



FALL 2019

GERSTLE PARK Neighborhood Association



GPNA Calendar

- 12/1 Hugo Landecker French Broom Pull
- 12/9 Winter Social
- 12/12 Christmas Caroling
- 1/27 GPNA Annual Meeting @ Elks Lodge

Halloween Contest Results

Congratulations to these winners!



Photo credit Cynthia Cushman

- 1st Place: 217 Bayview St.
- 2nd Place: 508 D St.
- 3rd Place: 201 Marin St.
- 4th Place: 108 Marin St.
- 5th SPlace: 145 Ross St.
- Honorable mentions: 23 Ross, 101 Marin, 6 Welch, and 31 Clorinda

Many thanks to all of our neighbors who created the magical and spooky haven that attracted many families to trick-or-treat in Gerstle Park! Also a big thank you to the sponsors of the contest:

- Riley Street Art Supply 1138 4th St**
- Shineology Car Wash 1515 2nd St.**
- Miracle Mile Cafe 2130 4th St.**
- Passion Nail 1027 C St.**



Photo credit Cynthia Cushman

Christmas Caroling 12/12

Thursday, December 12 at 6pm



Come join your Gerstle Park neighbors in song, bringing warmth and joy to the neighborhood! Led by local musicians, entire families are encouraged to come. Fun goodies for kids will be available. Bring your water bottle or a travel mug ready to

be filled, a flash light, a warm coat and Christmas cheer. Warm drinks, Christmas schwag and song books provided. Meet at the corner of Marin and Ross Streets at 6pm on 12/12.

Gerstle Park Winter Social

Monday, December 9 at 6:30pm

It's holiday party season! Gerstle Park neighbors will mingle and enjoy drinks and appetizers at the vibrant Panama Hotel on December 9th. Bring a friend and meet many more!

Hugo Landecker Mem. French Broom Pull

Sunday, December 1 at 10am



Please join your neighbors in the Gerstle Park Redwood Grove for the 3rd annual Sunday morning of pulling French Broom from the open space. French Broom is an aggressive, non-native species which is a fire hazard and which also

makes Gerstle Park's trails impassable. Continental breakfast will be served. All ages welcome. Bring gloves, water to drink and wear long sleeved clothing.

RSVP to info@gerstlepark.com.



President's Column

by Gina Silvestri



I hope everyone has gotten out and experienced the fall colors in & around Gerstle Park. Our neighborhood gardens may have finished blooming, but the street trees and our park are exploding with colors.

I sure appreciated all the festive houses lit up for Halloween this year, especially after those three dark days leading up to it. Even with the recent sidewalk improvements, the thought of experiencing Halloween without streetlights was a very SPOOKY thought!

We were all relieved to have escaped the threat of wildfires here in Marin this past month. However, if you were like me and felt a little “under-prepared” for the blackout, I encourage you to sign up for one of the [“1 Hour 2 Get Ready”](#) free classes over the next month offered by Emergency Manager for the City of San Rafael, Quinn Gardner.

This month the GPNA continues to work with the City as they begin the next important phase of the sidewalk repair project - replacing street trees in multiple locations around the neighborhood where trees were removed to accomplish sidewalk repairs. The City's promised Tree Ordinance has not yet been presented to City Council for review (don't get me started...), but the GPNA Tree Committee is offering to help property owners navigate the process of selecting their replacement trees from the City's Tree List. I read recently that “a street lined with rows of more or less identical trees brings to most observers a sense of order and tranquillity.” The GPNA Tree Committee will continue to remind the City of San Rafael about the role our street trees play in maintaining the historical character of the neighborhood.

A huge GPNA thank you goes out to all the volunteers and committee members who worked tirelessly to make sure the 2nd Annual San Rafael PorchFest on Sept 22nd was safe and fun for all. We opened the doors of our neighborhood to the broader community for a magical Sunday afternoon of music and community building. Well done, Gerstle Park!

The holidays are right around the corner. I hope you'll come out and join us for one of the many fun GPNA holiday traditions in the neighborhood (see the calendar on page one).
Happy fall to all!

PorchFest

A BIG Thank You!



The second annual San Rafael PorchFest was truly magical. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who made the day so special — Musicians, Porch Hosts, Volunteers, Photographers, Attendees, Sponsors, the City of San Rafael and the Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association. The PorchFest team is working to keep it a local community event even though it has grown! This is a completely free and volunteer run event. Please consider being a volunteer or a sponsor for next year. See sanrafaelporchfest.com for more.



Photo ©2019 Bruce Forrester warmlightphoto.com



Photo ©2019 Blake Davis

Treasurer's Corner

by Tom Heinz

- Beginning Balance (06.24.2019) - \$17,416.84
- Expenses - \$6,065.83
- Income - \$5,683.93
- Ending Balance (10.23.2019) - \$17,034.94
- PorchFest Acct. Balance - (10.23.2019) - \$2517.41
- MarinLink Balance - \$13,490.00

(not included in Bank balance)

Meet Your Neighbors

Phil Milner & Jenny Kerr

by *Denise Van Horn*



The main goal of PorchFest is to showcase local musicians in our beautiful neighborhood. Finding and booking the musicians, and helping them produce the best sound possible from porches and yards, are huge jobs. So, we thought

you might like to know more about Jenny Kerr and Phil Milner, who bring the music to PorchFest. They live in Gerstle Park, in the lovely blue Victorian with a cow on the garage roof. They've also provided music for GPNA Annual Picnics, Winter Socials, and Holiday caroling.

Jenny, a San Francisco native, learned classical piano in childhood. Her grandmother was a composer and viola player of note. Jenny's teenage forays to the Haight-Ashbury music scene in the late 60's (Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Muddy Waters) led her to leave her classical roots and turn to the guitar, banjo and harmonica. After college at Sarah Lawrence, she lived in France for 11 years, translating books and magazines, busking in the Paris subway, and plastering and painting. The next two years were in England at Oxford, where she would turn to music to soothe the frustrations of being a graduate student in Comparative Literature. Realizing she was not an academic, she returned to San Francisco and continued making music. She became a songwriter, playing Americana, swamp rock, soul, backwater honkytonk, blues and ballads and has recorded many CD's.

Phil was born in Long Beach, just as his dad, a jazz trumpeter, was beginning work as a DJ. Phil's dad became a radio personality with multiple rock radio stations. Phil recalls being surrounded by his dad's records and listening to all of them. At age 12, after a brief period playing accordion, he picked up a guitar, loved it, and became immersed in "guitar degradation and debauchery". At age 24 he joined the US Navy for a 6-year stint, receiving advanced electronic training. On discharge in 1991 he settled in Northern California, repairing and maintaining musical gear in the Bay Area. By 1994 he and Jenny were friends, playing music together, and he started going on the road as a guitar tech for Tracy Chapman, Bob Weir, Bonnie Raitt, Graham Nash, and others.

After a year-long recuperation from a serious motorcycle crash in 1997, he reorganized his priorities and re-connected with Jenny, eventually becoming her producer and playing guitar in her band. Between 2000 and 2007 they toured Europe, playing at large music festivals. They married in 2016, the same year they relocated to Gerstle Park, bringing the cow with them. Her name is "The Cowtess". She needed some repairs after high winds blew her off the garage roof the first year here. But with a new coat of paint and some seasonal decorations, she is now a neighborhood fixture.

The Jenny Kerr Band and the Crow Eaters (Phil's band) have a residency at the Madrone Art Bar in SF. Their home contains Okey Doke (recording) Studios. Strong connections to the local music community make them the perfect people to line up bands and electronic equipment for PorchFest. Placement and scheduling of bands, while avoiding "sound bleed" from one porch to another, is complicated, with lots of moving parts. Jenny and Phil also organized PorchStock, a fundraiser concert at Terrapin Crossroads to help pay for next year's PorchFest. GPNA is grateful to have their expertise and dedication.

I asked them, "What would you like your neighbors to know about you?" They responded, "We love being part of this community and would like to get to know you better. Bring your kids for Halloween, and they can get a peek of Sneaky Zebra in our living room! Come to the GPNA Christmas Caroling event. We host the pre-party!"

Wildfire Advisory Board Update

By *Sandra Luna*

Although Summer is officially over, "wildfire season" is still upon us, if it ever really goes away. The planning, prevention, strategy, and education efforts of Marin County's 19 local firefighting agencies will continue. We previously brought you a brief update that San Rafael's Mayor Gary Phillips has formed this advisory committee, as well as in-progress development of the Wildfire Prevention and Protection Action Plan. Approximately monthly, since June of this year, the committee has met, hearing public comment, and reviewing and discussing methods of neighboring communities.



This committee is not focused on exit strategies, rather we are researching and discussing commonly known prevention methods such as clearing brush, ridding of dead trees, and newer methods such as “hardening,” your home and “defensible space.” “Hardening” your home means that you are using fire-resistant building materials. This includes roofing materials, siding and wood used for decks and fences, etc. “Defensible space” is specifically the immediate area around your home, up to three or sometimes five feet.

Both Mill Valley and Novato have taken this issue seriously and although the matter seems quite urgent to many, resistance has been met when the plans call for specific garden changes. Resistance is related to aesthetics, concern for wildlife and one’s budget when tree cutting or other costly items are a part of the plan. The writing on the wall is that fire-resistant building materials will have a place in new buildings as well as updates and additions to existing properties. Mill Valley has given residents two years to figure out ways to comply with the defensible space. Much discussion has been made around lower income residents and/or seniors on fixed incomes and what City or County funds could assist. Americorps volunteers have been used to clear brush and may have a future role in other areas. Few may know wood chippers are currently made available to residents for free for Eucalyptus and Juniper!

In 2015, when I first moved to Gerstle Park, I was happily working away in my garden and I was visited by a San Rafael fire fighter, who was on foot. The woman explained to me that my healthy looking junipers in front, were actually a fire danger, with a flammable oil in its leaves. She suggested I remove them. They were gone from my yard within three months, and the fire department chipped---for no cost---and removed the debris from my curb (after we pulled them up and removed the bushes from my yard, using our own effort).

San Rafael is a diverse mixture of terrain and housing types. Our downtown residents will have different needs than the hilltops or than that of the homes in the “WUI,” or wildlife urban interface. Stay tuned for the final plan, which is still a few months away. If you would like to have input please consider coming to a future meeting, dates to be announced.



Photos of neighbors charging up during last month’s blackout - charging provided by Ready Gerstle Park. Photos by Amy Likover

1 Hour 2 Get Ready

Emergency Manager for the City of San Rafael, Quinn Gardner has asked GPNA to announce 5 opportunities over the next month for San Rafael Residents to participate in a “1 Hour 2 Get Ready” class. These FREE and important classes are focused on easy things you can do at home and with your family to be more prepared for a emergency or large-scale disaster. The class focuses on 3 keys to being prepared: Be Informed, Have a Plan, and Gather Supplies.

See flyer attached or go to SROES.ORG for more info. RSVP’s are helpful, but not required. These classes (and Quinn!) are FABULOUS and we strongly encourage you to jump on the bandwagon and take advantage of one of these opportunities ASAP.

At this time, they can only offer the class in English, but have Spanish printed material available and hope to offer Spanish language classes in the future.



Short Elementary School Update

by Jennifer Horta



Originally built in 1903, and later named after Gerstle Park developer J.O.B. Short, the quaint school nestled in the Gerstle Park neighborhood was reopened in August 2010 due to the enrollment growth in the San Rafael Elementary

School District. Often referred to as an “overflow school,” Short does not have attendance boundaries, and therefore is impacted by the District’s overall enrollment numbers. Not including its Transitional Kindergarten class, Short currently hosts grades 2 through 5, and only 52 students would continue at Short in the next school year. Compared to the highs of 220 students in the ‘15/’16 and ‘16/’17 school years, this is a significant drop in enrollment across the entire district, and enrollment is projected to continue decreasing.

In response to the declining numbers, the District held outreach sessions in the 2018- 2019 school year to discuss the potential closing or repurposing of the school. Attended by staff and over 80% of the school families, the sessions aired concerns, ideas, and potential paths forward. As a result, the San Rafael Board of Education accepted recommendations to keep Short School open for the 2019/2020 school year, however decided to convene a Short School Community Taskforce to plan Short School’s next chapter in Fall of 2020. In addition to this work, Principal Pepe Gonzalez continued his dedication to the families by accepting a split assignment as principal to both Laurel Dell and Short Elementary for the 2019-2020 school year. In the Fall of 2019, GPNA representatives were invited by Superintendent Jim Hogeboom to join the Short School Community Taskforce with the goal of determining what to do with Short School after the 2019/20 school year ends. Led by the Districts Communication Director, Christina Perrino, the group recommended to the school board to close Short as an overflow school, and to repurpose Short School for a different use after this school year --- with the stipulation that careful attention be paid to the transitioning of current students. By the end of December the taskforce should come up with a recommendation on the potential repurposing options for the future use of Short School.

According to Superintendent Hogeboom and other management on the taskforce, the idea to sell the property for a one-time financial gain is discouraged. Rather, San Rafael City Schools Board of Education wants to use the property for purposes that promote the education, health, and welfare of students, while benefiting the community, and perhaps providing revenue for the District. Specific criteria has been developed to help guide the taskforce into the Phase Two discussions. While Short is not currently needed to house students, the taskforce will ensure that the property will be put to the best use possible. The Board continues to encourage broad community participation, transparent decisions, and consistent communication. As part of this endeavor, the GPNA will participate and update the community along the way.



Fall colors in Gerstle Park by Cynthia Cushman



Fall colors in Gerstle Park by Cynthia Cushman

1 HOUR 2 GET READY

San Rafael Disaster Preparedness

Learn what you can do in one hour to be more disaster ready and help create a more resilient community.

WHAT

A 60 minute class focuses on helping you take steps to be better prepared. Whether you own or rent, what you do now can help you survive the next wildfire, earthquake or flood.

TOPICS

- + Understanding Emergency Management
- + How to support city responders
- + Ways to minimize damage and injury
- + How to stay informed
- + Making a plan
- + How and when to shelter in place
- + Evacuation
- + Go-Bags and disaster kits
- + Working together as a community
- + How to learn more and get involved
- + Hazard specific tips, including power outages

The presentation focuses on things you can do in one hour to Get Ready! A 30 minute Q&A will follow the presentation.

OVERWHELMED?

Don't be. Come to a class or other event, and commit to spending one hour to get prepared. Every step you take is one step closer to being prepared.

WHEN

November 5th | 6:30pm

1 Hour 2 Get Ready
City Hall- 1400 Fifth Avenue
RSVP/details on Eventbrite and SROES.org

November 7th | 6:30pm

1 Hour 2 Get Ready
Terra Linda Community Center
RSVP/details on Eventbrite and SROES.org

November 14th | 6:30pm

1 Hour 2 Get Ready
Al Boro Community Center
RSVP/details on Eventbrite and SROES.org

November 21st | 6:30pm

1 Hour 2 Get Ready
City Hall- 1400 Fifth Avenue
RSVP/details on Eventbrite and SROES.org

December 5th | 6:30pm

1 Hour 2 Get Ready
Terra Linda Community Center
RSVP/details on Eventbrite and SROES.org

Learn more at [SROES.ORG](https://www.sroes.org)



Gerstle Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership Form

Membership year runs from January 1st - December 31st

One vote per individual - \$20/year (\$10 seniors age 65+)

Renew your membership online at www.gerstlepark.com!

NEW MEMBER

RENEWAL

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Cell: _____

Email Address: _____

Date: _____

all GPNA correspondence is via email

Payment Type: CHECK CASH

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

The GPNA is powered by volunteers!

Interested in Volunteering for the following events or committees?

If so, please indicate with one or more checks.

Descriptions can be found at www.gerstlepark.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

GRAPHIC DESIGN

EVENTS

- Spring Fling Egg Hunt (weekend before Easter)
- Neighborhood Garage Sale (June)
- National Night Out - yearly neighborhood potluck in the park (2nd Tuesday of August)
- PorchFest - 50+ bands play on porches throughout the neighborhood (September)
- Halloween Decorating Contest (Judging)
- French Broom Pull in the Open Space (December)
- Christmas Caroling

NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCACY IN SAN RAFAEL

- City Planning
- Park Beautification
 - Gerstle Park Albert Park
- Planning & Development

NEWSLETTER (QUARTERLY)

- Writing
- Distribute newsletters to neighbors

COMMITTEES

- Ready Gerstle Park, Emergency Preparedness
- Community Tree Committee
- Food Committee - help with planning, preparation & service for GPNA events

Welcome to the GPNA!

PO BOX 150644 • San Rafael CA • 94915-0644 • www.gerstlepark.com