



Gerstle Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Spring 2017



Spring Fling Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 8

10 AM Sharp!

Gerstle Park Playground

Be there by 9:30 AM with your baskets, cameras, parents, grandparents and extended family to join us in this Gerstle Park ritual. Our Bunny will visit and pose for photos with the children. She will have already sprinkled the park with candy-filled eggs and special prize notes. This is a fun activity for children 9 and under. Younger children (up to 5 years old) will gently search the playground while older children carefully comb the upper level of Gerstle Park, including the Redwood Grove. This very special Gerstle Park event is not to be missed. It's a great time to see old friends, meet new families, and renew your membership. Join us for fruit, coffee and pastry! Donations gladly accepted. Volunteers for set-up, egg coloring, serving, and cleanup would be most appreciated! [Click here](#) for a cute video slideshow of last year's Spring Fling! Please contact: info@gerstlepark.com

Albert Park Clean Up

Carrie Marmesh

Thanks to those who participated in the clean up on Saturday March 11th. A special thanks to the Marin Academy students, San Rafael High students, St. Vincent volunteers, and Councilwoman Kate Colin. Your food and beverage donations were much appreciated as well!



Albert Park Playground Redesign

**Ashley Howe, Senior Recreation Supervisor
City of San Rafael**

On Thursday, March 2, 2017 the Community Services Department hosted a second public meeting for the Albert Park Improvement Project to debut the proposed design for the preschool and school-aged playground.

Landscape Architect Phil Abey provided a brief background of his inspiration as it relates to community feedback from the first meeting, online comments, and survey results. The majority of the meeting was spent in small groups with the plans and proposed playground elements for people to make comments and ask more questions of table facilitators.



The proposed design was well received by the roughly 60 members of the community, city departments, and the Parks & Recreation Commission who attended. A few of the elements most appreciated were the use of natural materials, clear lines of sight through the playground area, the proposed restroom, and two points of entry away from the street. Areas to provide more thought are increasing the height of the fence from 4 to 6 feet along B Street, continuing the rod iron fencing used at Bocce verses black chain link, more seating areas inside the park, and if there will be adequate shade.

The City will use City Voice to collect feedback in English & Spanish using text and voice message. Public Works installed a sign at the entrance of Albert Park with a prompt and phone number for individuals to contribute their opinion. To add your opinion and view others, go to <http://www.neighborland.com/albertpark>. Data will be transcribed and sent to the Community Services Department and analyzed.

President's Column

Gina Silvestri



In 2004, my husband and I moved to Gerstle Park. I had spent all of my free time that summer cleaning up a rental house on Ross Street that my family had taken back from a bad-news tenant. When we began the process, I would tell friends "this house could make a frat house look fancy". But, once we got it cleaned it up, I began to see the charm and history of the old house and the Gerstle Park neighborhood. Working on the house also gave me the chance to meet some of the neighbors. Maybe they were just glad to see the old tenant gone, but they were all so welcoming and encouraging. It also gave my father a chance to tell me stories of his early childhood on Marin Street. That Christmas season, I'll never forget the unexpected knock at our door to find carolers serenading us. (Ok, yes...I cried.) I thought, "Wow – this could be a great place to live and start the next chapter of our lives."

Flash forward to 2012. "I HAVE NO TIME FOR THE GPNA BOARD." That was what came to my mind when Amy Likover asked me to join the GPNA Board. With a demanding full-time job in SF in addition to being the on-site manager of the apartment building next door, I thought joining the GPNA Board was simply out of the question. Two large homes on my block suddenly converting to group homes had inspired me to join the GPNA, and the sub-committee on Sober Living Facilities. But the Board? No way, I thought. After some soul-searching, and conversations with my husband, family and boss, I decided that maybe I could find "just a little room on my plate" to help the neighborhood. I told Amy I would help with events, as part of my job includes event planning. I followed that up with, "Just don't ask me to attend City Council Meetings." (LOL)

Flash forward 5 more years. Being on the GPNA Board has honestly been so much more rewarding than I ever imagined. Events will always be my favorite – Spring Fling, Garage Sale Day, Halloween and National Night Out. There have been so many more pleasant surprises and insights gained as part of this great group – the people I've met, the issues I understand, and the difference we all make. The investment of time has been well worth the effort. I encourage anyone out there who has thought about getting more involved with the neighborhood...even a small way.... to do so. This is such a great community and we could really use you!!

I look forward to the next year as your GPNA President.

Our Big Announcement!

At the Annual Meeting on Jan 23rd at the Elks Lodge, our "big announcement" related to the filming in the neighborhood last summer & fall. Prior to the start of Netflix's filming of "13 Reasons Why," (a series premiering 3/31), the GPNA Board met with location managers about the impact that months of filming would have on the neighborhood, including temporary street closures and parking restrictions. In consideration of the inconveniences, the GPNA Board asked producers to consider making a donation to the neighborhood. Paramount Television (the producers) agreed to make a series of donations after every block of filming. Donations were made to GPNA via MarinLink, our non-profit fiscal sponsor. Upon completion in November 2016, GPNA had received a combined total of \$5,000 from Paramount. This donation was announced publicly at the GPNA Annual Meeting.

Participants at the Annual Meeting were asked for suggestions of how we might spend the money. Now, we want to reach out to & hear from rest of the members & neighbors. How do YOU think the GPNA should spend a \$5,000 donation made to the neighborhood?

[Click here](#) to take a quick survey on our website. The GPNA Board will make the final decision(s), based on total number of votes, project affordability, and feasibility. Any reasonable idea will be considered. Be creative - have fun with it!! One vote per person. The survey is open to everyone who lives in the neighborhood - please share with your neighbors. The survey will be available until March 31, 2017.



Treasurer's Corner

Ross Parmenter

Balance (as of 11/11/2016): \$6,251.86

Expenses: \$1,144.39

Income: \$1,721.87

Balance (as of 02/11/2017): \$6,829.34

MarinLink Account balance \$5,270.00

Donation to neighborhood for filming

Neighborhood Interview

Dan Miller of the Panama Hotel

By Dotty LeMieux

I meet Dan Miller just before the lunch crowd arrives at the Panama Hotel. We sit in the patio, now tented in for the winter. It's very cozy and all set up for the lunch crowd. Dan has owned the Panama Hotel with two of his brothers and his parents since 1984, when he returned from running a restaurant in England and felt it was "time to come back home."



When he first bought it, he lived in various rooms in the hotel for a couple of years, but "that got old," so he rented an apartment nearby and later bought a home within walking distance of the Panama, where he still lives with his partner.

Meeting Dan today, a handsome man with a dignified bearing, neat gray hair and beard, you would never know he got his start in the restaurant business in the hippie days while in search of a place that served brown rice in his mother's home town of Manchester, England, where he traveled after college. Dan's mother had met and married Dan's dad while he was stationed there as an army aircraft mechanic. In Manchester, Dan discovered a workers' cooperative called "On the 8th Day" and quickly found himself with a new job and a new profession. After learning to cook there for four or five years, Dan bought his own restaurant in the English countryside, while looking for a wine bar to invest in with some cousins. Telling the story, he laughs, "They practically gave it me," of the successful *Dumbwaiter*.

After several years, Dan returned to the US and his hometown of San Rafael. There, he, with two of his brothers and his mother, Maureen Miller, bought the historic Panama Hotel in 1984. Before that, it was run by a couple known only as Richard and Mimi, who had taken it over from its original owner, years before, Jose and Maria Gargiulo, when it was known as Maria's Pueblo. Although it is a family venture, Dan is the one who takes an active role in running the restaurant and hotel.

At the time Dan took over the Panama, it was a boarding house and café. Dan converted it into the charming hotel and restaurant it is today, making extensive renovations, but keeping much of the eclectic feel of the past. Although he loves concocting new recipes in the kitchen himself, changes are not always welcome to the many regulars who return again and again. "I feel like an old rock star," he says. "People like what they like and are disappointed if it's not on the menu. They were picketing in the streets when we tried to take the calamari salad off the menu a few years ago!"

Over the years, he has had repeat visitors from all over the world. "And they have specific rooms they like to stay in each time," he says.

In his spare time he loves to cook at home and walk his Tibetan Spaniel Mimi, named for previous owner Mimi. His love for dogs is reflected in the hotel's policy of setting aside four rooms especially for people with pets, and in the popular "Yappy hour" when dogs and people share the outside seating. There are often organic treats for the dogs, free of charge. Live music is also an integral part of the Panama, and Dan is proud of the fact that it has been for over thirty years running.

For more in depth information about Dan and the Panama Hotel, go to <https://www.panamahotel.com/>



Gerstle Park Neighborhood Night at Albert Park

Tuesday June 20, 2017

vs. Pittsburgh Diamonds

7:05 First Pitch Gates Open at 6:00

Buy Tickets at PacificsBaseball.com

\$13 / General Admission

(after \$2 discount w/promo code **gerstle** at check out)

Contact: Gina Silvestri info@GerstlePark.com

San Rafael Heritage to Surveys Older Structures

Cynthia Landecker, President of San Rafael Heritage

The historic preservation group San Rafael Heritage, formed in 2015, has taken on the project of reviewing the City of San Rafael's outdated list of historically and architecturally significant structures, starting in Gerstle Park. The City completed this survey in the 1970's. Over 500 structures were considered. The list was only lightly updated in 1986. Over 60 houses were listed from Gerstle Park's unique treasure of 19th century and early 20th century homes. These buildings make our neighborhood such a charming community through a sense of place and a sense of time.

The list provides known historical details about each structure, which then informs decisions the Planning Commission makes if a change is proposed to a historic building's exterior. Lastly, the lists help the community understand and appreciate our rich physical legacy.

San Rafael Heritage hopes to encourage the City to use our volunteer work as a basis to update the list. SRH Board members have spent two weekend days in Gerstle Park in training. We intend to reach out to the broader community for help so that we can mount two-person teams to visit historic areas throughout the city, including commercial buildings downtown.

We are considering three main categories of historic structures: 1) Those on the list - have they been destroyed or altered substantially since the 1970's or do they still deserve list status? 2) Those that were considered but did not make the list: should they be listed? 3) Those that now seem to merit consideration, such as "revival" styles, along with historic structures not considered originally, like the steps leading to the former Sloss Estate on Grove St. and to the Gerstle Estate, now Gerstle Park, on San Rafael Ave.)

We'll be planning other survey forays for weekends to come. Please join us! There is so much to learn, and it is a great way to really get to know your neighborhood. If you are interested, call 415-456-0221.

Board Members

Gina Silvestri, President
Hugo Landecker, Vice President
Joss Robertson, Corresponding Secretary
Nadia Silvershine, Recording Secretary
Ross Parmenter, Treasurer
Carrie Marmesh, Member

New Homes Proposed for Ross Terrace

Hugo Landecker

Two new homes have been proposed on Ross Terrace, a little known undeveloped public right-of-way that connects Ross Street to the west end of Clayton Street. The plans called for an encroachment for parking, a shift of existing fences that encroach on the right-of-way, and a new street that might connect Ross to Clayton.

Currently the project has been rejected by Public Works and plans have been returned to the developer for changes. After changes are made, there will probably be another review by Public Works, followed by a public hearing with the Design Review Board.

Neighborhood Sidewalks "The Waiting Continues"

Gina Silvestri

At the San Rafael City Council Meeting on Monday, February 6, the Director of the Department of Public Works, Bill Guerin, presented his findings on the various different options for ways the City might deal with the sidewalks issue. The Mayor and Council Members asked questions and listened to 15 community members (9 from Gerstle Park). [Click here](#) for the video of the meeting. If you click on Agenda Item 6B (listed below the video), it will advance to the sidewalks item.

Follow-up: Bill Guerin relayed that he is working on a formal proposal for the City Council, and anticipates a sidewalk policy will be on the City Council agenda April 17. This will be an important meeting to attend. As soon as we hear more, we will email members. However the sidewalk improvement program is structured, Bill says that the City hopes to start repairs this summer.

Volunteer Opportunities

The GPNA is interested in growing its board and encourages your involvement. [Click here](#) for more information.

GPNA Calendar

March 31 – Netflix Release Date, "13 Reasons Why"
April 8 – Spring Fling, 10 AM Gerstle Park
April 18 – Monthly Board Meeting
June 17 – Garage Sale Day
June 20 – Gerstle Park Night @ Pacifics Baseball
August 1 – National Night Out
September 17 – Annual Picnic, Gerstle Park



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

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: \$ _____

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
- Community Tree Committee
- Open Space Committee – weeding of invasive species (French Broom) in neighborhood open space, Nov-May
- Food Committee - help with planning, preparation & service for GPNA events

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!