



Gerstle Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Early Fall 2014

Annual Picnic in the Park

Sunday, September 14th, 4-7 PM

It's time to dust off the old family recipe, and put on your dancing shoes! Join your neighbors for our annual farewell to summer FREE hoopla when we catch up on conversation, enjoy great food and have fun. You bring a side dish, and we provide yummy hotdogs/veggie dogs, buns, chili, and soft drinks. For the kids, we'll have the fun jumpy house and face painting. Meet Short School's new principal Vanessa Flynn, help us plant trees in the park, and learn about Wildcare's owl box program. To volunteer with the barbecue, set-up, clean-up or with the kids:

info@gerstlepark.com
or 450-1520.



National Night Out

Neighbors picnicked in the Redwood Grove while swapping stories with the Mayor, City Manager, Police, Fire and Open Space Rangers officers while friends on Ross St set up a major barbecue and pot luck. This event is a great way to build friendships and enjoy a summer evening, while making the area safer for all. Consider planning a block party next year – Tuesday, August 4th.



Thanks to Ilona and Dylan Galante, Muffin Mania

At least 100 loyal and grateful clients and friends of the iconic Gerstle Park bakery and café, Muffin Mania, flooded into the Panama Hotel June 30th with gifts, cards and good wishes, as the music of Danny Click warmed the evening. Muffin Mania was founded by Ilona and her husband, Rocky. Great thanks to Dan Miller, Panama Hotel proprietor and neighborhood friend, Ross Parmenter Insurance Agency, Dotty Lemleux and Ray Moritz for their support and to Judy Gallegos and Bob Urban for the amazing cake! We welcome Brett Moore, Muffin Mania's new owner who's keeping up the old family recipes and the great neighborhood feeling of the place.



Happy 20th Marin Bocce!

A fine time was had by all at the 20th Anniversary of Gerstle Park neighbors, the Marin Bocce Federation. About 400 people were in attendance at 550 B Street to enjoy the event, Saturday August 30th. One bocce member



captured the spirit of the sport and venue, as quoted in The Marin IJ (8/30), "I like the camaraderie.... It's moderate exercise and friendly competition." The GPNA congratulates Marin Bocce on their success, and thanks them for being such great neighbors.

President's Column

Greetings, Gerstle Park Neighbors!

What a great summer we've had! From the successful neighborhood-wide Garage Sale that showcased 50+ neighbors' gently used items, to our final summer event, the Annual Picnic in September, this will have been one outstanding season. We hosted a classy farewell bash at the Panama Hotel and also National Night Out picnics. Speaking of picnics, you'll enjoy reading about the Gerstle family reunion this summer. Look for our planting handiwork at the green triangle on Antoinette/D streets and the native species planting at this year's picnic.

Your Board regularly considers planning issues, such as the aesthetic recommendation that drainage and sidewalk improvements at the corner of San Rafael and Lodge do not jeopardize the character of our historic blue stone wall. The GPNA is contacted frequently by the City to consider new designs such as BioMarin (with your input), and renovations that come to our attention. We always try to preserve the character of the neighborhood. If there are nuisance properties, we advocate for improvements.

Read on to learn how seriously we take emergency preparedness in Gerstle Park. With a new webmaster in place, we are expanding our online public face.

Take a look at our calendar of events, and let us know how you'd like to get involved. I look forward to seeing you at the picnic September 14th.

~Amy Likover, GPNA President

New Webmaster

Hello! My name is Dave Peticolas and I am the new GPNA webmaster. That means periodically updating the GPNA website to add new community event information, like the neighborhood garage sale, and adding the digital version of this newsletter. I've lived in Gerstle Park for four years and in San Rafael for over ten years. I came to San Rafael to work at ILM as a software developer when ILM was still at Kerner Boulevard, and we stayed after they moved because we love the town. Now I work for a company called Counsyl that does genetic testing. I'm happy to be able to help out the GPNA with my computer skills.

Treasurer's Corner

Balance as of 8/31/2014: \$5,150.05

~Ross Parmenter, GPNA Treasurer

What's Happening in San Rafael?

Just ask Nancy! That's Nancy Mackle, our City Manager, whose "Snapshot" is just a click away <http://www.city-of-sanrafael.org/snapshot> where you can sign up for regular bulletins. Featured now: Nixie emergency emails or texts, SMART train quiet zones, City proposal to lease Beach Park to Terrapin Crossroads, Serve on a Board or Commission, City Hall goes Green, Chamber of Commerce Business Showcase, Camp Chance, Meet the Mayor, parking lot closures, and how to volunteer.

Sidewalk Update

The GPNA will offer property owners a group price for sidewalk repairs for those interested. Stay tuned.

BioMarin Plans

If you are interested in perusing the plans for expansion; please contact info@gerstlepark.com to make an appointment with Ross Parmenter

Short School News

School's in session, and with the additional traffic we ask you to drive and walk carefully near the school. The GPNA is excited that there will now be a full-time principal, and we welcome Vanessa Flynn, Short's new principal. Vanessa will be present at our Sept 14th Annual Picnic to "meet and greet" the neighbors.

Neighbors may have also noticed an oversized portable has been installed along the fence to provide a central meeting space for students. All 8 classrooms are in use (two classrooms each for K-3). This year the school will hold approximately 175 students. As planned, the school will continue to expand each year until it is a standard K-5 elementary school. This will mean that further portables will be installed next summer.

~Kearsley Higgins, GPNA School Liaison

Calendar

September 14 Annual Picnic, 4-7 PM, in Gerstle Park. See article.

October 31 Halloween Decorating Contest

December 8 Winter social, Panama hotel

December 11 Christmas Caroling

January 26 Annual Meeting

Monthly Board Meetings: September 20, October 16, November 20, December 18. Confirm date/place:

president@gerstlepark.com or 415-450-1520



Gerstle-Sloss-Bettini Family Reunion at Gerstle Park

On August 10th, over 200 descendants of the Gerstle-Sloss-Bettini families had a reunion in former Gerstle summer home in today's Gerstle Park. It marks the 84th year since the family donated the property to the City of San Rafael as Gerstle Memorial Park. It also marks the 123rd year since the family acquired the lovely property on San Rafael Avenue.



In 1881, San Francisco businessman Lewis Gerstle was searching for a pleasant location for his large family to enjoy summers away from San Francisco's notorious fog. Eventually he rented "Violet Terrace", a 4½ acre estate on San Rafael's largely undeveloped south side. The Gerstles ultimately bought the property and over the years built additional homes to accommodate their seven children and many grandchildren. In 1883, Mr. Gerstle's brother-in-law and business partner, Louis Sloss, purchased a 4½ acre plot of land next door, on which he built a large house, plus a guest house/servants' quarters and a carriage house, the latter two of which still stand. For many years, the younger members of the Gerstle and Sloss families enjoyed their summers out in the "country", playing back and forth at will across the unfenced boundary lines between the two estates.

By 1930, visits to San Rafael had become rare as various branches of the family settled in permanent or summer homes elsewhere in the Bay Area, and the Gerstles graciously donated their land to our city. The Sloss mansion was sold and became a rooming house for some years until it burned down in the 1950's.

The Bettini family had an important link to the Gerstles, as Cesare Bettini, an Italian stonemason, was the property's long-time caretaker. His care and skill are still evident in the park to this day, as he built the stone walls

and maintained the landscape. When the land was donated to the City in 1930, the Gerstles stipulated that Cesare would be retained and that he would continue to live on there. Cesare's son went on to become the city's mayor from 1965 to 1979. San Rafael's downtown transit center is named the C. Paul Bettini Transportation Center.

Lewis and Hannah Gerstle's great great grandson Philip Gerstle is one of the few family descendants who still bears the name ("the son of an only son of an only son," he says.) He is helping to plan this year's reunion and kindly gave us some information about the family's current relationship to the estate.

Lewis and Hannah Gerstle had seven children, so there were many descendants still living in the Bay Area by 1957, when it was decided to honor the 100th wedding anniversary of the founding couple with a gathering. Since then, there have been reunions about once every 10 years. At every one, the family donates a tree to the park. These gifts continue to enhance the beauty of our park, which was originally planted with stately and exotic trees by the Gerstles in the 1800's.

Philip Gerstle is well aware that most large homes of 19th century entrepreneurs are lost to their descendants. If the family had not donated their old home to San Rafael, it would not be available to them now as a gathering place. In fact, he said, the existence of Gerstle Park is a "glue factor" in keeping the families together. We do hope the families enjoy their reunion time, and we all thank them deeply for letting San Rafael folks enjoy the park's peace and beauty the rest of the time.

We asked Philip Gerstle if many of the family descendants still live nearby. While some have moved to other states, most of the family has stayed close to or in the Bay Area. "Why would we leave?" he asks.

~ Cynthia Landecker



Neighborhood Stories

From a friend...

I found a wallet in my grocery cart at Safeway, and not seeing the manager, I opened it and identified the owner by his photo and business card. When I called, his wife thanked me, explaining her husband was returning to the store. I saw him and said, "Hello! What is your name?" After he told me, I handed him his wallet, greeted with a big hug. A few minutes later, I was invited to share a wonderful dinner and a glass of wine on this couple's deck where we spent a lovely summer evening together!

From a GPNA member...

I found a purse on the ground in front of my house. When I found no phone number to contact the owner, I posted the lost and found on the website NextDoor.com. A neighbor put us in touch with the owner's aunt. Small world! So the owner has her purse back, and has learned not to leave valuables in the car, since the wallet was saved, but the iPod in her purse was taken. Wherever you live, remember to lock your car!

Next Drill: November 15th, 9-10 AM

There will be a "medical based" drill with the leaders in Gerstle Park and with the expert help of the MMRC. Join us!

"Neighbors Knowing Neighbors" Program

You may have noticed a friendly letter from your block leader, introducing her/himself (we often work in teams), and inviting you to fill in an info form on behalf of the GPNA. This form is also found online here http://www.gerstlepark.com/gpna_joomla/index.php/ready-gerstle-park or give me a call if you'd like me to drop off forms: Amy 450-1520

Our purpose for meeting you is to connect neighbor to neighbor so that in case of an earthquake or another disaster, we can help each other. The info is for block captains only so they know if you have skills (construction, medical, logistics), and needs (medical, pets). The block captain will check up on you, or call upon you if you indicate so on the form. We have just begun the process of organizing individual blocks within the neighborhood. Can you help us?

Emergency Preparedness: Drills, Training, Block Organizing

Great news! We may be in earthquake country, but we are prepared.

There are 18 GPNA emergency preparedness leaders who attended a recent drill. These are neighbors, GPNA Board members, Resilient Neighborhood, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) trained leaders. We met at the park on August 23rd for a drill with four Fire Department firefighters and simulated a disaster: scenarios of neighbors stranded and injured, power lines down and roads impassable. Thanks to our San Rafael Fire Department, Paula Doubleday of the Dominican neighborhood and Maggie Lang, Coordinator of the Marin CERT program for leading us in this valuable exercise.



CERT Training

For those of you who wish to step beyond preparing your home and reach out to help your community in an emergency, train to be a CERT member. This 18-hour national program will teach you skills to organize and help out in your neighborhood and community in the event of a large-scale emergency/disaster. As a CERT graduate, you will be a valuable asset in our preparedness effort. Go to www.ReadyMarin.org for more information and how to register for the next CERT Basic Training Class.

If you are already CERT trained, on September 27th, you can learn about helping your community from the American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter & hosted by Marin County CERT. To Register, coordinator@marincountycert.org or call 415-485-3409.



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+)

Please complete the information below and return with your check to:
GPNA, P.O. Box 150644, San Rafael CA, 94915-0644

NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Cell: _____

Email Address: _____ Date: _____
all GPNA correspondence is via email

Payment Type: CHECK CASH TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Interested in volunteering for the following events or committees?

If so, please indicate with one or more checks.

Descriptions can be found on our website, www.gerstlepark.com.

COMMITTEES

- Ready Gerstle Park, Emergency Preparedness
- Membership Committee – promotion, organization and staffing membership tables at events
- Open Space Committee – weeding of invasive species (French Broom) in neighborhood open space, Nov-May

EVENTS includes planning, decorating, helping day-of:

- Fall Picnic
- Christmas Caroling
- Garage Sale
- Halloween Decorating Contest (judging)
- Spring Fling Egg Hunt

NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCACY IN SAN RAFAEL

- City Planning
- Homelessness issue
- Large Group Home Regulation(s) Committee
- Parks
 - Gerstle Park Albert Park
- Zoning enforcement

NEWSLETTER Quarterly

- Distribution
- Editing
- Graphic Design

PHOTOGRAPHY

WEBSITE

Welcome to the GPNA!