

Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association



Gerstle Park Newsletter

Spring | March / April 2022



Spring blooms in Upper Gerstle Park!

2022 Annual Meeting Recap

By Denise VanHorn

Many thanks to over 75 people who showed up for the Annual Meeting Zoom call. We could get used to this! Definitely no trouble parking.

Two interviews are available on www.gerstlepark.com. Board member Sandi Luna interviewed Police Chief

David Spiller, and Gina interviewed Marin County Supervisor, Katie Rice. Residents were encouraged to volunteer their talents, particularly graphic design, photography, and newsletter articles. Specifically, we're looking for graphic designers and artists to help us revamp our logo. Could this be you? Reach out to Alicia at info@gerstlepark.com.

Mayor Kate Colin spoke about economic recovery from COVID-19,

racial justice, homelessness (and housing), and climate change /wildfire prevention/sea level rise.

Council Member Eli Hill discussed neighborhood issues, including the Ross Terrace Project, the Bettini Transit Center progress, the Goldstone project (property on 4th St), and the tree policy. A perennial favorite, "A Year in the Neighborhood" slide show, wrapped up the evening.



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GPNA President's Column

By Gina Silvestri

Springtime is here, and Gerstle Park is in full bloom! Goodbye to face masks (hopefully for good), and hello to seeing the smiling faces around the neighborhood. It's a joy to make plans to meet, greet and re-connect with all of you. We made it through this together, ultimately stronger in this great neighborhood that we are fortunate to call home.

Now, let's get together!

The GPNA is working on several fun ways to connect in person this spring & summer. Join us (and the Bunny) for free morning coffee, muffins and egg hunting at the Spring Fling Egg Hunt happening Saturday, April 9th at 10AM sharp. Then, clean out those closets and get ready for Garage Sale Day on Sat, June 18th. Last but certainly not least, we are planning for the exciting return of San Rafael PorchFest on Sunday, September 18th. Visit sanrafaelporchfest.com for more info.

Don't Trash Your Neighborhood

Watch for bright blue yard signs popping up around the neighborhood as GPNA rolls out a campaign and webpage: gerstlepark.com/dumping. We provide better options to repurpose items you no longer need, in a way that respects the community. Signs were purchased with a 2021 grant GPNA received from the Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods.

Fire Safety

Many Gerstle Park property owners worked with the San Rafael Fire Department over the last year to reduce the wildfire risk around their homes. GPNA applauds those who stepped up to create a more resilient and fire-safe San Rafael.

Annual Meeting

Thanks to ALL of you who joined us for the 2022 Annual Neighborhood Zoom Meeting in January. It was a great evening of sharing ideas hearing from Mayor Kate and Council member Eli Hill. Make sure to watch the "2021 - A Year in the Neighborhood" musical slideshow on the homepage of the website! (www.gerstlepark.com)

Please Renew Your Membership

The GPNA is a 100% volunteer commitment, and



Our 2022 Annual (Zoom!) Meeting

our events are funded by your membership fees. Memberships went down during the pandemic, but we want to get back to our previous levels. Please renew your membership online or use the form. Anyone can be a member (owner or renter). www.gerstlepark.com/membership---joinrenew

2022 Neighborhood Survey

By Alicia diVittorio

2022 is a new year, and we want to kick it off right. We'd love to learn more about you (our neighbors), and get your input on activities the GPNA is considering pursuing. Take a moment to fill out the survey so your voice can be heard.

Fill out the [survey online](http://www.gerstlepark.com/survey), or visit www.gerstlepark.com/survey for the link. We will be accepting responses through the end of April 2022.



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Street Parking Changes

By Denise VanHorn

San Rafael Fire Department has been working on vegetation management along narrow, curvy streets in the hills above Gerstle Park (Knoll, Reservoir, Miraflores and Miramar). This is coupled with parking management and signage to ensure residents can safely evacuate and allow fire and other emergency vehicles access to these areas. The program, dubbed, "Safe Parking", will replace the "6 feet from center" rule in select areas where there are narrow and/or windy roads. Residents in these areas have been contacted, and white parking boxes will be painted where it is safe to park a vehicle (parking isn't allowed outside of white boxes). The Public Works Department will also add signage for "No Parking" areas and extend some red curb areas. The city did an excellent job of notating changes via a live Google Map.

While we are on the subject of vegetation management...

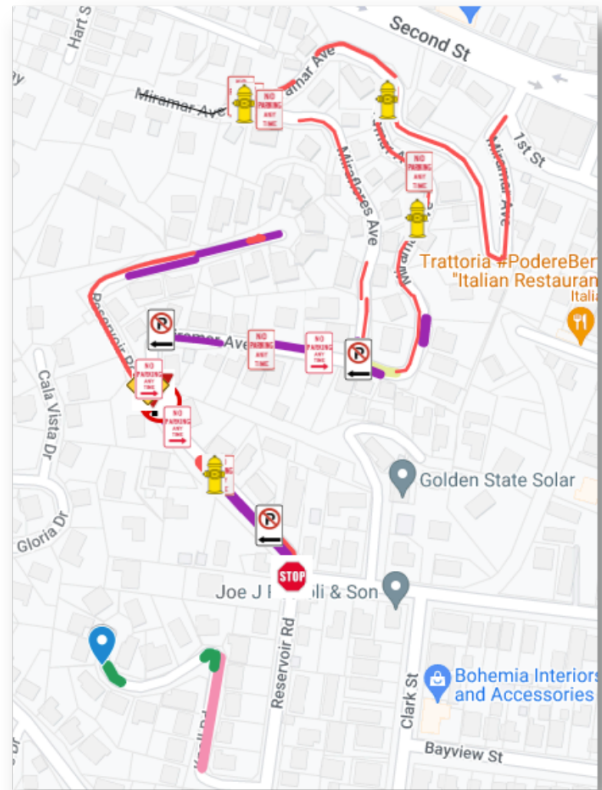
Juniper, Acacia, Bamboo and Italian Cypress are considered "Combustible Vegetation" by the City (SRMC 4.12.020), and must be removed within 30 feet of structures. Please remove these plants ASAP to reduce fire risk to you and your neighbors.

Don't Forget About Fire Risk

By Sandi Luna

While it's easy to forget how hot Marin can get in the Summer during these perfect temperature days, I ask of you one thing: don't forget! Summer will soon be upon us and daily temperatures will hit the 90's and even over 100 degrees, all but burning-to-a-crisp our yards and the large trees we host in Gerstle Park. One way to keep Gerstle Park safe from fire is by "hardening" your home now (see link below).

Several years ago I learned that the time to prune trees and plants back is while they are dormant, or not blooming. Take some time now to trim back overgrown trees and shrubs and keep plants away from windows. When fire happens outside, the fastest way for it to get inside is through windows. Plants that are about as fire resistant as you can get include succulents, so plant those in any and all



[City Google Map of Gerstle Park Parking Changes due to the Parking Box Program](#)

window boxes, if you have to have them. You can learn more about creating a defensible space around your home at www.marinwildfire.org, the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority. Or call 415-275-1185

Did you know?

A local grant program was established to provide additional resources for homeowners to implement home hardening efforts that reduce fire risk to their homes. Owners unable to implement home hardening efforts on their own because of income, age, and/or disability will be eligible for grants to ensure that critical fire aware upgrades and improvements can be made. Applicants can apply for a MWPA home hardening grant up to \$500 to match their own, equivalent investment. SOURCE: marinwildfire.org/project/home-hardening-matching-grant-program

Learn more about how to protect your home at and how to create fire resistant yards here: <https://firesafemarin.org/harden-your-home/>.



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Before & After: Defensible Space on D St.



Before



After

Spring Fling

SAT 4/9

egg hunt

For kids under 9
10am sharp start!

GERSTLE
PARK
PLAYGROUND
✿ Egg Dyeing
✿ Golden Egg Prizes
✿ Muffins + Coffee



A free community event hosted by your
**NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**
Powered by Volunteers

Calendar of Events*

- April 9th** — Spring Fling
- April 30th** — Earth Day Mushroom Hunt
- June 18th** — Garage Sale Day
- September 18th** — San Rafael PorchFest
- October 31st** — Halloween Decorating Contest
- December 10th** — Santa Drive-By
- December 12th** — Winter Social

*All dates subject to change pending pandemic



Treasurer's Corner

Beginning Balance 2022: 17,949
PorchFest Account balance: \$4,067.27
MarinLink Balance: \$16,250.00

Board Members

Gina Silvestri, President
Alicia diVittorio, Vice President
Tom Heinz, Treasurer
Denise Van Horn, Recording Sec.
Sandra Luna, Corresponding Sec.
Josselyn Robertson, Member
Kim McGinnis, Member
Michael Bruel, Member



Meet Your Neighbor: Elvira Lindemann

By Denise VanHorn

We are familiar with our Gerstle Park Neighborhood, and our beautiful park, but in the early part of the 20th century, when the streets weren't even paved, things were different. One of our neighbors, Elvira Lindemann (nee Regalia), shared some memories of living in our neighborhood for 92 years.

A bit of historical context: in 1881, Lewis Gerstle, a wealthy businessman in San Francisco, purchased a property called Violet Terrace (now known as Gerstle Park) for his large extended family to enjoy during the summers and on winter weekends. Over the next three decades, stables, plumbing, a greenhouse, and servants' quarters were added. Eventually there were three large homes for the family to occupy. Cesare Paul Bettini was the main caretaker of the property, managing the landscaping, orchard, and livestock.

Elvira's parents immigrated from Italy when they were teenagers, her father from Tornavento and her mother from Lonate Pozzolo. They married in 1916, and bought a house near the Gerstle Property in 1926, when Elvira was two and her brother was eight.

Across the street from her house was a tree-filled hill and children would rub wax on pieces of cardboard and slide down the hill.

She never went onto the Gerstle property while the family was living there, but sometimes she could peer through the hedge and see their large black Cadillac convertible. In 1930, when Elvira was six, the Gerstles donated the property to the city to become a park.

At that time, there was an orchard behind the tennis courts. A stable, vegetable garden, pigeon coop, and garage with chauffeur's quarters stood where the children's playground now stands. A large house built further up the hill in 1898, was moved in 1905, down near the stable. The Gerstles made an agreement with the city that Mr. Bettini and his family could live in the house, rent-free, for as long as he wished, in gratitude for how beautifully he had maintained the property.

When the property was turned into a park, there were one small and two large swings, a three-seat swing, a long slide, a trapeze bar and rings, and climbing bars. Mrs. Bettini, from her house, kept an eye on the playground. Serious misbehavior could result in banishment from the playground. The Bettini's hosted watermelon fests for the children, with plenty for all to enjoy. Elvira loved playing at the playground and became a dear friend of Dorothy, the youngest Bettini child, eventually being her bridesmaid.

Elvira's family was poor, but there was always enough food. During the Great Depression, 1929-1939, men would make their way from the railroad station in

Kentfield, show up at the back door, and her mother would always give a meal to grateful men. Her mother was a great cook, and a intelligent woman. Her father worked for the San Rafael Street Department. Elvira remembers him playing the accordion and singing. He played his accordion for many weddings and other occasions.

Elvira attended Short School for kindergarten through 4th grade, and her aunt was the janitress there. She continued at Saint Raphael grammar school, graduating from San Rafael High School. Without pay, after every school day from 4th grade through her senior year, Elvira would work at Short School— dusting the desks, doors, windows and baseboards in the classrooms and library, and erasing the blackboards.

Elvira hoped to go to college and become an English and PE teacher, but there wasn't enough money for it. She began working at Bank of America at Hamilton Air Force Base and became a teller at age 19, though usually tellers had to be 21 (and male!). Hamilton was a very busy place during World War II. Elvira and her cousin would walk to Lincoln Avenue in the morning and catch a ride to the base. She recalls that on payday, work at the base started at 6:30 am, and lines of men stretched out the door and down the block.

"There were some very interesting people there, and a few that you would want to wring their necks!" After the war, the men came home, and most female tellers had to relinquish their jobs, but Elvira was kept on the job. She was good and fast at her work, and her customers were very fond of her, sometimes bringing her candy. She followed her brother's advice that "it doesn't take any extra effort to be nice!"

After 10 years at Bank of America she accepted a job as cashier/accounts receivable at British Motors in San Francisco. Her mother was distressed that she was leaving a good job, but Elvira felt she was ready for a change. She never felt any pressure to marry, but life happened! Barnard Lindemann was the assistant manager in the service department at British Motors and he took an interest in Elvira. She recalls "Barney was a good guy, very congenial." They married in 1955 and raised 2 daughters, who still live nearby. She had a long happy marriage. She and Barney traveled extensively in California, due to Barney's membership in the Packard Club. He owned a 1956 Packard Caribbean convertible, "the other love of his life." Barney passed in December of 2019 at age 94.

At age 97, she feels she has had an interesting life. She remembers a neighborhood of mostly Italian immigrants, with a few Irish and French families. All the summer days were nice days and everyone would come out of their houses in the evenings and chat. Children could roam freely and loved going to the park. "You didn't have to worry about having babysitters!" She has lived through remarkable changes in the city and in the park.

Visit the Patch.com for more history on Gerstle Park.





Gerstle Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership Form

One vote per member. Membership year runs from Jan 1st - Dec 31st

Renew your membership online at www.gerstlepark.com!

- RENEWAL** ___ # of Seniors 65+ @ \$10 ea.
 NEW MEMBER ___ # of Regular @ \$20 ea.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Cell: _____

Email Address: _____ Date: _____

all GPNA correspondence is via email

Payment Type: CHECK CASH VENMO 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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> PHOTOGRAPHY <input type="radio"/> GRAPHIC DESIGN <input type="radio"/> EVENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Spring Fling Egg Hunt (weekend before Easter) <input type="radio"/> Neighborhood Garage Sale (June) <input type="radio"/> National Night Out - yearly neighborhood potluck in the park (2nd Tuesday of August) <input type="radio"/> PorchFest - 50+ bands play on porches throughout the neighborhood (September) <input type="radio"/> Halloween Decorating Contest (Judging) <input type="radio"/> French Broom Pull in the Open Space (December) <input type="radio"/> Christmas Caroling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCACY IN SAN RAFAEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> City Planning <input type="radio"/> Park Beautification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Gerstle Park <input type="radio"/> Albert Park <input type="radio"/> Planning & Development <input type="radio"/> NEWSLETTER (QUARTERLY) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Writing <input type="radio"/> Distribute newsletters to neighbors <input type="radio"/> COMMITTEES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Ready Gerstle Park, Emergency Preparedness <input type="radio"/> Community Tree Committee <input type="radio"/> Food Committee - help with planning, preparation & service for GPNA events |
|---|---|

Welcome to the GPNA!