

Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association

Fall 2010



Neighborhood Picnic / Western Cookout Theme!

Mark your calendars! The GPNA annual neighborhood picnic is on Sunday, September 26th. Hot dogs, burgers, chili, buns, the fixings & entertainment are supplied by GPNA. Neighborhood members are encouraged to round out the menu with potluck items of fruit, salads, side dishes and desserts. See below for suggested food items by last name.

**GPNA Western Cookout/Picnic
Sunday, September 26th: 4-7pm**

A-L: Bring fruit or dessert

**M-Z: Bring a salad or small side dish
Gerstle Park Playground**

We are doing a western cookout theme this year! Wear your 10-gallon hat and favorite cowboy wear. Games and prizes for the kids. Fun things are still in the planning stage.

The neighborhood picnic is yet another free GPNA neighborhood event. The event is hosted each year by the GPNA Board and volunteers.

Volunteers are needed for the following tasks: set-up, grill cooking, clean-up, food table maintenance, help with games, etc. To volunteer, please email Jenny Tonyes at: jen@jentonyes.com or call her at 415.785.4924.

New Stop Signs

Nader Mansourian, Assistant Public Works Director for the City of San Rafael, attended the July GPNA Board Meeting. At that meeting, the Board requested the city to install stop signs at the uncontrolled T intersections within the neighborhood. Based on location and vehicular traffic observations, the city recommends to install stop signs at nine side streets within the neighborhood. The work order is currently being designed and the signs will be installed as soon as scheduling and material acquisition permits. (Installation of the stop signs requires street pavement markings and legends. There is currently an industry wide shortage of street paint and the time frame to obtain more paint is uncertain at this time).

Locations of the new stop signs are:

1. Hayes at First
2. Ross Terrace at Ross St.
3. Woods at Ross
4. Clark at Ross
5. Reservoir at Ross
6. Bayview at Clark
7. Greenwood at Clark
8. Reservoir at Clorinda
9. Grove at San Rafael

A Whale of a Sale!

This year's annual GPNA Garage Sale was a great success! There were 50 participants and we passed out fliers to shoppers from all over the Bay and beyond. This event is the biggest fundraiser for the GPNA. Many hours donated by your board members and volunteers go into the planning and execution of the Garage Sale.

This year the GPNA made \$1,035, which goes into the treasury to fund future Gerstle Park events and activities. A big thanks to all of the neighbors who registered to participate in the sale, and to the board members and volunteers who worked so hard to make it happen.

Meet Your Neighbors

The first Dinners for Eight gathering was held on Saturday May 15. A gracious host and six other neighborhood guests contributed to a wonderful meal, spirited conversation and a memorable evening for all.

The Dinners for Eight program is a wonderful opportunity for members and friends of the Gerstle Park neighborhood to get acquainted with other neighbors. You can sign up for this event as a single, or a couple. If you volunteer as a host for the dinner, you will provide an entree of your choice at your home. As a guest, you will be assigned by the host one food and beverage item to bring to the host's home.

The next Dinners for Eight will be held on Saturday, October 16 and you are invited to sign up for it. To sign up, or to get more information, please contact Suzan Dexter at: suzandex@yahoo.com

MMWD Replacing Pipe in Eight Locations

(This is the text of an article from the August 11 issue of the Marin IJ)

The Marin Municipal Water District is replacing almost a mile of pipe in eight different locations in San Rafael to eliminate sections of pipe with high concentrations of leaks.

The project involves the installation of 4,490 feet of 8-, 6- and 4-inch welded steel and polyvinyl chloride pipe to replace existing undersized and badly deteriorated galvanized and cast iron mains that range from 50 to 120 years old.

The district is replacing water lines this month on Sussex Court, from Golden Hind Boulevard to the end; Nye Street, from Laurel Place to Curtis Avenue; Mission Avenue, from Nye Street to Court Street; 59 Knoll Road to the end; Clark Street, from Clorinda Avenue to Ross Avenue; Clorinda Avenue, from Clark Street to Marin Street; D Street, from San Rafael Avenue to Antonette Avenue; Wolfe Avenue, from Antonette Avenue to C Street.

Construction is expected to begin in mid-August and go until early January 2011.

Gerstle Park Going to the Dogs?

You may have noticed a front page picture of a giant lizard and article in a recent Marin IJ. The text concerned an unleashed dog that bit the lizard while the lizard was being walked through Gerstle Park – on a leash. This calls attention to a couple of related problems, and a possible opportunity, that have developed there in recent weeks.

First, the problems. We've heard more and more complaints about unleashed dogs in the park. Dogs have bothered small children, perhaps in a spirit of "let's play," but that's not how the children interpret the advances. And, of course, there is the lizard bite. The other issue is dog waste that owners fail to pick up. This is unforgivable, and not only a health threat, but a terrible mess if one steps in it. The other side is the dog owners who socialize in the park while their dogs interact. Aren't public parks for people?

A second problem is caused by homeless people who use the park as a hangout. They spend the night in the grove area, often with their unleashed and unlicensed dogs and leave trash and litter behind in the morning. The park gardener also reports that they outwit the bathroom door locks so they can use the bathrooms throughout the night as well as sleep in the bathrooms. The police have been involved in removing these folks but it is a recurring problem and the police urge us to call them any time such activity is observed.

Now, the possible opportunity. Some who use the park have begun to talk about creating a dog park within Gerstle Park. This would give dog owners a place to let their dogs run and play unleashed without fear of disturbing others. Among the things that need to be explored before this can be proposed are: (1) a location good enough that dog owners would use it and (2) a place that would not take away the nicer parts of the park that non-dog people enjoy.

What do you think?

Short School Opens

The GPNA is happy to announce the re-opening of the Short School on Marin Street right here in Gerstle Park. You have probably noticed the repairs & improvements that have taken place over the summer. It is also important to remember there will be an increase in young children around the school, so please drive with caution around that area.

The School District says that the reopening is a result of a significant increase in student enrollment during the past four years. As school opens the kindergarten through eighth grade enrollment will exceed 4,200 students. This is the largest enrollment for San Rafael city schools in over 30 years. The district's seven other elementary schools are at capacity enrollment and there is not sufficient classroom space for all the incoming students, so reopening Short School will provide the needed space.

The district will also create an early childhood center at Short that will educate children enrolled in preschool through first grade. For the upcoming school year Short will have four district-operated preschool programs, two morning classes and two afternoon classes in addition to two kindergarten classes.

It is anticipated that total enrollment at Short will be about 150 students, all of whom will reside within the school district boundaries. School hours begin at 8:40 AM and conclude at 1:35PM. If you'd like additional information please call the school district at 415.492-3200.



Give Gerstle Park a Brake

Concerns about traffic are always a key topic at GPNA and city meetings. And while Gerstle Park has been described as “a lovely, leafy suburban alternative to the hustle-bustle of downtown San Rafael,” the reality is that too many of us are hustling our way around the neighborhood, exceeding the speed limit and generally forgetting safe driving rules.

Speeding on Bayview and Clark Streets is particularly troublesome, as drivers choose these routes to enter and exit the west side of the neighborhood. Intersection hot spots are at Bayview/Clark, Clorinda/Clark, Ross/Clark, Ross/Reservoir, Marin/Clayton, Bayview/C and C/Taylor.

The GPNA is working with the City of San Rafael Traffic Engineer and Department of Public Works to make positive changes that will protect our families, pets and property, and preserve our neighborhood. Stop signs will be added at a number of three-way “T” intersections very soon. Because it is bureaucratically and politically more complex to create four-way stops, those (such as Clorinda/Clark) will take longer to materialize.

In the meanwhile, please SLOW DOWN. Be courteous. Watch out for pedestrians. And use care at every intersection, especially those without a stop sign.

Please feel free to share your supportive comments and ideas on the GPNA website “Traffic in our Neighborhood” Forum at <http://gpnaforum.blogspot.com/>.





Making Things Better: A Resident Profile

by Bob Urban

Three years ago my wife and I moved from the country (Sonoma County) back to the city (here in Gerstle Park) and it's been wonderful. We can walk to the store, to the theater and to a variety of restaurants and shops. We had one concern however. We walk every day with our two dogs and we feared that city living would condemn them to city sidewalks. But one day we met a fellow dog walker, Rene Mouly, who directed us to trails and paths in the hills above Gerstle Park that surpass those in the country. Talking with Rene, we learned how he has worked long and hard to create and maintain them. Rene is a long-time resident who has done more than his share to make things better in our neighborhood.

Rene came to San Rafael and bought property on Madrona Street in 1965. In those days the hills above his house were wooded and unpopulated. Earlier, there was even a brewery at the end of nearby Greenwood Street and a bar on Madrona Street. Which shows how much things have changed. For many years Rene owned a landscape gardening business and worked for the owners of the mansions that line Upper Toyon and hillside homes in Kentfield. When he retired in 1996 he began daily walks with his dogs. But there were no paths and the old dirt coach roads were covered with French Broom and wild blackberry vines, so walking was a challenge. Not to be deterred, he decided to clear the

undergrowth and create trails that the whole neighborhood would enjoy. Over a period of several years Rene braved wood tick bites and poison oak and worked with bare hands to complete a walking path that connects the end of Greenwood Street with Upper Toyon and another from the end of Makin Grade to Gerstle Park. Today you will meet Rene and his dog Bubba and many other hikers and dog walkers on these wonderful trails nearly every day.

The GPNA salutes Rene's volunteer spirit and the generous contributions that he's made to our community. If any of our GPNA members who read this newsletter know of a neighbor who has enhanced the quality of life in Gerstle Park we hope you'll let us know. We'd like to recognize him or her in a future newsletter.

Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) Membership Form

Please complete the information below and return with your check to:

GPNA, P.O. Box 150644, San Rafael CA, 94915-0644

Membership year runs from January 1st - December 31st

INDIVIDUAL: One Voting Member - \$15/year (\$10 seniors age 65+)

HOUSEHOLD: Two Voting Members - \$20/year (\$15 seniors age 65+)

NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

CHECK CASH

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Date: _____

Do you wish to receive our quarterly newsletter via email instead of home delivery? YES NO

Would you like to be included on our email distribution list? YES NO

Are you interested in volunteering with the GPNA? YES NO