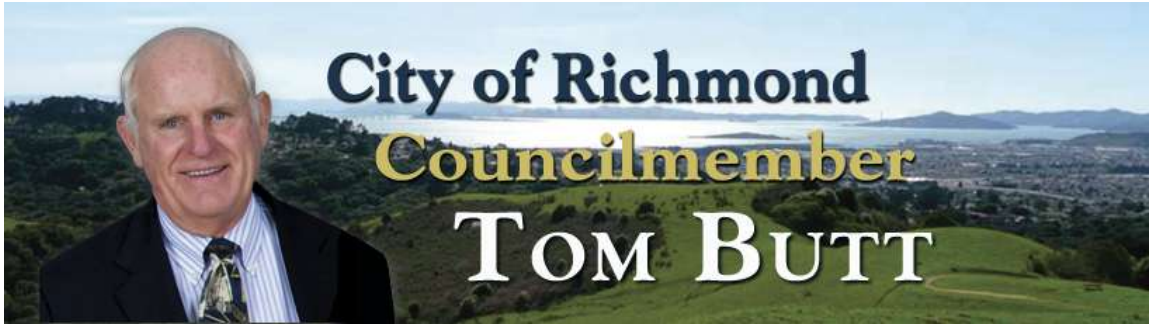
Contents

Over a Decade of TOM BUTT E-FORUMS.....	4
2012 – Productive Year for City Council despite Late Nights and Acrimony	6
Top Richmond Stories of 2012.....	8
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Chooses Richmond.....	8
Special Interests Buy 2012 Richmond Election.....	8
Chevron Fire Roils Community-Chevron Relationship.....	11
Most Controversial Issues of 2012	12
North Shoreline.....	12
Marijuana.....	13
Riggers Loft.....	14
Animal News	15
Did My Wishes/Predictions for 2012 Come True?	16
Shipyard 3 Buildings	16
Point Molate	16
Railroads.....	16
Crime	16
Chevron	17
Elections	18
Marijuana.....	18
Booker et al.....	18
North Shoreline.....	18
My Nominations for the Best of 2012	18
My Nominations for Worst of 2012	19
The Election.....	19
City Council Meetings.....	19
The Chevron Fire.....	19
Railroads.....	19
E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best of 2012	19
City Council.....	19
Streets	19
Crime	19
General Plan	20
Rosie the Riveter	20
Point Richmond Music	20
Salute	20
LBNL.....	20
Booker vs. City of Richmond	21
West County Health Center	21
Casinos	21
Chevron	21
Downtown	21
Ford Building.....	21
Richmond Art Center.....	21
Japanese Americans.....	21
The Annex	21
Dedicated Citizens.....	21
E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best Organizations of 2012	22

Fix Our Ferals	22
TRAC	22
Richmond Trees.....	22
Ujima	23
Spokes.....	23
Richmond Community Foundation	23
Writer Coach Connection	23
Richmond Main Street.....	24
Richmond Art Center.....	24
E-Forum Reader Nominations for Best City Employees (including elected)	24
.....	24
Gayle McLaughlin.....	24
Tom Butt.....	24
Jeff Ritterman	24
Bill Lindsay	25
Chris Magnus.....	25
Jim Goins	25
Chris Chamberlain, Lisa Graves, Steve DeLucchi and Lina Velasco	26
Bruce Goodmiller	26
Sheila Dickinson.....	26
Shasa Curl.....	26
Mary Phelps.....	26
Janet Johnson	27
Rochelle Monk, Sue Kedlac, and City Clerk, Diane Holmes	27
E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best City Department 2012	27
City Manager's Office	27
Parks and Landscaping	27
Planning.....	28
Police	28
Code Enforcement	28
Parks and Planning	28
E-FORUM Reader's Nominations for Best Projects of 2012.....	28
Solano Playlot.....	28
Bike Facilities	28
Carlson Boulevard	28
Marina Bay Bypass and Underpass	29
Tennis	29
Bay Trail.....	29
E-FORUM Nominations for the Worst of 2012	29
The Election.....	29
City Council.....	30
Bates and Booze	30
Corky Booze	30
Chevron Fire	31
Chevron Moving Jobs Out of Richmond	31
Air Resources Board.....	31
Jeff Ritterman Leaving	31
Bicycles	31
Design Review Board	31
Racism	32
Schools	32
2013 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers.....	32

Navy Ship	32
Bates and Booze	32
Trees and Bike Lanes.....	33
Chevron, Bates and Booze.....	33
Rugby	33
2013 Wishes from E-FORUM Readers	33
City Council.....	33
Retail and Restaurants	33
Graffiti	34
On and Off Ramps	34
Paving	34
How did E-FORUM Readers 2012 Predictions turn out?	34

Over a Decade of TOM BUTT E-FORUMS



I started the E-FORUM in 2001 primarily to provide Richmond-related news, information and points of view not readily available in the mainstream media, although I have copied and shared a lot of articles from mainstream media over the years.

The first E-FORUM was dated January 13, 2001, and carried information about obtaining public records from the City of Richmond.

In 2002, I published 180 E-FORUMs, but by 2009, I was up to 460. In 2010, it was 506. In 2011, I dropped to 340, but in 2012 there were over 500.

E-FORUMS typically fall into three categories:

1. Copies of content from other media, including emails from other people and organizations announcing events or providing information.
2. Copies of content from other media with some preliminary editorializing by me.
3. Pieces that are primarily editorial or personal reports.

I have about 2,000 people and about 40 media contacts on my current list, but I understand a lot more people get it through secondary distribution from primary addressees.

In addition to email distribution, all E-FORUMS beginning in 2001 are accessible on my website at <http://www.tombutt.com/archives.htm>.

The website, www.tombutt.com gets a lot of traffic:

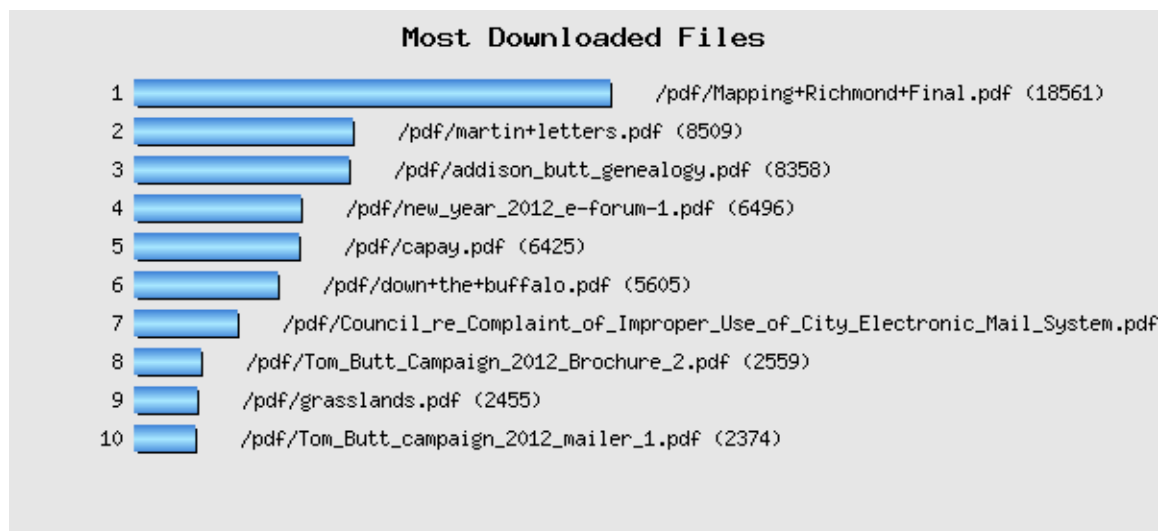
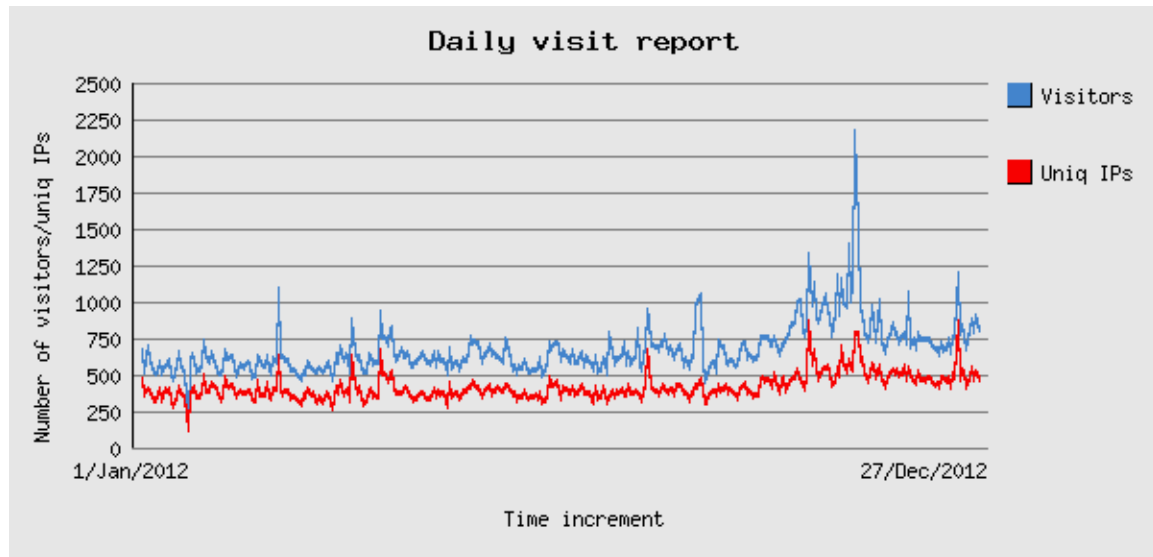
- In the past 12 months, there were 243,394 visitors, up nearly 10% from last year, and 1,170,432 hits.
- Visitors average 673 a day with an average of 3,233 hits per day. The biggest day in 2012 was August 6, the day of the Chevron fire, with 8,131 hits from 688 visitors. The day of most visitors was November 4 with 2,150.
- 30,848 visitors bookmarked www.tombutt.com, up 42% from last year.
- Although most of the hits were overwhelmingly from the U.S., there were also visitors from dozens of countries, with China coming in second with 2,493 visitors.

The five most visited E-FORUMs in the last 12 months were:

- [A General Plan for a Worse Richmond - I Can't Support It](#), January 6, 2012
- [Richmond Has a New General Plan](#), April 25, 2012
- [Berkeley Celebrates Washington Elementary School 103 kW Solar Installation](#), February 25, 2009
- [Chevron Fire: Legal Industry Fares Poorly](#), August 20, 2012
- [Another Bay Area City Moves Against Rodent Poisons](#), February 23, 2012

The five most downloaded files were:

- [Mapping Richmond's WWII Home Front](#)
- [Martin's Letters](#)
- [Descendants of Addison and Elinor Butt of Virginia and Kentucky](#)
- [2011 Year End Review and Prediction and Wishes for 2012, In What Will We Delve in 2012?](#)
- [Capay Valley State Park](#)



I get a lot of responses to E-FORUM postings, and I read and appreciate all of them. Sometimes on a controversial subject I will create and send a digest of responses. I respond to a few, but I just don't have time to respond to all of them all of the time.

I have no staff, other than two people in my office who help me by entering and deleting email addresses and transferring E-FORUM's to my website.

Since 2002, I have prepared some kind of year-end evaluation of City of Richmond services, problems, challenges and wishes. Originally, these were conveyed to my City Council colleagues and the city manager as a way of providing input into the annual city manager performance evaluation and establishing my priorities and legislative objectives for the coming year. Since 2005, I have invited public participation, and I have shared the results on my E-FORUM.

- **2003**, I shared one of these priorities on the E-FORUM in [New Year's Resolution - A Full Court Press on Blight](#), January 3, 2003.
- **2004**, I went whimsical and authored [Out With The Old – In With The New](#), January 1, 2004, providing a number of awards and multiple choice predictions.
- **2005**, I decided to expand the New Year's Day, [2004 Year-End Review](#), December 31, 2004, to become a broader evaluation of the City of Richmond and to give E-FORUM readers an opportunity not only to participate but to also play the principal role.
- **2006** was [What Can We Fix in 2006?](#), January 1, 2006.
- **2007**, it was [Will Richmond be Heaven in 2007?](#) January 1, 2007.
- At the beginning of 2008 I wrote [Year 2007 Review and Will Richmond be Great in 2008?](#)
- **2009**: [Will Richmond be Fine in 2009?](#)
- **2010**: [2009 Year End Review – Who Will Win in 2010?](#)
- **2011**: [2010 Year End Review – Will Richmond be Riven in 2011?](#), January 1, 2011. On my 2011 wishes, I only scored three out of eight. E-FORUM readers did better with five out of seven.
- **2012**: [In What Will We Delve in 2012?](#)

I recommend you take a look at these previous E-Forums. You will be amazed at how many challenges have persisted unabated, how many predictions have been fulfilled and how one year's top stories became distant memories a year later.

What follows is not based on a scientific poll or survey by any standard. The only public input quoted herein is from readers of the E-FORUM, which is a self-limiting sample. *Comments from E-FORUM readers are in italics to distinguish them from my own.*

This summary is uncensored. This is an equal opportunity forum, and I welcome responses, comments, arguments and debates. I especially solicit corrections.

I extend special thanks to all those citizens and City employees who keep me informed of both problems and solutions all year long. Your input is invaluable. Please keep it up. My [E-FORUM](#) is my best tool for dispensing with my own frustrations, and I hope it provides useful information for those who subscribe.

2012 – Productive Year for City Council despite Late Nights and Acrimony

Continuing the water metaphor I used to describe the City Council years in 2010 (*watershed*) and 2011 (*water under the bridge*), I would describe 2012 as a *water torture* year. It was a productive year of significant accomplishments, but it was also a remarkably painful year where both City Council members and the public had to bear vicious and incessant personal attacks from a handful of City Council gadflies and the time consuming and rambling personal attacks of Corky Booze.

Lisa Vordebruggan wrote ([Vorderbrueggen: Richmond Politics Get Ugly](#), April 21, 2012):

Richmond's bare-knuckle politics are rarely confused with the silken-glove civility of Danville, but even the gritty city's most veteran players are cringing these days. "Where do I even start?" said one Richmond politico. Council meetings routinely devolve into shockingly rude and racially charged shouting matches. Council members constantly interrupt and insult each other in public. Dozens of

council groupies -- many of them recruited by council members -- jeer and cheer from the audience, cycling one by one to the speaker's podium, where they comment on every single agenda item no matter how small. Meetings often drag out five, six and seven hours. The question is not when will it stop, but how bad will it get?

Elected two years ago after 10 attempts, Councilman Corky Booze remains a lightning rod. Some people thought he would temper his combative style once he sat on the other side of the dais, but his battles and provocative comments have multiplied like mushrooms after a soaking rain. He's been at war with the alliance ever since he refused to support an Israeli-Palestinian resolution. He and Ritterman have had deeply personal and public conflicts. Booze regularly spars with McLaughlin, who once spoke with police after her council colleague made what she interpreted as threatening comments following her ejection of a speaker clad in fatigues who yelled out "racist."

At a meeting earlier this month, Booze uncharitably referred to McLaughlin as "that lady" and characterized her action as "The black community loses again!"

Hoping to quash expected squabbling over hearing rules, the council also passed what some privately called the "Corky Doctrine," which requires council members to keep quiet during public testimony and hold their questions until the end. Booze's most serious rift erupted in mid-April when he made ugly public accusations of racism against Councilman Tom Butt, his longtime friend and ally. Booze is African-American, Butt is white. The exchange came after Butt broadly released scathing responses received from an e-forum that asked the public to rate Booze's job performance. People slapped Booze with every pejorative adjective they could find -- argumentative, opportunistic, disruptive, bully, egotistic and, well, you get the point.

Richmond Confidential also wrote ([Richmond Confidential on Council Dysfunction](#) July 23, 2012):

In an unusual move, last week after a particularly heated city council meeting Mayor Gayle McLaughlin sent an email to her online supporters entitled "The situation at City Council meetings," in which she castigated "one councilmember's" behavior during meetings, urged the public and other councilmembers to recognize to her authority as mayor and assured everyone that she will be tightening the reigns.

"There is dysfunction on this Council, but the dysfunction does not come from the Council as a whole. This dysfunction comes from one councilmember," she wrote in her message. McLaughlin accused this councilmember of disrupting the council and of wasting time while he levels personal attacks against other councilmembers, instead of dealing with the agenda items. "It is truly a shame that this councilmember disrupts time and time again the needed business under discussion at the Council meeting. He forces us to deal with chaos, disruptions, and vitriolic speech that bring harm to the entire city of Richmond," she wrote.

The letter did not name a particular councilmember, but during recent meetings conflict has broken out between the mayor and Councilmember Corky Booze, as well as between Booze and other councilmembers. At the July 17 meeting, Booze accused the mayor of trying to silence him and asked the Richmond City Attorney to advise the council on free speech guidelines. Booze said he was concerned that the mayor may have infringed on the public's right to free speech by having an audience member removed during a previous meeting. Booze and Councilmember Jovanka Beckles, whose relationship is especially strained, got in to an argument towards the end of the July 17 meeting resulting in Beckles leaving early and saying to Booze, "You are evil. So evil."

It was a year of mostly 5-2 votes with a few 4-3 votes on almost every issue where some controversy either existed or could be manufactured.

Nat Bates and Corky Booze opposed many important legislative accomplishments, such as adoption of the General Plan, joining Marin Energy Authority, adoption of an Integrated Pest Management Ordinance, rehabilitation of the Riggers Loft, berthing of the SS Red Oak Victory, accepting a grant to establish a railroad Quiet Zone on 34th Street and resolutions supporting best practices in repairs of the Chevron fire.

Bates and Booze also joined to dissent 5-2 on placing the soda tax on the ballot and went on to champion its ultimate defeat at the ballot box.

Booze not only took on most of the other City Council members with personal attacks but distinguished himself by regularly haranguing and insulting many City staff members.

Late nights, often extending into the early morning hours, were also a hallmark of 2012, resulting from the time consuming ramblings of Booze and the remarks of Booze's support gallery in the audience using any agenda item as an opportunity to mount a personal attack on various City Council members.

Top Richmond Stories of 2012

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Chooses Richmond

Possibly the only important issue that City Council members and the community could totally agree on this past year was the importance of bringing LNBL to Richmond. All of the hard work was done in 2011, but the long-awaited announcement was delayed until January 23, 2012. See [More Media Coverage for Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Move to Richmond](#), January 24, 2012 and [FLASH: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory is Coming to Richmond](#), January 23, 2012.



While the elation was instantaneous, and provided prompt bragging rights, actual completion and operation of the initial campus facilities is not projected until 2017, which means construction will start in maybe 2015. All of this is also contingent on funding and approvals by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Meanwhile, just the prospects may have a hard to quantify effect on real estate decisions related to acquisition of properties in Richmond by companies that value proximity on property values. Speculation is that acquisition of the former Berlex campus by a Chinese bio-tech company may have been related to LNBL proximity.

Special Interests Buy 2012 Richmond Election

Richmond was buried in a tsunami of special interest campaign money. Between the American Beverage Association and Chevron, a total of at least \$3.7 million of out of town money was spent on the Richmond election to defeat the soda tax and elect Chevron-friendly councilmembers.

The American Beverage Association scored 100% on its lopsided defeat of pro-beverage tax forces, and Chevron got two out of three of its backed candidates elected.

The Richmond Progressive Alliance, which backed the soda tax and sponsored two candidates, was the big loser, with an apparent shutout.

What surprised me the most was lack of outrage about the gigantic infusion of outside money. Some compared the American Beverage Association campaign to that of the casino campaign



two years prior when RPA came out the big winner. “Live by the sword; die by the sword,” said the big money defenders. The difference is that in 2010, there were millions of outside dollars both pro and con in the casino campaign. They probably cancelled each other out to some extent, and the vote actually reflected the opinion of an over- informed electorate.

In 2012, the outside money totally overwhelmed the race, resulting in a legitimate accusation that the election had been bought.

The [American Beverage Association](#) spent about \$2.5 million to defeat Measure N, which would have taxed business owners a penny per ounce on soda sales in what would have been the first voter-approved soda tax in the United States. The measure lost by a 2-to-1 margin, with most of the opposition coming from the working-class precincts in the center and northern parts of town. Voters in the hills and Point Richmond mostly voted in favor.

Of 43,687 registered Richmond voters, 34,072 cast ballots , a turnout of 77.99%. Not all voters filled in the entire ballot. Most voted for president, and 31,944 voted yes or no for Measure N, the item that garnered the most participation. The total votes for Richmond City Council candidates were 76,163, which divided by 3 = 25,387, which means that many did not use their three votes. This could be due to “bullet voting” where some voters cast only one or two votes intentionally to reduce the chances of competitors, or it could be due to voters just not being interested enough in the City Council race to vote..



2012 RICHMOND ELECTION RESULTS

As of 12/03/2012

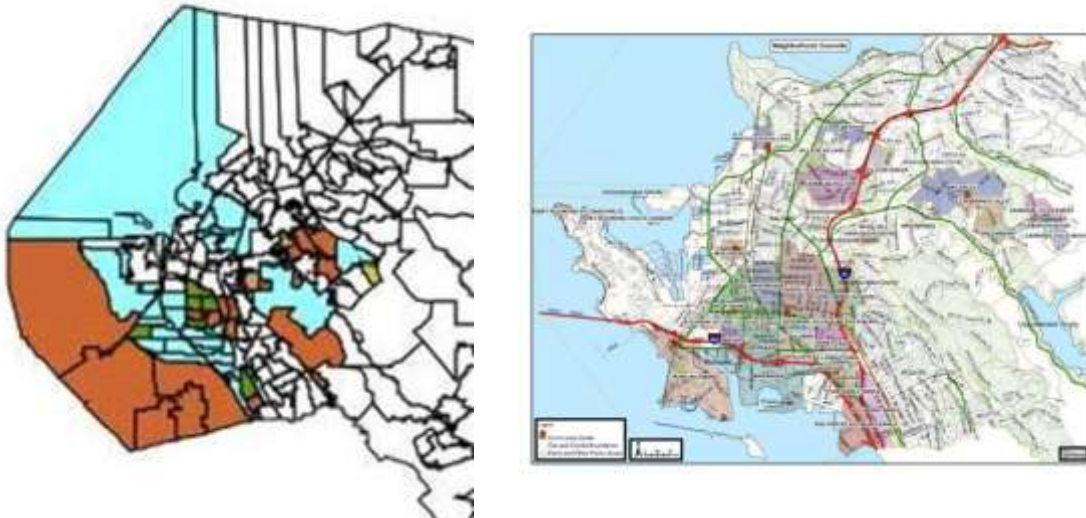
FINAL CITY COUNCIL

CANDIDATE	MAIL-IN	% of Total	POLL	% of Total	VOTES	DELTA	PERCENTAGE
Nat Bates	6,758	49.7	6,834	50.3	13,592	—	17.85%
Tom Butt	6,682	57.7	4,893	42.3	11,575	2,017	15.20%
Gary Bell	5,624	49.0	5,850	51.0	11,474	101	15.07%
Eduardo Martinez	5,085	46.4	5,871	53.6	10,956	518	14.38%
Marilyn Langlois	4,262	49.5	4,348	50.5	8,610	2346	11.30%
Bea Roberson	2,996	52.6	2,702	47.4	5,698	2,912	7.48%
Eleanor Thompson	2,673	50.7	2,601	49.3	5,274	424	6.92%
Jael Myrick	2,111	51.4	1,993	48.6	4,104	1170	5.39%
Michael Ali Kinney	1,096	51.4	1,038	48.6	2,134	1,970	2.80%
Mark Wassberg	747	48.3	798	51.7	1,545	589	2.03%
Anthony Green	502	47.3	560	52.7	1,062	483	1.39%
Write-In	89	64.0	50	36.0	139	923	0.19%
TOTAL	38,625	50.0	37,538	50.0	76,163		

As of 1:05 PM on Monday 12/03

THESE RESULTS ARE FINAL

The delta is the difference between a candidate and the next highest candidate



It is not unusual that none of the candidates received a majority of votes cast in this election, indicative of a deep political split among Richmond voters that cleaves along ethnic, economic and racial demographic lines. The map above left is from the Contra Costa County Elections Office, and the map above right is to help identify precincts with the more familiar neighborhood council districts. On the left map, the brown represents precincts carried by Butt, and the aqua represents precincts carried by Bates. The green represents precincts carried by Martinez. You can see that Butt was strong south of I-580, in the North and East, the Annex and parts of El Sobrante. Bates carried the Richmond flatlands, Parchester, North Richmond Fairmeade-Hilltop and one El Sobrante precinct. Although pulling enough votes to win, Bell carried only one precinct -- in El Sobrante. Martinez, who did not place but pulled a strong fourth, carried Belding Woods, part of the Iron Triangle and the Panhandle Annex.

In terms of money, the biggest campaign financier was Moving Forward, a committee bankrolled almost exclusively by Chevron to the tune of \$1.2 million dollars. All of it went into the Richmond City Council election except for \$100,000 that went to unsuccessfully unseat Democratic California state legislators. A smaller player was Richmond First, a committee funded by the Richmond Police Officers Association and Richmond firefighters, Local 188, which moves in lockstep with Chevron.



Although year-end campaign statements will probably show additional expenditures of 10% to 25%, the patterns shown by statements filed just prior to the election will probably remain consistent. Money spent per vote will rise accordingly.

The top cost per vote was Bea Roberson at \$16.20. Bates won the expenditure prize with a total of \$193,858. Butt had the lowest cost per vote and the lowest expenditure of the three winners.

- The top vote getter, Nat Bates, with 13,592 votes and 17.85% of the total, got a vote from 31.1% of those who voted. Bates spent \$30,531 of the \$62,529 he raised before the election, and Richmond First and Moving Forward spent \$163,327 on his campaign. In total, \$193,858 was spent on his campaign, resulting in \$14.26 per vote.

- Tom Butt, second with 11,575 votes and 15.07% of the vote, got a vote from 26.4% of those who voted. Butt spent \$51,883 of \$61,700 raised before the election (including matching funds), resulting in \$4.48 per vote.
- Gary Bell, third with 11,474 and 15.11% of the vote, got a vote from 26.2% of those who voted. Bell spent \$41,213 from the \$60,430 he raised before the election (including matching funds), and BAPAC, Richmond First and Moving Forward spent another \$104,535 on his campaign. In total, \$145,748 was spent on his campaign, resulting in \$12.65 per vote.
- Moving Forward spent \$71,357 for Bea Roberson, and she spent \$21,000 from her own committee, placing sixth with \$92,353 and a cost of \$16.20 per vote.
- Moving Forward spent \$94,768 against Marilyn Langlois and \$93,599 against Eduardo Martinez.



Richmond Confidential created an interesting [interactive map of voting patterns](#).

Chevron Fire Roils Community-Chevron Relationship

The August 6 fire that shut down Chevron's #4 Crude Unit and caused 15,000 people to seek medical care roiled a community-Chevron relationship that had been trending upward until then. The Chevron fire dominated the Bay Area media for months, all the way to Christmas.



By all accounts, Chevron's application for a permit for the reconstituted refinery Revised Renewal Project was moving along as expeditiously as possible. Earlier in the summer, Chevron lost a County Assessment Appeals Board bid that resulted in a \$27 million levy against the oil giant instead of the expected \$73 million refund that Chevron had all but deposited in the bank, giving City officials a glimmer of hope that the constant property tax appeals might actually subside. It was widely accepted that Chevron's relationship with the community had hit a new high point. That is, until August 6, 2012.

Even after the fire, Chevron officials did something unheard of. They apologized to the community! Chevron was clearly shaken. A week after the fire, Chevron cancelled the rollout of its 4Richmond project, a thinly-veiled ploy to counteract influence of the RPA by pumping \$25 million into community projects and programs.

Then things started to deteriorate. Critics accused Chevron of polluting the soil and poisoning vegetable gardens. A lack of air monitors that could actually measure air quality during the event and the fallout afterward resulted in a bitter controversy over how much damage was actually done. Public agencies, including Contra Costa County Health, CalOSHA and the Air Board that had been relatively quiet about previous major releases, became a higher profile presence in the inquiries that followed. For the first time ever, the U.S. Chemical Safety Board launched an investigation. Federal authorities announced a criminal investigation of Chevron for allegedly contriving a way to avoid reporting emissions.



Chronicle columnist Chip Johnson wrote ([Chip Johnson - Chevron Owes Richmond More Than Damages](#), August 10, 2012):

No matter how much money Chevron shells out in real and phony injury claims - or the inevitable class-action lawsuit - it won't amount to half of what it owes Richmond residents, whose health and the health of their children are at risk daily...

Fresh air is supposed to be free, yet residents in Richmond neighborhoods close to the refinery pay a heavy cost. North Richmond, within the refinery's sphere of operations, ranks among the Bay Area's lowest-income communities. The rate of asthma among adults and children is three times the county average. One in 3 children in Richmond has been hospitalized for asthma.

It's not by choice, but social circumstance, that most live there, and more than a few people who filed claims against the company said they hoped any settlement money they received would be enough to allow them to live somewhere else.

Sides were taken, with the construction labor unions, the Chamber of Commerce, BAPAC and Council of Industries defending Chevron, and CBE, ACCE, RPA, APEN and others slamming Chevron for damaging public health, causing a nuisance and degrading the environment.

The final battle of 2012, but not the final act, revolved around the choice of material for repairing and replacing pipe subjected to high-temperature refinery processes involving sulfur, the generally accepted cause of the corrosion that resulted in the fire.

Just before Christmas, the City of Richmond accepted Chevron's proposal for the replacement pipe alloy, and the requisite permits were issued.



Most Controversial Issues of 2012

Unresolved issues aren't necessarily top stories, because there is no outcome. Others may be contentious but are so petty that they simply don't rise to the top of the news. Here are some that stand out this year.

North Shoreline

Future land use designation of the North Shoreline had been a contentious issue for years and had been delaying adoption of the new General Plan.

The City Council was divided, with Bates, Booze and Ritterman favoring development and McLaughlin, Butt and Beckles favoring low intensity uses. Nobody knew where Rogers was heading, so there was sort of a stalemate.

It was a classic environment versus jobs phony battle.

Then, the property owners successfully challenged Butt's ability to participate due to a conflicting business interest involving one of the property owners. That turned the tide, and on April 3, 2012, a vote was taken that was seen as a compromise by some and a defeat but the best possible outcome by others.



Low Intensity Business/Light Industrial was adopted on a 6-0-1 vote with Butt absent, paving the way for the General Plan vote the next Council meeting.

Marijuana

In 2012, the City Council completed its approval of six licensed dispensaries, but not without controversy.

Influenced by a combination of generous campaign contributions and support from true believers, the City Council doubled its original allocation of dispensaries from three to six, providing sufficient capacity to provide medication to fully 80% of Richmond's population.

Allocation of the last two permits, however, became contentiously embroiled in personal issues of some council members that may have been related to campaign contributions or lack thereof. On June 13, Robert Rogers wrote ([Pot Peddler Slams "Booze, who has earned a reputation for bruising politics and confrontational tactics..."](#) June 13, 2012):



The owner of the most recently approved local medical marijuana collective in Richmond is demanding an apology from a councilman after a contentious public meeting.

Zee Handoush, whose 7-Stars Holistic Healing Center became the fifth medical cannabis shop granted a permit to operate in the city this year, is miffed by what Councilman Corky Booze said about him and his business during the City Council meeting June 5.

During discussion of the permit, Booze attacked Handoush as an irresponsible business owner and suggested the businessman bore responsibility for a December 2011 shooting in the parking lot of the mall where he operates a smoke shop and hookah bar.

Despite Booze's protestations, Handoush was approved to open the city's fifth medical cannabis shop by a 4-1-1 vote, with Booze dissenting, Councilman Tom Butt abstaining and Councilman Jeff Ritterman absent.

"(Booze) slandered me personally by saying that I cannot be trusted, however ... he is the one making false claims," Handoush wrote in a June 10 email to Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, which was copied to the other five council members. "For now, I am very concerned with his final threat to unduly single myself and 7-Stars out for special police scrutiny. I have every reason to think that finding nothing wrong, he is capable of abusing his position of power and of manufacturing what he wants in his blind pursuit of hurting me."

...The debate over 7-Stars, which would also be located at the Pacific East Mall near the borders of Albany and El Cerrito, is the latest in the increasingly contentious process by which the city grants permits to marijuana dispensaries. In March, a divided council agreed to increase the number of dispensaries permitted in the city from four to six, paving the way for Richmond to have one of the highest concentrations of pot clubs in the Bay Area.

Booze, who has earned a reputation for bruising politics and confrontational tactics, said he had other concerns about Handoush, a longtime Richmond businessman whose parents owned a local grocery store in the 1970s.

Booze said Handoush has promised money to a local nonprofit in an attempt to curry favor with the council and has been "running around telling everybody he has his way with the council," a charge Handoush called "ridiculous."

"(Handoush) donated \$2,500 to my (council) campaign," Booze said. "But now he knows what everybody knows, you can't buy Corky."

Riggers Loft

In early 2012, City staff attempted to secure City Council approval to execute a contract with Alten construction to construct a Security and Operations Center funded by the California Emergency Management Agency. The project had been designed as an expansion and rehabilitation of a small three-story building at Terminal 3 west of Harbour Way South. The building was originally constructed as a control tower for the now obsolete container port operation.

The project had been poorly managed from the beginning, and, despite repetitive bid solicitations, was substantially over budget. The plan was to let the contract anyway, then downsize and redesign the project, then negotiate a giant change order with the contractor to reduce the cost. Even at the reduced size, the project was grossly expensive, nearly \$1,000 per square foot.

I then proposed an alternative. Rehabilitate the much larger Riggers Loft for approximately the same amount of money left in the budget. The proposal was opposed by the Port staff and ignited a bitter protest from Bates and Booze.

Robert Rogers wrote ([Richmond Council Delays Port Security Project, Continues to Weigh Options](#), May 2, 2012):

The council declined the staff recommendation, voting 5-2 to get more information about a possible center at Riggers Loft. Councilmen Corky Booze and Nat Bates dissented.

"We need to have fuller information," Mayor Gayle McLaughlin said. "Right now, there are too many unknowns."

More than 20 public speakers weighed in. Virtually all supported the staff recommendation to go ahead with the project at Harbour Way, arguing that a delay would jeopardize construction jobs. Bates chastised Butt for what he called "bully tactics" in waging a public campaign to halt the port's project in favor of Riggers Loft. In recent weeks, Butt has publicly criticized Matzorkis' management of the port, accusing the longtime director of not running the facility efficiently.

"The city manager and city staff have every right to make recommendations, and they made good recommendations to award the contract" for construction at Harbour Way, Bates said. "But then Mr. Butt started throwing his weight around, going after staff."

In June, the City Council officially shifted the location to the Riggers Loft. ([Richmond Council Moves Port Security Project to New Location](#), June 7, 2012). Robert Rogers wrote:

RICHMOND -- After weeks of debate, the City Council opted this week to shift a grant-funded port security construction project to a new location.

The divided council has approved a measure to seek new bids to build a security and operations center for first responders at Riggers Loft, a vacant 26,000-square-foot building constructed during World War II.

The vote, which occurred past midnight on Wednesday after more than two hours of heated debate, was a rejection of Richmond Port staff's suggestion that the city rebid the project for its original proposed location, the port's former main offices at 1411 Harbour Way South.

Councilman Nat Bates, who joined Corky Booze in dissenting, criticized his council colleagues for eschewing the staff recommendation.

"This jeopardizes the whole project," Bates said, noting that the nearly \$4 million California Emergency Management Agency grant that will fund the project includes a June 2013 deadline for project completion.

Council members Jim Rogers, Jovanka Beckles and Tom Butt joined Mayor Gayle McLaughlin in forming a four-vote majority. Councilman Jeff Ritterman was absent.

The issue of where to build the center has simmered since early spring, when Butt began lobbying publicly to move the project from the Port's main office to Riggers Loft. Butt argued that Riggers Loft may be a better site not only for the center but also in terms of spurring economic development and enhancing historical attractions related to the city's World War II Homefront National Park.

Riggers Loft is located across the Santa Fe Channel from the site originally proposed, and sits among several other World War II-era buildings in the Point Potrero Marine Terminal.

As part of his efforts, Butt publicly criticized Executive Port Director Jim Matzorkis and his management of the port facilities.

"It came down to a matter of credibility," Butt said. "Where I differed with the port staff is that we were working from different fact sets, and it was my credibility versus theirs I had no choice but to take them on."

Matzorkis and his staff had been joined by the city's fire and police chiefs in proclaiming that Harbour Way was the optimum site for the security center. Matzorkis said that responding to Butt's criticism of the security center plans and insistence on Riggers Loft had consumed "significant" staff time over the past two months.

City Manager Bill Lindsay lamented the rift that had opened between port staff and the council.

"I will say that this was not a good process," Lindsay said. "It did become adversarial, and I think unnecessarily so."

Lindsay added that haggling over the location at this late date is undesirable.

"We are still very concerned about making the deadline," Lindsay said. "We are really going to have to expedite getting this done (by June 2013)."

Ultimately, Alten Construction was also the low bidder for the Riggers Loft Rehabilitation, and construction is well underway and on schedule. Port staff have embraced the project and are doing an excellent job of managing it.



Animal News

Everyone likes animal stories.

This year, we had two lambs born in the spring ([Tinker Belle Delivers Two Lambs - Spring Must Be Here](#), February 17, 2012) and a pygmy goat joined our menagerie ([Getting Tom Butt's Goat](#), November 13, 2012)



Lucia, the missing dog of a cancer patient was found and returned in response to an E-FORUM posting ([Lucia Found!](#) October 23, 2012)



Li'l G, the pygmy goat thinks she is a dog (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-sMyAAAnTOM>).

Did My Wishes/Predictions for 2012 Come True?

How did my wishes for 2012 fare? It was pretty much a mixed bag Here are the results:

Shipyards 3 Buildings



Wish: *I hope that the National Park Service will lease enough space in the General Warehouse and/or Riggers Loft for the maritime Museum Archives to enable the financing of rehabilitation of the Riggers Loft and tenant improvements for the General Warehouse, and that the work will be completed in 2012. It would also be nice for the National Park Service to designate the Cafeteria Building as its headquarters and begin the rehabilitation of that structure.*



Outcome: Although the National Park Service spurned Richmond, the Riggers Loft is under construction, and a leasing broker has been retained to market it as well as the General Warehouse and the Cafeteria.

Point Molate



Wish: *I wish that the City will prevail in or successfully settle its lawsuit for interpretation of the Upstream contract and that a new plan for development of Point Molate will go forward.*



Outcome: Unfortunately, the City is still locked in litigation with Upstream and the tribe.

Railroads



Wish: *I hope that the proposed Quiet Zones at Cutting Boulevard and 4th Street and Canal Boulevard will be completed and activated. I hope that the City will keep its promise to limit street blockages by trains serving the Port of Richmond during the day. I wish that BNSF would make its engineers more sensitive to the needless harm they are causing by abusing train horns at night. I wish that the Federal Railroad Administration and the California Public Utilities Commission would become as concerned about the adverse impacts of noise as they are about grade crossing safety.*

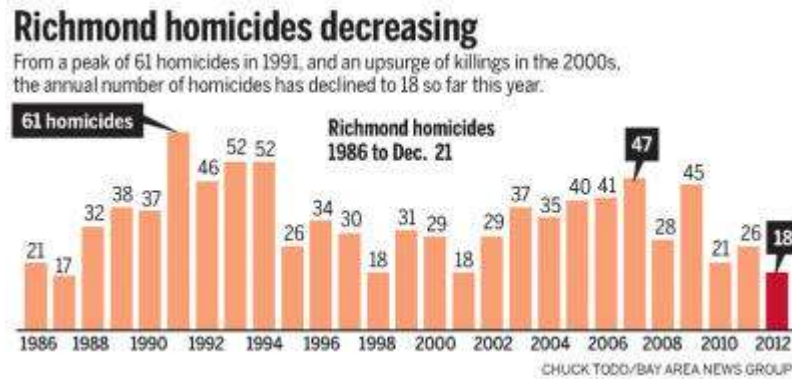
Outcome: The Quiet Zone at Cutting and 4th is operational, but the Canal Quiet Zones are still lagging. Horns are still a huge problem, but incremental improvements are being made.

Crime



Wish: *I hope Richmond's crime rate continues to decline, and I hope the homicide rate will also decline in 2012.*

Outcome: Crime overall continues to drop, and the 2012 Richmond homicide rate is the lowest in recent memory. On December 24, Robert Rogers wrote:



As Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose grapple with rising homicide totals and fears that their police departments are ill-equipped to stem the tide, a different reality has taken shape in this city once labeled among the most dangerous in the nation.

Eighteen people have been killed in Richmond this year, down from 45 three years ago and about half as many as the yearly average over the past decade. Many credit the turnaround to a confluence of law enforcement and community efforts since a summer of bloodshed in 2005 that led to calls for the city to declare a state of emergency.

While strained resources in police departments and social services have hampered public safety efforts in other Bay Area cities, Richmond has bulked up its police force from 150 sworn officers in 2006 to 190 today, implemented modern community-policing models and funded a novel violence-prevention office.

The results can be seen all over Richmond's craggy streets. Parks once prowled by drug pushers and gun toters now bustle with kids. Violent tracts, where gunfire and sirens once ushered in the Tent City peace movement, now host dog walkers and cyclists.

The total crime rate is down about 20 percent since 2006. The last time the city finished a year with homicide numbers this low was 2001.

"Richmond is doing a lot of things right, and that's helping them buck a trend," said Barry Krisberg, research and policy director at the Earl Warren Institute at UC Berkeley School of Law. "Years ago, Richmond committed itself to an evidence-based, comprehensive strategy to reduce violence, and we're seeing the payoff."

With 103,000 people, Richmond still has a higher per-capita homicide rate than cities like San Francisco or San Jose, but the days of making "most dangerous in the country" lists -- Richmond was in the top 10 as recently as 2007 -- seem like a distant memory.

Chevron



Wish: *I hope that the Chevron Energy and Hydrogen Project will be permitted and start construction in 2012. I wish that Chevron would either drop their property tax assessment appeals or negotiate a settlement that leaves Richmond whole.*

Outcome: The Renewal Project permitting process continues but has been eclipsed by the rush to repair damage from the Chevron August fire. While Chevron's appeals continue, the one heard by the Assessment Appeals Board in 2012 was both a shock and a setback for Chevron.



Elections



Wish: *I hope the 2012 City Council elections will result in a City Council that can work together for a progressive and sustainable future. I predict that one or more incumbents will choose not to run for reelection.*

Outcome: Incumbent Jeff Ritterman declined to run for reelection. While the RPA slate was defeated, the City Council will retain a progressive flavor for at least the next two years.

Marijuana



Prediction: *I predict that the City Council's plan to license marijuana dispensaries will fail due to federal intervention.*

Outcome: So far, the feds have stayed out of Richmond.

Booker et al.



Prediction: *I predict the [Booker litigation](#) will be resolved in 2012.*

Outcome: While the Booker litigation was resolved in the City's favor in state court in 2012, and most of the plaintiffs have either dropped out or settled, the Federal court case may go ahead for one or two plaintiffs in 2013.

North Shoreline



Prediction: *The idea of the North Shoreline as open space will be toast in 2012.*

Outcome: North Shoreline open space did not make it into the General Plan 2030.

My Nominations for the Best of 2012

You can get plenty of bad news in the traditional media, but I tend to gravitate toward good news involving Richmond, which is way underreported. In fact, the E-FORUM is mostly good news about Richmond. The advent of [Richmond Confidential](#) in 2009 continues to bring a welcome new source of news that often focused on the positive. [You can subscribe to the City Manager's Weekly Report](#), which is also an excellent source of information about mostly positive developments and activities in Richmond. Instead of listing stories from the E-FORUM about positive events and happenings of interest in Richmond in 2012, just go to <http://www.tombutt.com/e-forum/e-forum.htm> and browse through them. Here are some of the best:

- [More Media Coverage for Lawrence Berkeley National laboratory Move to Richmond](#), January 24, 2012
- [Rare Chance to Visit Battleship in Bay Area](#), February 14, 2012
- [Another Bay Area City Moves Against Rodent Poisons](#), February 23, 2012
- [Rosie the Riveter Pays Off City of Richmond Bridge Loan for Maritime Center](#), March 28, 2012
- [Shocking Decision on Chevron Property Tax](#), April 2, 2012
- [Richmond Has a New General Plan](#), April 25, 2012
- [Grand Opening Celebration Planned for Visitor Education Center at Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park](#), May 21, 2012
- [Richmond Council Moves Port Security Project to New Location](#), June 7, 2012
- [Nutiva Moves to Richmond. Adds 50 Employees](#), June 12, 2012
- [Main Energy Authority Signs Up Biggest Customer Yet: City of Richmond](#), June 20, 2012
- [Richmond Adopts Nontoxic Pest Control Rules](#), July 26, 2012
- [Riggers Loft Rehabilitation Project Contract Authorized by City Council](#), August 1, 2012

- [Rosies Girls](#), August 17, 2012
- [Richmond: Marina Bay Underpass Project Funding Restored](#), September 19, 2012
- [Restoring Richmond's Tree Canopy](#), November 9, 2012
- [From Chief Magnus - Note What City is Missing From This Year's List](#), December 6, 2012

My Nominations for Worst of 2012

The Election

Despite being reelected myself in 2012, the election was a painful and disappointing event that reflected poorly on Richmond. It is widely accepted that Big Soda and Big Oil bought the election for about \$4 million. Maybe the outcome would have been the same without the onslaught of outside money, but we will never know, will we?

City Council Meetings

City Council meetings have deteriorated to perhaps the most uncivil and longest in Richmond history, thanks largely to Corky Booze and his gallery of audience.

The Chevron Fire

Despite huge successes in many areas, publicity about the Chevron fire was a setback for Richmond's reputation that will impair economic development, job creation and recovery from the recession. The fire proved, once again, that the Community Warning System was a failure.

Railroads

With Union Pacific driving piles all night long next to the Richmond Annex, BNSF blowing horns all night as loud, long and often as possible, these renegade dinosaurs of another era do whatever they can to make us miserable. Add to that the FRA and CPUC, both owned by the railroads, that fail to regulate and fail to live up to their own mission statements. The only bright spot is Richmond Pacific, which donated funding to create a Quiet Zone at 34th Street. Thanks RPR!

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best of 2012

City Council

- *The best of 2012 is that the majority of the City Council had the political courage to make a lot of decisions that they knew would bring down the wrath of Chevron and Big Soda. If politicians in other jurisdictions had that same level of political courage, this state and this country would be in less of a mess.*

Streets

- *I am glad that the streets & roads of Richmond are no longer rated among the worst in the Bay Area, but the streets of Point Richmond are still poster children for "failed streets."*

Crime

- *Dropping of the "most dangerous cities in America" list makes the top five, maybe #1.*
- *The city has enjoyed less crime, and I'm hoping with our great police force and police chief, the wonderful youth job training programs and organizations such as Urban Tilth, every year the*

- crime rate will continue to drop. I was so happy when I saw that Richmond was not on the list of the 25 most dangerous cities! Richmond's image is changing for the better all the way around.*
- *We moved here 13 years ago from San Francisco. We lived near the project in North Beach and gunfire was a common occurrence. For the first several years we lived here we would lay in bed at night and count the gunshots. This happened on many nights. Now, we almost never hear gunfire anymore. I think the policing effort and shotspotter have contributed greatly to this and we are thankful.*
 - *Best: Decline of the homicide rate*

General Plan

- *The redevelopment [General Plan 3030] plan, which includes safe bike routes, is another hopeful feather in Richmond's renaissance cap. Again, Bates and Booze did not support it.*
- *I am pleased that the new General Plan was finally passed. It isn't perfect, but it does attempt to provide a blueprint for sustainability and a concern for the health for the citizens of Richmond. It is wonderful that several new "green" businesses have chosen to relocate in Richmond, providing much needed jobs.*

Rosie the Riveter

- *A highlight: the opening of the Rosie the Riveter visitor center.*
- *It is also clear that the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front Historical National Park is creating for a very young city, a sense of shared history -- out of which community can be formed. The fact that Richmond was a city of 23,000 in 1941 and grew to a population of 130,000 over just a few years -- we are still only 70 years old [as a major city]at this point. One of the gifts of the National Park Service is that it is providing that shared history that has been missing. Where it will take us is unknown, but the now available films and exhibits are gaining a growing audience of both young and old. Every day the pride of the community is growing as we remember and celebrate our achievements.*
- *Nat'l Park Service/Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park for helping put Richmond on the map, positively.*
- *The Rosie the Riveter World War II National Historical Park continues to draw visitors from around the world to Richmond, and presents the positive story of Richmond's spunk.*



Point Richmond Music

- *Also, love the great music events at the Point.*

Salute

- *Please acknowledge Salute's for the Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless - and those who volunteer.*

LBNL

- *Getting Lawrence Berkeley Lab to select Richmond for their campus*
- *The Lawrence lab is good.*

Booker vs. City of Richmond

- *Best and worst: The lawsuit against Chief Magnus was a time consuming, painful process but the Chief and other city staff maintained their civility, dignity and integrity and an excellent judge and jury were to shift through very complex issues to render a just verdict. Kudos to the City Council for drawing a line in the sand and not settling with the plaintiffs before the facts were known.*
- *Decision of LBNL to create a Richmond Bay Campus.*

West County Health Center

- *The opening of the West County Health Center bringing affordable care to Richmond, San Pablo and other low income residents.*

Casinos

- *Best: Defeat of further expansion of Indian casinos in Richmond*

Chevron

- *The best is that Chevron got busted for putting in bad pipes that caused the fire.*

Downtown

- *I like the appearance of the downtown with the street lamps and street furniture. And the huge new parking garage makes the downtown seem metropolitan.*

Ford Building

- *The Ford building area, always beautiful but now accessible. Years of work showing results.*

Richmond Art Center

- *I hear rave reviews about the City's Art Center and always mean to take a class and maybe this year I will.*

Japanese Americans

- *I wish that more tribute be made to the American citizens of Japanese descent, for their continuing contribution to Richmond, because they have contributed greatly to the City of Richmond and I see their garden esthetic, still, as I walk around the Annex*

The Annex

- *San Pablo is a street I love - all the small businesses along it - but there are definitely down areas that I would like to see landscaped. I wish that I knew more about the work of the Planning Department and sincerely hope that the Annex, for one, retains its neighborhood quality - it is an example of how good a neighborhood can be and I think that Mary Selva, Annex Council President, deserves high praise for her dedicated service to both the Annex and to the City of Richmond. Mary is extremely well informed, and she also values public employees' perspectives and I think she represents our concerns while maintaining a balanced perspective.*

Dedicated Citizens

- *The many dedicated citizens of Richmond who work towards excellence for this city.*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best Organizations of 2012

Fix Our Ferals

- *Fix Our Ferals with their new clinic on San Pablo Ave is doing much to minimize the feral cat population in Richmond and beyond.*

TRAC

- *TRAC, the Trails for Richmond Action Committee, for its leadership and hard work in making Richmond The Bay Trail City. We're so lucky to have over 31 miles of Bay Trail free to all linking the City's neighborhoods and shoreline parks. Richmond has more miles of Bay Trail completed than any other city and attracts a growing number of users from throughout the Bay Area for both walking and cycling.*
- *TRAC has continued its impressive record of completing our section of the Bay Trail and making Richmond a model for all of the other cities on the Bay.*

Richmond Trees

- *Richmond Trees is my favorite organization! As a member of Richmond Trees, I may be tooting my own horn, but we are doing great work with the city to expand the urban forest, helping to beautify the city, and educating people along the way on all the health, safety, and environmental benefits of trees! All the organizations we've worked with are fantastic as well! Hometown Richmond Green Team is an inspiration! The young people are upbeat, active, ready to make things happen! Groundwork Richmond and the Watershed Project are there to support the young people in this. The Watershed Project has been a stalwart for the environment. And then there are other groups...Urban Tilth is committed to the community. They do so much work to encourage health, DIY, self-confidence. They work hard! Richmond Spokes also doing wonderful work encouraging healthy lifestyles and advocating for people on bikes, also bringing youth into the mix. How can there be anything bad to say about this city with all this wonderful work going on?!*
- *Individually and collectively, Richmond Trees is beautifying Richmond, making it safer, quieter, building community, improving air and water quality, and the health of the community by growing Richmond's tree canopy.*
 - *In 2012, Richmond Trees received a \$500 grant from PG&E and a \$10,000 grant from California ReLeaf to plant 100 street trees, develop new educational materials, purchase a concrete saw, and export the model of partnership, education, training and advocacy we developed into other neighborhoods in Richmond. To that end, we partnered with the City of Richmond, Groundwork Richmond and The Watershed Project.*
 - *Richmond Trees members completed an Advanced Structural Tree Pruning workshop with Molly and Steve Batchelder of SBCA Tree Consulting, who generously donated their time and expertise so we can expand the scope of our tree walks.*
 - *Richmond Trees hosts Tree Care Walks on a monthly basis in the North and East Neighborhood and include weeding, mulching and removing tree stakes where appropriate, and speaking with residents about proper care of trees.*
 - *Richmond Trees is an all-volunteer, grassroots group of dedicated, hard-working community members from all walks of life. Our mission is to promote and grow the City of Richmond's urban forest and green infrastructure through community planting, tree care, education and advocacy in order to improve the health and well-being of the diverse Richmond community.*
 - *Since October 2011, more than 200 new street trees have been planted with more requests coming in all the time. Benefits of planting street trees include:*

- *Cleaning the air by absorbing and storing pollutant gases and replacing them with oxygen to combat the greenhouse effect, improve air quality and slowing global warming;*
 - *Saving and cleaning rainwater and preventing water pollution;*
 - *Softening neighborhood noise and providing an urban habitat for wildlife;*
 - *Improving health, increasing physical activity and fostering community;*
 - *Increasing property values by 15% or more;*
 - *Slowing traffic, improving public safety and decreasing crime.*
- *Richmond Trees trained young adults in Richmond in urban forestry skills, including Watershed Project interns chosen through their respective neighborhood councils and four members of the Hometown Richmond Green Team (partnership between Groundwork Richmond, Rosie the Riveter National Park, and City of Richmond YouthWORKS). The model of education, advocacy and outreach developed by Richmond Trees has been successful in training interns who reside in Iron Triangle, Coronado and Santa Fe neighborhoods. Training included the canvassing process; appropriate planting sites, tree types, and tree care when we ran across neighborhood trees that were not thriving. Flyers detailing the benefits of trees are handed out during the canvassing events, and canvassers have been educated in how to talk with residents who have concerns about potential sewer problems, leaf litter, crime, and how to talk with potential adopters. In addition, students from Making Waves participated in two planting events with Richmond Trees.*
- *Between 9/24/2012 - 12/15/2012, Richmond Trees volunteers donated 597 hours of service.*
- *Richmond Trees. Shows great promise for continuing to transform Richmond into a greener, healthier and more beautiful city.*

Ujima

- *Ujima continues to rescue women from drug dependency, and helps them learn to be better parents.*

Spokes

- *I'd like to nominate SPOKES as Success for 2012..... It is our anniversary year for the Bike shop and fourth year creating a vibrant bike culture in Richmond, Ca. (<http://spokeshopanniversary-eorg.eventbrite.com/>). 2012 The SPOKESHOP bike lounge has made Richmond History. 2013 THE SPOKESHOP Bike Lounge will tighten the spokes and tune the machine*

Richmond Community Foundation

- *I can't think of any organization that has had a greater positive effect on the community than the Richmond Community Foundation under Joan Davis' leadership. It has changed the face of the Iron Triangle and Coronado districts through well-placed programming and resources. Where it may be hard to pinpoint the reason why Richmond has experienced a significant drop in crime; where surely the forward-looking police practices are a contributing factor, the RCF has proven to be a quantifiable preventative measure by providing hope for the young while it gave families reasons to celebrate a new-found sense of security.*

Writer Coach Connection

- *I'm participating in the Writer Coach Connection as a writing coach at Richmond High, and hats off to everyone who had a hand in bringing that wonderful program to Richmond! I predict that it will expand to Kennedy in 2013, and double the number of kids being served.*

Richmond Main Street

- *I think Richmond Main Street made a monumental accomplishment by implementing the first Business Improvement District in the City of Richmond. The creation of this district will pay off in dividends that will create economic sustainability and growth for years to come. This project will no doubt be replicated throughout the City and will bring business, residential development and create a much needed positive image for the City.*

Richmond Art Center

- *I joined the Board of the Richmond Art Center a year ago on January 1. From that time until the city agreed to an MOU with the Art Center for support and expanded programs in July, the Board struggled every day over whether we could keep the doors of this 76 year old Richmond institution open for another day, another week, another month. The Board worked incredibly hard, as did the staff, but the real heroes of the piece are Bill Lindsay, Michele Seville and the City Council for agreeing that our city needs art at its heart and is worth supporting. Since July, the Art Center has hired a great new Executive Director, installed a largely new Board, and we've held incredibly popular community events in October (SkeletonFest) and December (the Holiday Arts Festival), and we're taking art classes out to schools, community centers and soon the libraries and possibly even the Barrett Apartments. And we're building more support for the on-site classes, and getting our house in order to be eligible for more grants to expand into the community even more. In January we'll open the 17th annual Art of Living Black and an exhibition of woodcuts linked to Richmond's sister city of Regla, Cuba. We are looking forward to working with Katy Curl at the Library on a program called STEAM - incorporating science, technology, engineering, math and ART into an after-school program. The energy, optimism, and inclusiveness at the Art Center are almost 100% different from last January 1. So, while there have been many positive developments in Richmond in 2012, this one is my nomination for one of the best things that has happened in Richmond this year. Thanks again.*

E-Forum Reader Nominations for Best City Employees (including elected)

Gayle McLaughlin

- *I think Mayor McLaughlin is a good mayor, and she has my solid support. Years from now people will reflect on the changes she has made. I support her world view, and how it affects our community.*
- *Our Mayor, Gayle McLaughlin represents the City well, also, and her behavior during adversity has been even handed and compassionate.*



Tom Butt

- *Tom Butt has been an outstanding City Councilman, words aren't sufficient to describe what a great job he has done*

Jeff Ritterman

- *Jeff Ritterman served this city with intelligence and dignity. He took on big beverage and though Prop N lost, it will continue to resonate across the country as more cities look at the effects of sugar on all of us. He was instrumental in helping to bring Lawrence Livermore Labs here. (Of course this seems to have escaped Mr Ellis)*

- *Sad farewell to Dr. Ritterman; he has some great ideas (soda tax) and expended a lot of energy to work on causes.*

Bill Lindsay

- *Bill Lindsay, Chris Magnus, and Richard Mitchell for their strong support and invaluable cooperation in continuing to make the Craneway Pavilion and Ford Point the waterfront destination we all envisioned.*
- *Bill Lindsay-I still think he's one of the few really professional, competent city managers, maybe in all of CA.*
- *City Manager Bill Lindsay for everything that he does so well with special kudos for organizing the large, successful campaign demonstrating to LBNL that Richmond would be the best location for its new campus. He also deserves immense credit for maintaining his cool in the face of Corky Booze's bullying and vicious, unwarranted attacks during City Council meetings.*
- *I think Bill Lindsay is a 'top drawer' city manager. He keeps his cool and gets the job done. We are fortunate to have him.*
- *A tip of the hat to Bill Lindsay for being a great City Manager.*
- *Our wonderful city manager, Bill Lindsey, deserves kudos. He is probably the best city manager Richmond has ever had, and is the envy of all of the cities around.*
- *Generally, I think our City Manager has been great - he gets good press, he seems to be working hard for the City and us residents, I've been generally pleased by his remarks to the press - I think he has been a major factor in turning Richmond around and leveling the playing field among cities along our East Bay coast and in Marin.*
- *Lindsay because he hired Magnus I think.*



Chris Magnus

- *Huge kudos to Chris Magnus for keeping us out of the top 25 crime-ridden cities list - and to Bill Lindsay for hiring him!*
- *Chief Magnus, who leads our PD like a professional who's in it for the community, not just his own power/money. I have many concerns about our PD, and cops in general, but I think Magnus as Chief is as good as it gets.*
- *I believe Chief Magnus is a blessing. Crime is dropping, and he has helped to change the 'good old boy' mentality that appears to have once existed inside the RPD.*
- *Huzzah to Chief Magnus for all his good work with the RPD and especially for getting Richmond off the list of 25 worst crime cities!!!*
- *Best department chief of police Magnus.*
- *Our police chief, Chris Magnus, made it through the turmoil and was supported by the City and I appreciate that and the fact that the City has found a way to ease just about every one of the petty complainers on to greener pastures and, hopefully, avoid a federal suit, enabling our security executive to get back to using his creativity to work on police and community safety issues.*



Jim Goins

- *James Goins and crew, who seem to be keeping the COR on an even keel while finances of many other cities leave much to be desired.*

Chris Chamberlain, Lisa Graves, Steve DeLucchi and Lina Velasco

- *City employees who have distinguished themselves by superior service, ideas, leadership or deeds. I think the city of Richmond generally has a pretty great staff. From personal experience: Chris Chamberlain, Lisa Graves, and Steve DeLucchi in the Parks and Landscaping, and Lina Velasco in Planning having been doing a wonderful job working with citizen groups and nonprofits to expand Richmond's Urban Forest. Lisa has been available on weekends to work with groups to plant trees. She is wonderfully organized, and always ready with new ideas on how to get more groups involved. Great at dealing with kinks in the program. She is great to work with!*
- *Chris Chamberlain, Lisa Graves, Steve DeLucchi and Lina Velasco deserve recognition for their support and partnership;*
- *We wouldn't be where we are today without Chris Chamberlain and the Department of Parks and Landscaping, and Lina Velasco's work in the Planning Department enabled us to receive a \$10K grant from California Releaf.*
- *Best employee Chris Chamberlain came into the city of Richmond with his feet on the ground and an attitude of working to make things work.*

Bruce Goodmiller

- *I think Bruce Goodmiller must be part saint to put up with the attacks from Booze.*

Sheila Dickinson

- *Looking back at last year I see someone nominated children's librarian Sheila Dickinson for special mention. She's still doing wonderful things at the library, creating a sense of community among toddler parents (and some grandparents) in Point Richmond where I hang out, but also at Bayview branch where I attended one crowded story time. Upstairs at the library I don't think things are going so well. For instance, no story times during the two weeks of Christmas when children are out of school. I was planning to bring my older kindergartener grandchild back for a "reunion" but no luck.*
- *Sheila Dickinson - Children's Librarian. Sheila is a true treasure and the most remarkable employee in the City of Richmond. She has an amazing way of connecting with children at story time, sparking their creativity, and helping to foster a love of books and learning. After checking out story times in libraries in Berkeley, Albany and Oakland, hers became our favorite because of her great gift as a story teller and her commitment to getting to know all the children who attend. She routinely goes above and beyond her duties to help children find books that match their interests. On a recent occasion, Sheila helped us find 12 books on a subject that were age appropriate and exemplary in their art work and their text. She is a gem, and Richmond is so lucky to have her.*

Shasha Curl

- *Shasha Curl and her work to bring LBNL is one of the huge events in 2012--I am biased but Devone Boggan and ONS and RPD and broader Ceasefire-Lifelines to Healing movement to reduce gun violence also stands out.*

Mary Phelps

- *Kudos to the Engineering Department's Mary Phelps. Here in Atchison Village, since the spring of 2011 we've been working hard on getting our aging, decrepit sewer laterals replaced. It's a huge and very expensive project that we would not be able to tackle were it not for Mary's support and guidance. She has gone above and beyond in helping us understand the intricacies of Richmond's wastewater program, and has mentored us as we've navigated all aspects of the grant application process. At present we're about 1/3 of the way through replacing the laterals for all 450*

units. Thanks to her, we have recouped over \$200,000 so far, which we then invested in the next phase of the project. Without this help from the City's sewer lateral grant program, we would not be able to keep the momentum going. I predict that in 2013, with Mary's help we will be able to replace the laterals for at least 80 more units. BTW, you were very instrumental in getting this project started too, Tom. Thank you!

Janet Johnson

- *For more than 10 years, Janet Johnson has committed herself to improving this City. She is a true champion who goes above and beyond to make Richmond a better place. She has made a smooth transition from the now defunct Redevelopment Department to the City Manager's office, taking on additional projects and duties with great zeal. She has distinguished herself as a great leader by her service and good deeds.*

Rochelle Monk, Sue Kedlac, and City Clerk, Diane Holmes

- *I want to recognize Rochelle Monk, Sue Kedlac, and City Clerk, Diane Holmes. For one reason or another, I have contact with these people on various issues: Rochelle is professional, helpful, and reliable. She is unfailingly pleasant. Sue is the go-to person. When all else fails, she comes through. Like Rochelle, Sue is a pleasant person. Diane Holmes is a professional, patient, and helpful "frontperson" for our City. We are lucky to have them. I wish I could say the same for Jeff Shogi, Marilyn Langlois' replacement in the Mayor's office.*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best City Department 2012

City Manager's Office

- *Best Department- City Manager's office – Most effective and committed staff. Helping to create new, effective programs and policies for Richmond that will help to make Richmond a safer, more environmentally, economically developed place to live.*

Parks and Landscaping

- *Richmond Parks & Landscaping Department - Under Chris Chamberlain's outstanding leadership, the department has done a great job of encouraging community engagement and supporting community efforts as much as budgets will allow. With unfortunately very scarce resources, Chris has turned the department around, increased morale, and has begun building truly great parks that will benefit Richmond's children and families for years to come.*
- *Parks & Landscaping Dept. managed by Chris Chamberlain for their stellar accomplishments in maintaining and beautifying the City's parks, Bay Trail and roadways. In particular, they've made Richmond a springtime destination for viewing the colorful flower show flourishing naturalized along trails and roads.*
- *The gardeners are the City team that I have most personal contact with - I always liked Carol Hauthausen and Paul Hyman is conscientious and personable and seems to be well informed and he cares about trees and people too - I think he's doing an excellent job for us!*
- *For what it's worth, I was really impressed with, I guess, Public Works in keeping the weeds down – for the first time, that I've experienced – near San Pablo and Roosevelt, esp. on east side of SPA and on Roosevelt just east of the onramp. I had written COR connect about the weeds and about getting several flat bike tires every year due to goat head punctures. This is the first year that I haven't had any punctures. So, yeah.....!!*

Planning

- *The staff in the Planning Department continues to maintain very high standards in spite of being over worked. I worry about them as development picks up.*

Police

- *Chief Magnus and the RPD have done a superb job, both at reducing crime in my area (bay side of Point Richmond), and improving traffic safety.*

Code Enforcement

- *Excellent work has been done at painting over graffiti, which used to be a plague in my area.*
- *Ed continues to diligently clean the vandalism from our city. Wishing we could catch vandals and get them to clean their own mess.*

Parks and Planning

- *Parks and Landscaping Department and the Planning Department are terrific departments! Forward thinking, professional, and work well with the ideas citizens bring to them. I also appreciate the Environmental Initiatives group, although I wonder about the Olive Tree give away. The trees can be weedy, and it would be troublesome to see olive trees popping up in the few wild places left surrounding Richmond, outcompeting native vegetation and reducing biodiversity.*

E-FORUM Reader's Nominations for Best Projects of 2012

Solano Playlot

- *Project completed - Solano Playlot. The renovation of the space is amazing both in design in execution. The City's support of extensive community involvement led to the creation of a park that is beautiful, unique, enjoyable for adults and fantastic for kids. It's helped to bring the entire North and East neighborhood together by creating a public gathering space, and has become a city-wide destination for families and kids.*

Bike Facilities

- *I haven't been following as closely as I have in previous years, I think the best projects are those that include bike facilities! I know that Barrett Avenue bike lanes have been in the works (I would love to see it happen!), and the Ohlone/Richmond Greenway connection is also somewhere in the planning stage. Looking forward to seeing those projects come to fruition!*

Carlson Boulevard

- *The new Carlson Blvd. is the best thing that's happened to Richmond in general and the Annex in particular. What a pleasure to drive to El Cerrito Plaza and other spots on San Pablo without that horrible traffic snarl on Central. Even good for getting to the Monterey Market, where I frequently run into Richmond folks.*
- *I really want to thank the City Engineer for Carlson Street - I was on the Annex Council Executive Committee when the City agreed to finally improve Carlson and DID! Carlson looks great and they did it the way the Council and residents wanted it to be done!*

Marina Bay Bypass and Underpass

- *Much gratitude to those who got the Marina Bay underpass money back from the State's clutches. Also big gratitude to those responsible for guiding the Meade St. Bypass which finally opened. Many thanks to Sunset Pointe's Gilda and David Waldman for pursuing the idea with UC in the first place.*

Tennis

- *The grand opening of the Pt. Richmond tennis court and the dedication of the Pt. Richmond tennis court to Garry and Maryn Harlbut for their work in establishing adult tennis in the city of Richmond.*
- *The joint venture between Recreation, Parks & Landscaping and the USTA that resulted in the refurbishing of 4 tennis courts in Nichol Park and the summer dedication ceremony.*
- *The relationship that is established with the U.S. Tennis association and the City of Richmond Recreation youth tennis program.*

Bay Trail

- *I nominate the Richmond Bay Trail for Best of 2012 because: 1. \$2,074,000 in new funding for the Bay Trail came to Richmond in 2012 (a total of over \$7.2 Million in grants so far); 2. Progress on the Shipyard 3 and Wildcat Marsh trails and on the 5.5 mile spur trail running from the Plunge to Point Molate; and 3. Over 31 miles of Bay Trail now completed - more than any other city on the SF Bay. For details see <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/pdfs/2013NewYearLR.pdf>.*

E-FORUM Nominations for the Worst of 2012

The Election

- *The city council election with Bates and Bell winning.*
- *The unlimited money spent by Chevron and Big Soda to buy the election.*
- *While most of the country gave the finger to Citizens United, Richmond residents seemed to have embraced it with their support of Chevron and the ABA.*
- *Richmond African American religious leaders for selling out their community for a little ABA cash. Reminds me of the tune Stealing in the Name of the Lord and the Temptations homage to it- Papa Was a Rolling Stone. Money changes everything-they've lost what respect I have for them big time. Whores.*
- *Worst thing happening in Richmond -- as in across the nation. Unregulated corporate funding of elections. In this case, of course, the Beverage Association and Chevron funding of the campaign against the RPA candidates (and you) and their promotion of Bell, Roberson and Bates. My favorite campaign flier: "Gary Bell -- He'll Hold Chevron Accountable" on one side and "major funding by Chevron" on the back. Best thing: the Community Advisory Board's successful campaign to spend a good portion of the money provided by the state for relocating prisoners back to the county not on a larger jail, but on community support measures to decrease recidivism.*
- *The buying of our election by Big Soda, Chevron, and their allies was the very worst thing by far that happened in Richmond in 2012. I don't know which was harder to bear: the unrelenting sanctimony of the Chamber of Commerce types mewling nonstop about "taxing our poor," or the lurid anti-RPA flyers mailed out nonstop courtesy of Chevron's millions. What a disgrace. With their explosions and their toxicity and their litigiousness, Chevron has exerted and continues to exert a deeply negative effect on our health, our property values, and now, our democracy.*

- *Chevron's effort to buy a city Council that would rubber stamp its wishes and the Beverage Industry's disgusting manipulation of the facts to ignore serious public health issues and the impact of sugared beverages on especially the Latino and African American population*
- *The worst is that Chevron spent so much money to keep progressive council members from being elected.*
- *The effort by Chevron to buy the election, and, unfortunately, they almost succeeded.*
- *The worst of this year was the smear campaigns against Edwardo Martinez and Marilyn Langlois. That CHEVRON was behind this smear just tells us how trustworthy they are.*
- *That Chevron and the Beverage industry were able to buy, quite openly, the votes of so many.*
- *Was somewhat embarrassing to see the level to which people were willing to stoop to lobby for or against potential councilmembers or the implementation of a tax on Sugar Sweetened Beverages. So much money was wasted on these campaigns that could have been used for more important projects for the City.*

City Council

- *I'm disabled so I don't come to Council meetings, but I watch them pretty faithfully on KCRT. Over the course of the past year, though, I keep having to turn the TV off because the hostility and conflict make the meetings too distressingly unproductive. I hope and pray that things will calm down in 2013!*

Bates and Booze

- *The NO-NO's, Bates and Booze, for their Republican-like opposition to anything that won't benefit their benefactors. And their race baiting. Whores II.*
- *The worst that has happened is that money and ignorance played such a large part in the recent elections. That Bates was able to be re-elected is almost criminal. That he and Booze played the race card to the hilt, and helped to drive a wedge further between the people of this city is disgusting and only continues to demonstrate that neither of them really are concerned with the community at large.*
- *With Booze and Bates on the council, they may be the worst. They will blame the council for the loss of 800 jobs Chevron is moving to Texas, although those jobs are in San Ramon or some are. Richmond's eye on the future and green energy is very exciting and hopeful. I wish the pure arrogance of Chevron were exposed more and also the hope that the lab brings to the city, not to mention many smaller new green businesses.*
- *Our City Council is beset with two very unhelpful members, Mr. Bates and Mr. Booze - I simply do not understand the ugly and malicious campaign tactics pulled against the two progressive candidates and hold Mr. Bates responsible for that - he has not learned his lesson and has repeated his tactics from the past Mayoral election and I don't know why he continues to pull a majority of the votes. Mr. Booze should never have gotten elected - a 'sympathy' vote proved to be a huge mistake.*



Corky Booze

- *Corky Booze's grandstanding, obstructionism, racism and general obnoxiousness*
- *Worst of 2012 is Corky Booze's performance in City Council meetings.*
- *PS...and a big boo/hiss to Corky Booze for impeding progress in general. Has someone started a recall yet?*
- *Worst of what has happened in Richmond this year: Corky*



Booze's bullying, racist demagoguery during City Council meetings. His disruptive attacks on the City Manager and other City Council Members make Council meetings tedious, long and painful for citizens & City staff as well the City Council itself. As a disgrace and embarrassment to the City of Richmond. he should be ashamed of himself.

- *Boo Hiss to Corky Booze! Can he be recalled?*
- *The big disappointment for the year was the bully on the City Council.*
- *The worst thing to happen to the City of Richmond in 2012 was the election of Corky Booze to the City Council. There has never been, in my 40 years of following the council meeting, a more disruptive and argumentative member of the council. He's a disgrace to the City of Richmond.*

Chevron Fire

- *Chevron's fire and reaction to it*
- *The worst is the Chevron fire, or it may be the outrageous response that Chevron has made to the city council. Congressman Miller sent out a message detailing this. It shows that Chevron thinks it can get away with anything. With the Feds on Richmond's side maybe it can't.*
- *The Chevron fire, fortunately, did not kill us all but it does smack of the arrogance of lack of proper attention to the condition of the equipment. Also, the universal warning system did not function - I saw the horrendous black plume from a kitchen window in Kensington and rushed home to care for animals and my house*
- *Refinery fire at Richmond due to the poor operating and maintenance programs that allowed a weakened line to remain in service.*

Chevron Moving Jobs Out of Richmond

- *Chevron leaving Marina Bay and moving 800 jobs to Texas*

Air Resources Board

- *Air Resources Board knew for 2 years that Chevron was dumping waste into the air in an un-monitored exhaust line, and even secretly video taped the violations. The Air Board did this to collect evidence the same way a police department might allow a murder to happen on tape, in order to prosecute the alleged offender. What about us 98% that are the victims?*

Jeff Ritterman Leaving

- *Also, sooooo sorry to see Jeff Ritterman go. He was invaluable and his achievements for Richmond will live on.*

Bicycles

- *How about the bicycle group wasting tax payer money on painting four lane auto roads into two lanes of auto traffic and two empty lanes of bicycle all over the city? ONE Two hour parking space for autos from 7A.M. until 7P.M. and unlimited parking for an auto at other times, or a bike corral for ten bikes 24/7/365 and still empty (not enough bike riders). Businesses need more parking for their customers not less. There are many places to visit in the world and it will take forever to get there on a bicycle.*

Design Review Board

- *I continue to find it amazing that the Design Review Board meets in the BASEMENT! The Board that has a primary responsibility for the designed and visual environment in the City meets in the worst designed room in City Hall. The lighting is terrible, the HVAC is noisy, and the interior design is second (or third) best. Certainly, a better room can be used for most meetings and we can do better.*

Racism

- In a city where so many have come because of its racial and cultural diversity, there appears to be a conscious and studied re-building of the racial barrier that so many of us worked so hard to dismantle not so long ago. People of color are being appealed to through the media with mind-numbing regularity in order to build and maintain political power. Our inability to find an acceptable answer to his shameful posturing before a small but true constituency leaves us at risk of losing much of what makes Richmond one of the most interesting and forward-looking communities in the Bay Area. And, yes, I was one of those who voted to seat Councilman Booze, if only as a reward for acting in what I thought was the community's interest over a 10-year period. I so regret having done so, and were it possible -- would support a recall in the time it would take to say "Peace!" Unless the community can find a way to rid itself of the divisive effects of his tenure, we must look forward to two more years of the same.*

Schools

- Our schools rank at the bottom in test results, even comparing our students to other similar populations of English-language-learners, economically disadvantaged—in fact, by all measures. We pay taxes at the top, and continue to provide terrific incomes for outside contractors, architects, and builders via the multi-billion-dollar construction program, loans and bonds we will be repaying for years after the buildings crumble. Expensive structures do not produce literate students—pass it on, the School Board doesn't know. In classrooms, we have teachers who refuse merit rankings, who themselves can't write a coherent paragraph, and who exemplify gaming the system by absenteeism and poor performance. Our expectations for teachers and students—for the whole system--are low and going lower with more excuses instead of changes and progress.*

2013 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers



Navy Ship

- I predict that no US Navy ship will be named for Richmond, CA*

Bates and Booze

- Bates and Booze will continue their quest to serve their masters, their race-baiting, and their attempts to impede Richmond's progress.*

Trees and Bike Lanes

- *Predictions for the coming year. Trees! Bike Lanes! Healthy and Happy people, young and old!*

Chevron, Bates and Booze

- *Chevron, through Bates and Booze, and the mentors they employ to school those two, will continue to divide the council. Both men will be divisive, disrespectful, and continue to bring race into the picture, which would be fine if their accusations were at all truthful. For the life of me I cannot understand how people viewing their antics fail to see them for what they are. They are ignorant men who are fearful of losing what little power they have, and apparently are willing to sell out an entire community to maintain their egos. It is my wish, that the remaining four non crazies on the council will continue to push Richmond into the future, and not allow big business to once again, own this city. We have been stagnant for too long, we are a jewel by the bay, and it is our time to shine.*
- *Prediction? Chevron will threaten they can't refine enough oil and will have to fire people unless they are allowed to expand... even though it will mean more pollution. Last time they tried to expand they withheld that fact.*

Rugby

- *Thanks to the efforts of Nate Trivers, owner of The Up and Under Rugby Bar and Restaurant, and our dedicated school principals, 2013 will see the return of Rugby in the City of Richmond (first since 1917) starting with Stege and Peres elementary school youth as afterschool programs. This is also a joint venture with the International Rugby Association and the University of California at Berkeley.*

2013 Wishes from E-FORUM Readers

City Council

- *I am hoping, despite the fact that Nat Bates, Gary Bell, and Corky Booze will be on the city council, and despite the fact that they are the representatives for the city of Chevron as opposed to the city of Richmond, that Richmond moves along with progressive issues that have improved this city so much. With the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab coming to Richmond, the green businesses that have come to Richmond, and more that will follow suit due to the lab, we will be at the forefront of green technology, and not at the mercy of dirty industry.*
- *This is a wish more than, alas, a prediction: The recall of Corky Booze. I voted for him (twice) - worst votes ever cast. You say that 8000 signatures (20% of Richmond registered voters) are required to recall a councilman, and that it's never been done before. Ugly racial divisiveness, gratuitous personal attacks, and unabashed misogyny and homophobia are his specialties. Has there ever been a more suitable candidate for recall? Not to mention that he is mad RUDE and on the wrong side of nearly every issue that matters to Richmond citizens. Let us pray for a recall.*
- *As for next year I would wish that all of the City Council Members would treat each other with respect, but with one who chooses to distort the facts in his egotistical diatribes, I despair of improving the atmosphere until after the next election.*

Retail and Restaurants

- *Which brings me to the wish for 2013: Let's work on getting the kind of retail and lots more of the cafes and restaurants that now send us south to open in Richmond. How about Berkeley Bowl North? Maybe one book store in a city with none? Perhaps the addition of hundreds of new folks at the LBNL will inspire such retailers to come if only the city officials get to work on it fast. (I'd*

say Marina Bay is a great area for this kind of development - space, proximity to LBNL, good beginning with Cesars, Salute, Artisan Kitchen). I'll keep hoping.

Graffiti

- *Launch a major campaign to end graffiti. Stiffen laws substantially and make financial and public humiliation penalties painful for taggers and their families. Outsiders and involved citizens view graffiti as a tangible symbol of civic chaos and failure (just ride along with your friends from Central County as they drive down I-80 and snicker at the graffiti covered retaining walls along the freeway). Taggers should be actively pursued and prosecuted. Graffiti clean-up should be immediate and constant.*

On and Off Ramps

- *These are the entry windows to Richmond and they present a snapshot of Richmond to the millions of people who drive by each year. Almost universally these key windows to the city are a mess: graffiti, broken or vandalized signage, trash, broken down fences, weeds, dead plants and trees, broken paving. Allowing this to continue supports a negative image of the city and works against businesses and citizens who are investing their time and money to improve Richmond. Caltrans and other agencies and departments should be mobilized to put these areas on par with cities like Orinda, Danville, San Ramon, etc.*

Paving

- *Repave McBryde Avenue from east of the freeway to the EBRPD office (the old fire station). This connector to Arlington Avenue and the Alvarado Park gets very heavy use and is starting to look third-worldish due to lack of proper maintenance. Upgrade the intersection of Solano Avenue and the Solano off ramp from I-80. This area gets very heavy use and looks like a war zone. This lack of care is a disservice to the neighborhood which is spending time and money to upgrade their properties.*

How did E-FORUM Readers 2012 Predictions turn out?

There were no 2012 predictions from E-FORUM readers!

Happy New Year!

Tom Butt