

# Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 150644 • SAN RAFAEL • CALIFORNIA • 94915-0644 • [HTTP://WWW.GERSTLEPARK.COM](http://www.gerstlepark.com)



## UPCOMING EVENT: SPRING FLING, MARCH 26th!

GPNA is proud to once again host its Annual Spring Fling Event! Hop on over Saturday, March 26th, for egg hunting, treats, and a chance to meet the Easter Bunny. The Egg Hunt will begin at 10 AM SHARP! If you would like to volunteer your help, or donate plastic candy-filled eggs, please call Leslie Allen at 455-9435.

**PARENTS, PLEASE NOTE:** The Easter Egg Hunt is for young children only, 7 and under. In the past, we've seen that older children provide unfair competition for the younger ones, who have often come away disappointed, with few or no eggs, while older children- sometimes even young teenagers- go home with their arms and pockets full. Please help us keep the spirit of this event as it's intended by respecting the age limit, so that the tots can have a good time. Thanks!

## NEIGHBORHOOD SPRING CLEANUP DAY, MAY 14

On Saturday, May 14th, from 10 AM to 2 PM, GPNA will have debris boxes available outside Short School for disposal of yard waste. This is for yard waste ONLY- no plastic bags or garbage of any kind.. If you've been wanting to trim back foliage, hedges, etc., here's your chance! A volunteer will be available at the site, in case you need help.

## GPNA ANNUAL MEETING

The GPNA Annual Meeting on January 27th was a great success. This meeting is significant, as it gives the Board of Directors and GPNA members a time to discuss issues, events, successes, problems, and of course elect the Neighborhood Association's new Board of Directors.

This year's guests were Marin County District 2 Supervisor Hal Brown, Police Chief John Rohrbacher, current Beat One Officer Buffy Paxson, and Center Point Supervisor John Richey. Hal Brown provided a brief Marin County fiscal health report and forecast, and encouraged us to get involved with upcoming budget meetings that begin July 2005. He then opened the floor to questions, which addressed San Quentin, traffic, measures A and C, St.Vincent Silveira property, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) unit distribution, Marin County pension plans, the SR transit system, and interagency politics. Chief Rohrbacher thanked Gerstle Park for honoring Charlie Metcalf, who is retiring from SRPD, and said that our event honoring Charlie "speaks volumes about Charlie, and about our neighborhood". He reminded us that the Beat One schedule change is just around the corner, and discussed "solicitors"..GPNA will follow up on both of these items with Membership Email.

The Business portion of the meeting included brief updates by

the Board concerning GPNA's committees and ongoing projects. In addition to these updates, there were visuals and summaries of GPNA's accomplishments and activities for everyone to peruse, as well as snacks to enjoy. An open forum discussion provided valuable insights to clarify perspectives and shed light on neighborhood issues. Then nominees for the Board were introduced, the election was conducted, ballots were counted, and the new Board was introduced.

We were very pleased to see everyone who came and joined us for the recap of the year! If you weren't able to attend but want to learn about the items we plan to work on, or if you want to get involved, let us know by contacting Chandra Murphy at 415-482-8033, or [murphdtm@yahoo.com](mailto:murphdtm@yahoo.com).

## BEST CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS FOR 2004

Many neighborhood residents did a really fantastic job of decorating for Christmas in the recent holiday season. For all of you who participated, a hearty pat on the back and many thanks! Gerstle Park really showed a lively Christmas spirit this year, and we even got a mention in the Marin IJ for all the wonderful, creative work you did. Once again we have made a list of the decorations that we feel deserve a mention in the newsletter. You will note that we aren't awarding first, second and third places this year, because we've decided that Christmas decorating shouldn't be a competition- we just want to acknowledge those whom we felt did a fantastic job. We know that some beautiful displays aren't mentioned below, but we just don't have the space! The spirit this year was wonderful, and we hope that next year even more households will participate. So here's our list:

### Best in the Neighborhood:

116 Greenwood- An "Animated" Christmas (lots of lovely decorations in motion)

362 Clorinda- Spectacular Lights Display

508 D St.- Winter Wonderland

238 C St.- Trains & Spice & Everything Nice

119 Greenwood and

127 San Rafael Ave.- Victorian Christmas Classics

### Honorable Mention:

7 Espalda

210, 211 and 508 D St.

337, 303, 225 and 121 C St.

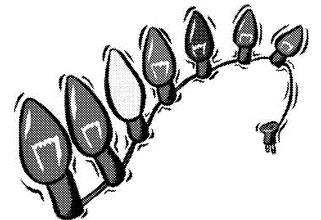
7, 12 and 25 Clark St.

124 and 131 Greenwood

231 and 347 Bayview

*All of Upper Greenwood:* Best neighborhood Christmas spirit

Thanks to all of you who lit up the neighborhood! That's what really counts!



**GPNA'S ROLE IN HELPING YOU**

“The purpose of GPNA is to promote and contribute to the general welfare and betterment of the Gerstle Park area through organized and cooperative action, striving at all times, to the extent possible, to be the representative voice of the majority of the residents in the Gerstle Park Neighborhood.”

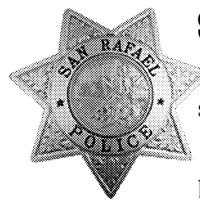
What can we do for YOU?

The Association and its Board of Directors can act as liaison between the residents and the City on some issues; however, if you have a complaint regarding parking, code enforcement, traffic, building, or any other similar issue, PLEASE call directly to the numbers we have provided. The San Rafael Police Chief has asked us to inform our neighbors that they want to be called if there is a situation that needs their attention. Please don't be shy or reluctant about doing this, and remember that all calls are confidential. We are happy to answer any questions, and hopefully we can help with information. We also want to know if there are issues that we should take directly to the City, if these issues affect the entire neighborhood. We can't solve every situation, but we strive to assist and be informative, so that every resident can get desired results for a problem. Below is a list of contact numbers that you should keep for possible future use.

For anyone interested, the San Rafael Police Dept. keeps a continually updated record of reports or complaints made to them, at this website: <http://www.srpd.org/publicrecords/BeatActivity.aspx>. Please keep in mind that this website covers all of San Rafael, not just our neighborhood.

**CITIZENS' RADAR PROGRAM AND NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC**

In order to qualify for traffic control improvements which many Gerstle Park residents want installed in the neighborhood, we must possess data supporting the need for such improvements. GPNA's Traffic Committee is ready to pursue the Citizens' Radar Program Training, which is offered through the SRPD. Volunteers will be needed in order to round out a couple of teams of three people each. Two people on each team will take down the license plate numbers of speeders. The third team member will operate a radar gun, which documents the speed of passing vehicles. This data goes to the SRPD, and warning letters are then sent to the drivers caught speeding. If you are interested in volunteering, or you want to voice concern about the traffic problems in our neighborhood, please contact Dan Miller, Chairman of the Traffic Committee, at [dan.miller@gerstlepark.com](mailto:dan.miller@gerstlepark.com). Thank you!



**SRPD OFFERS VACATION HOME CHECKS**

Many of you are unfamiliar with one of the services offered by the San Rafael Police Department through its volunteers: if you plan on being absent from your primary residence for 2 weeks or longer, you can request that volunteers do regular checks of your residence several time a week. The volunteers will check for any sign of suspicious activity, unlocked doors and windows, etc. You should make it known at the time of your request whether there will be lights left on, if there are pets on the premises, etc. The SRPD encourages homeowners to use common-sense precautions as well, such as locking your doors and windows and having your mail held at the post office. If someone will be coming by to pick up your mail, let the volunteers know this.

To request that your residence be checked by volunteers in your absence, call 485-5773. When prompted by the menu, enter 115050 and the pound key.

<b>Building Inspections</b> (415) 485-3365	<b>Human Resources</b> (415) 485-3063 24-Hour Job Hotline: 485-3433	<b>San Rafael Community Center</b> Department of Community Services (415) 485-3333
<b>Business Licenses</b> (415) 485-3051	<b>Parking Citations</b> (415) 485-3053	<b>San Rafael Police Department</b> (non-emergency) (415) 485-3000
<b>Claims</b> (415) 485-3066	<b>Parking Services Division</b> (415) 485-5333	<b>San Rafael Sanitation District</b> (415) 485-3132
<b>Code Enforcement Division</b> (415) 485-3097	<b>Permits / Planning</b> (415) 485-3085	<b>Sewer, Streets and Parks Maintenance</b> (415) 485-3375 Dispatch Hours: 6:30 AM - 3:00 PM
<b>Film Permit Office</b> (415) 485-3465		

## **GPNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2005:**

**Chandra Murphy** (*President*). Chandra is a Bay Area native, although she spent her childhood in Mexico and as a result is fluent in Spanish. She has lived in Gerstle Park for the past 6 years, and serves on the San Rafael Parks and Recreation Commission. Chandra was also President of the Board last year, and is the contact person for the Board. She chaired last summer's successful Garage Sale fundraiser, and was formerly in charge of GPNA membership. She is very interested in traffic problems in the neighborhood, especially on D St.

**Roger Coale** (*Vice President*). Roger and his wife, Jan, have lived in Gerstle Park for over 15 years. Roger continues as Vice President this year, and is a past President of the Board. He is a master gardener and carpenter, and is very interested in the important issues of neighborhood density and historical preservation.

**Kevin Stockmann** (*Secretary*). Kevin has lived in Gerstle Park for 7 years, and joined the Board last year. He is a biologist and clinical research consultant, and also owns and operates Marin Nature Adventures, a new company that offers naturalist-led biking, birding and kayaking tours throughout Marin County. He is a volunteer naturalist for the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) in West Marin, and a member of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, the Sierra Club, and the Marin chapter of the National Audubon Society. With his friend Sharon Barnett, Kevin led the popular GPNA Neighborhood Birding Walk event last year, and plans to offer family and advanced birding walks for the GPNA membership in 2005. Currently, Kevin is working with GPNA members and San Rafael city agencies to address the issue of C St. flooding. He is also involved in improving Mahon Creek between B and E Streets.

**Tymber Cavasian** (*Correspondence Secretary*). As a professional builder, Tymber is very involved with issues of property design and development in the neighborhood. She is Vice-Chair of the Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods, and represents Gerstle Park at their meetings. She also keeps the GPNA website up-to-date. Tymber helped to develop the Gerstle Park Blue Ribbon Awards, which recognize outstanding improvements to neighborhood properties. Her 2005 goals include keeping valued City services despite budget problems, B St. improvements, and collaboration with neighborhood businesses.

**Leslie Allen** (*Treasurer*). Leslie, her husband and their 2 daughters have lived in the neighborhood for 4 years. Leslie was in charge of last year's Annual Picnic raffle; she also helped to organize the successful 2004 "Spring Fling" event, and will be doing so again this year. She is interested in getting more families involved in GPNA and its work for the neighborhood.

**Lynn Bradescu**. Lynn was raised in Marin, and has been active with GPNA since 1996. She is a realtor and design resource specialist, and has a special interest in historic architecture. Lynn has chaired the "Spring Fling" event for the past 2 years, and has also worked on the annual Garage Sale and Picnic events. She is committed to protecting the integrity of Gerstle Park, and is a strong proponent of limited growth in residential areas.

**Tim Firman**. Tim was born in Indonesia, but has lived in the Bay Area for over 20 years, and in Gerstle Park for the past 4 of those years. He is an architect, and works for the firm that redesigned Marin General Hospital. He has helped out with most of the Board's activities in the past year, helps to deliver the GPNA newsletter, and creates GPNA signage. His professional expertise is invaluable to the Board, especially in the area of design review.

**Dan Miller**. Dan owns the landmark Panama Hotel and Restaurant. He has lived in San Rafael on and off since 1962, and graduated from San Rafael HS in 1966. Dan is an antiques collector, and wants to preserve the small town atmosphere of the neighborhood. He lives in a vintage home close to the Panama, and is a familiar sight to residents as he walks his little white dog, Monica. His position as a business owner here is a major asset to the Board in its dealings with City officials.

**Jim Gonsman**. Jim has lived in Gerstle Park since 1994. He is a civil engineer and general contractor, and has 25 years of experience in building construction, design and repair. He has served on a MMWD committee that recommended rate structure changes to promote water conservation, and is the treasurer of the Marin Audubon Society. He is interested in preserving neighborhood character and quality of life through control of density and traffic, and elimination of illegal housing. He also wants strengthened design standards for new architecture, preservation of open space, and better public transportation systems.

**David Simonini**. David was born in San Rafael, has lived in Marin all his life, and in Gerstle Park since 1982. His partner, Carol Tulipani, is also a Marin native. David is an attorney, and has specialized in civil litigation since 1975. He is a new Board member, and is interested in neighborhood preservation and improvement, as well as working with the community. His hobbies are travel, motorcycles, and water sports such as boating and scuba diving.

**Nancy Otto**. Nancy is also new to the Board, and has lived in her Gerstle Park home since 1986. She loves this area and feels fortunate to have settled here. When she bought her house, all of her neighbors were long-time residents; now all those homes have been sold and re-bought, and she is the one long-timer on her block. Nancy is a retired nurse who loves to travel, read, garden and hike. She is interested in preserving the quality of Gerstle Park, and in enhancing the sense of community. She enjoys walking around the neighborhood and seeing changes in homes and gardens as they are remodeled and updated.

**Lori Schifrin**. Lori has been a neighborhood resident for over 20 years. In the past, she has been a Citizens' Advisor to the Chief of the San Rafael Police Dept., has completed the Citizens' Police Academy and DART training, and is part of the new Neighborhood Emergency Service Team (NEST). She has a passionate interest in neighborhood parking and traffic issues.

## BLUE RIBBON AWARDS FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT



**Patty and Mark Thompson** have owned their contemporary bi-level home at 11 Madrona for 11 years, and although they love the house and have decorated the interior to be warm and comfortable, they were always dissatisfied with the front yard, an uphill slope with no landscaping, bounded by bare concrete forms. Last year, after they replaced the inferior-quality siding on their house with a good quality, wood-appearing fiber cement, and painted it in a flattering shade of muted beige with white trim, they decided that the front yard looked even more conspicuously unattractive than before.

They wanted a landscape design that would “bring the house to the curb”, as Patty put it; so they took advantage of the fact that the house is uphill from the street, and created a terraced, multi-level front yard, using dry-stacked Sonoma fieldstone to create the levels. Then, under the guidance of a landscape designer, they planted and mulched over 100 drought-friendly and deer-resistant plants all over the various levels, and ran new lines for the drip irrigation system. The unsightly concrete forms lining the driveway, as well as the cheek walls on the concrete part of the steps leading up to the front door, were faced with an integral color stucco in a beige sandpaper finish. This effect nicely frames the yard boundaries and softens the concrete of the driveway. Also, the redwood steps leading up to the house were refinished, and the old precarious stepping stones leading up the slope from the driveway on the left side of the house were replaced with more substantial landscape-tie steps that give better and safer access to the side and backyard. To finish off the effect, Patty and Mark invested in new exterior lighting fixtures and attractive brushed-nickel front door hardware, resurfaced the front deck over the garage, and added a gutter and downspout to correct a long-standing problem of rainwater cascading down the front of the house and the garage. All in all, Patty and Mark are very satisfied with the result. They have significantly improved their home’s curb appeal by creating a landscape design which is not only attractive, but also wise in terms of water conservation and erosion prevention.



Our second Blue Ribbon Award for the season goes to **Nita Lederman**, who has done a remarkable exterior makeover of 90 Pleasant Lane - no small job, because her property-situated on an acre at the very top of a cul-de-sac- has lots of room for landscaping in the front, on the sides and in the back, where she looks out onto a grove of bay and redwood trees. With the help of a designer, a landscape architect and several contractors, Nita has trans-

formed her property by applying cedar shingles to the house and garage, updating and augmenting her landscaping and replacing the decaying garden fence, back deck, front entry landing and both staircases, all of which were constructed of non-pressure-treated redwood.

The majority of Nita’s large back deck is now covered with StoneDeck- large, colorful 16" square stone panels chosen for their aesthetic appeal, ease of maintenance, and durability. In front of an existing concrete retaining wall, built-in planter beds of varying heights were constructed of stacked Red Mountain Ledge Stone capped with Montana flagstone. This effect is both sophisticated and rustic, camouflaging the harsh effect of the concrete wall. Within the planter beds is a large area which will soon feature a water fountain made of Korten steel and rippled glass. Tucked into the corner of the deck is a built-in bench made of Ipe, a durable, fire/weather-resistant Brazilian hardwood.

Ipe was used extensively throughout the remodel to form two wide stairs, a small deck, and a staircase leading from the back deck down to the side garden, as well as a see-through fence between the front and side gardens. It is also featured in the new widened front staircase, guiding the way to an enlarged wooden front entry deck. To complement the new cedar shingles and the Ipe, copper pickets were installed in all of the staircase railings and the new garden fence, and copper handrails were placed along both of the staircases. New brick pavers were secured to the top of the concrete stairs to join the existing brick walkways, providing a contiguous pathway around the front of the house. Glass wall-mounted light fixtures were added to illuminate the house and driveway at night.

To complete the exterior renovation, Nita’s landscape architect installed tropical plants and succulents in the new built-in planter beds on the back deck as well as in the front and side gardens, to replace or supplement the existing landscaping. When time permits, Nita plans to add copper landscape lights to highlight the pathways and new planting areas. It’s taken Nita almost two years to complete this makeover, but her patience has paid off, and the result is a handsome and unique exterior for her large outdoor space.

*Note: Thanks to Patty Thompson and Nita Lederman for their editing help in describing the many technical details of their home improvements.*

**BEAT ONE SCHEDULE ON OUR WEBSITE**

We were hoping to include the new schedule of Beat One police officers in this issue, but it isn't ready for us yet. As soon as we get their new schedule, we will post it on our website ([www.gerstlepark.com](http://www.gerstlepark.com)). It will also appear in our next issue.

**GPNA NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE AT MUFFIN MANIA**

From time to time, some residents have informed us that the newsletter isn't being delivered to their homes. We try to keep extra copies of the newsletter in the kiosk at Gerstle Park, but sometimes we run out of copies quickly. Muffin Mania, at B St. and Bayview, has graciously agreed to provide space on a shelf for extra copies of each newsletter, and Tim Firman, one of our Board members, has created a sign to sit on top of the stack. So in the future, if you haven't received your copy at your home, you can drop by Muffin Mania and get one. And while you're at it, enjoy their delicious coffee and try one of Dylan's addictive handmade pastries in their new refrigerated pastry case. Thanks, Muffin Mania!


**2005-2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- March 26: Spring Fling
- April 7: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- May 5: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- May 14: Neighborhood Spring Cleanup
- June 2: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- June 18: Annual Garage Sale
- July 7: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- August 4: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- September 1: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- September 15: Annual Picnic - 6-9PM
- October 6: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- October 31: Halloween Decorating Contest
- November 3: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- December 1: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- December 15: Christmas Caroling
- December 20-30: Holiday Decorating Contest
- January 5: Monthly Meeting - 7PM\*
- January 26: Annual Meeting

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- Cultural Affairs Commission - 1st Wednesday
- Design Review Board - 1st & 3rd Tuesdays
- City Council - 1st & 3rd Mondays
- Planning Commission - 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
- Fed. of S.R. Neighborhoods - 3rd Tuesday

\* Guests are Welcome! If you desire to address the GPNA Board of Directors, wish to attend a meeting or need more information on Gerstle Park Events or Community Meetings, below, please contact Chandra Murphy at 415-482-8033 or Tymber Cavasian via email: [tymber@gerstlepark.com](mailto:tymber@gerstlepark.com)



**GPNA Quarterly Newsletter 2005**  
 Number 1 of 4  
*All articles written by GPNA members.*  
 Editor: Lilian Walters • Layout: Ken Goudey

Reproduction by Office Depot • approximately \$ /1500 copies.

**Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) Membership Application**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to receive this newsletter at your home? Yes  No

Would you like to be included on our mailing list?  Yes  No

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member  Renewal

Amount Enclosed\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*Annual donation: **\$15.00** per household ( **\$10.00** seniors) - 1 voting member

Payment Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Term of membership is from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>

How did you hear about GPNA?  Friend  Newsletter  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome to GPNA!**