

Gerstle Park

Neighborhood Association

Winter 2010-2011



What a Picnic!

On September 26th Gerstle Park celebrated with a picnic like none other! The western barbecue theme ran the gamut from posters, to decorations, to costumes, to games, to food – and to a great band, the Savannah Blue.

The neighborhood not only turned out for the picnic, but people stayed to dance, get western branding-iron tattoos, play pin-the-tail-on-the-horse, join in the sack races, and meet old friends and new.

Everyone chipped in to make this a special event. Thanks to all! And remember, we'll do it again next year..see you there!



GPNA Annual Meeting

Join us on Thursday January 27 for the GPNA annual meeting. At the meeting we elect new members of the GPNA board, talk about new GPNA efforts for the upcoming year and re-view what we have done in 2010. We are still looking for special guest speakers, so that news will follow in future emails.

Thursday January 27, 2011

6:30pm: Snacks & Drinks

7:00-8:30pm: Annual Meeting

Trinity Church

333 Woodland Avenue

You're Invited to Short School's Community Celebration!

On Saturday, December 11th, the Short School (at the corner of Marin and Bayview Streets) invites its Gerstle Park neighbors to see its newly renovated campus.

Doors open at 12 noon and the fun lasts until 3pm. Visit classrooms and see the work that the students have done.

Students will be there to greet you, and the school has planned activities – face painting, music, Jumpee inflatables and balloon art, arts and crafts and a raffle. There will even be snack foods to savor.



Who Puts Trash On Our Street Corners?

We have all seen piles of trash that people have discarded on our street corners. This problem is not unique to the Gerstle Park neighborhood, but is a city wide problem. We live in a time when recycling has become a way of life. Unfortunately, there are those that are using our streets as a recycling depot. We have all seen the rain soaked sofa or the urine stained mattress dumped at curbside. Our city disposes and about 14 tons of such debris each year. We realize that dump fees are expensive and that there can be problems with getting discarded items to the dump, but please--we do take pride in our neighborhood.

Our neighborhood has a unique problem because we have open space nearby. The homeless that have taken to living in our open space often collect these unwanted items and take them to the open space for their encampments. So, while these items are removed from our streets they are moved to a place where it is even more labor intensive and expensive to remove them.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2011 our City hopes to adopt an ordinance that will put the burden for disposal on the property owner that is immediately adjacent to the offending debris. This means that the property owner can be faced with a fine and/or faced with a fee charged by a contractor for disposal. This could also be placed as a lien against the property.

Residents who see people dumping debris in the neighborhood should make sure to get a description of the person, license number of a vehicle, and anything else to identify the perpetrator and immediately call the police department (415) 485-3000.

Dinners for 8

The Dinners for Eight program is a wonderful opportunity for members and friends of the Gerstle Park neighborhood to get acquainted with others that live in the area. What better way to get to know your neighbors than with warm food around a table in friendship and laughter.

The next Dinners for Eight is scheduled for Saturday, January 22, 2011.

Hosts are needed! If you volunteer as a host for the dinner, you will provide the entree (or whatever you choose) 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. You can sign up for this event as a single, or a couple. If you would like more information, please contact Suzan Dexter at: suzandex@yahoo.com

Halloween in Gerstle Park

Halloween comes and goes every year and people who live in our neighborhood never let us down when it comes to decorating their homes. The GPNA would like to acknowledge the time spent, creativity and enjoyment all of us get from the decorations from the homeowners who took the time to transform their homes.

We have compiled a list of homes we felt went beyond the ordinary and made us proud to live in Gerstle Park. A special acknowledgement to the following homes:

101 Marin
508 D
347 D
217 Bayview
39 Pleasant Land
40 Pleasant Lane
116 Greenwood
533 D St.



Take A Hike - In Gerstle Park!

There's a hidden resource in our neighborhood. That's evident, because so few people seem to know about it, or use it. The resource, right here in Gerstle Park, is a wonderful network of wooded paths, hiking trails, fire roads and hillside streets that are great for enjoying the outdoors - or exercising yourself and your dog. If you only have a little time to spare we'll describe a couple of wooded trails that you can cover in half an hour, and if you want some serious hiking there are hour and hour and a half routes that circle the hills behind us. On our website you can find three maps of the open space areas around Gerstle Park. www.gerstlepark.com/open_space/ These show paths, trails and fire roads that are referenced below in descriptions of the walks. Now, let's start with two modest walks:

Grove Street to Clark via the Fire Road

This is a woodsy walk. See Map 3. You'll start with a bit of a challenge, from San Rafael Ave up Grove St to the entry to our open space. There you'll find a comfortable dirt path that continues up the hill to meet the fire road. At that point turn right and continue on the fire road until you reach the path that turns off to the right (Rock Trail on the map) and goes back down the hill. Follow the path keeping to the left when you reach a junction and continue down the hill until the path reaches Clark St above the park. Time: about 30 minutes. It's an easy walk, except for the climb up Grove St, and if you don't care for that you can reverse the walk and take it easy walking downhill at the end.

Reservoir Road Residential Stroll

This is a very pleasant street walk, with some modest hills and very little auto traffic, so it's good for the dogs. We start from D St and walk up Ross St to Reservoir, then up Reservoir, past two sites where two homes are in different stages of construction. We turn right on Miramar and wind through a quiet neighborhood to reach Mira Flores Street on our left. Mira Flores then descends to First St, where we continue back to D St.



When you have a little more time or energy to burn, here are two walks that take you further up into the hills behind Gerstle Park.

Clorinda to Upper Toyon & Back to D St.

We begin at D St and Bayview, continuing up Bayview to Clark St, where we cut over a block to Clorinda. See Map 1. We go up Clorinda to the end of the street and onto the trail, as shown on Map 1. The trail branches after a short walk and we take the left path, which leads to the end of Upper Toyon. Upper Toyon is a great walk through redwoods and past gated mansions. When we reach the first intersection we turn left on Makin Grade Rd. and follow it to the end (see Map 3). Then take the trail and continue on the Main Fire Road to its end, at D St. Be very careful when crossing D St! An alternate would be to turn left at Grove St trail and walk down to the beginning of Grove.

Greenwood Path to Makin Grade & Gerstle Park

This is the wooded forest walk. If you begin your walk at Gerstle Park you should continue up Greenwood Ave to its end and look to the left where you will find the entry to the Greenwood path. The path, a dirt trail that is marked Makin Grade Trail on Map 1, takes you up hill through the woods and deposits you on Upper Toyon. It is very accessible and pretty.

Both of our public open space areas can be accessed from this trail. According to current city maps this trail is privately owned, but it appears that it is the last remnant of the old stage coach road that ran from San Rafael to Bolinas in the late 1800's. There is a neighborhood committee that has been working for at least two years to determine if the trail is still in public ownership.

At the top you'll reach Upper Toyon. Turn left for a very short distance and you find yourself at a gateway where Upper Toyon intersects Makin Grade. Turn left on Makin Grade Rd. and continue downhill to its end, where the trail leads on downhill through groves of redwoods and bay trees. After a short walk you'll find a smaller path on the left of the trail (it's identified as the Gerstle Trail on Map 3). Take this path to its end at the top of Gerstle Park.

We hope you'll enjoy some new adventures in Gerstle Park!

Watch Your Speed!

There will be lots of speed limit changes coming to San Rafael. By California State mandate our City is required to update our speed limits to meet State standards. Our State, that is so broke that it cannot fund anything, has directed agencies to do speed limit studies at a very great cost. **The new law requires speed limits to be based on the 85th percentile of all vehicles traveling on a street during non-peak traffic volume times.** Each street requires a traffic study and an extensive report. A few exceptions allow the speed limit to be reduced to 5 mph less than the 85 percentile.

In our neighborhood the 85 percentile on D St is 34 mph. This means that the posted speed would be rounded up to 35 mph. We also know that the police probably wouldn't bother to write a ticket until the speed was over 40 mph. If there could be some unusual circumstance, such as accident history, then the speed limit could be reduced to 30 mph (maybe). **Until these studies are completed the police cannot enforce speed limits.**

Our City has previously had a traffic-calming drive that had the goal of reducing speeds. Due to budget problems this program has been abolished. We are not sure what it is that drivers do not understand about speed limits. Worse yet is that our lawmakers and court systems don't seem to get it either. Maybe our lawmakers are still driving cars with square wheels. In the past our neighborhood has asked that the police enforce the speed limits in our neighborhood. D Street has had a number of these efforts, at the request of D Street residents. Many of those who were cited were D Street residents. This translates to "I can speed in my neighborhood, but if you live outside of my neighborhood then you can't speed on my street."

Citizens Police Academy

The San Rafael Police Department offers two Citizen Police Academy sessions each year. The 10-week course is designed to provide citizens with an overview of the Police Department's function and operational procedures as well as an inside look at local law enforcement.

Classes are taught by civilian and sworn police personnel of the San Rafael Police Department. During the Academy, students will have an opportunity to ride in a marked patrol car, ride on the patrol boat and fire guns at the indoor shooting range.

Classes are from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesdays for 10 consecutive weeks. The next session starts around mid-February. Call 415-485-3114 or e-mail Peggy.Ruge@srpd.org for more information.

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