

Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 150644 • San Rafael • California • 94915-0644 • <http://www.gerstlepark.com>



Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Only five more shopping months 'til Christmas! My how time does fly. I would like to begin a petition supporting the idea that the "Holiday Season" only come every other year, so we can actually miss it instead of having the sense that it is already looming on the horizon. "She's thinking of Christmas in July", you say! But really what I am thinking, is that the holidays come so fast, and yet it is nearly August and we still don't have any results to report to you on the traffic front. A recent meeting with the city leads me to feel kind of comfortable saying that you may be able to expect a community meeting in early September presenting a couple of possible near term solutions for the inefficient and dangerous intersections at First and D and First and C. We, and the city, recognize that there is a much longer laundry list of "to do" items concerning traffic calming in the neighborhood. But we are determined to first resolve the problematic intersections noted above. As always, we will keep you posted.

GARAGE SALE, GOOD AS EVER!

Our annual neighborhood garage sale just keeps getting better. This past June, we had 41 households selling all types of "treasures". We appreciate all the people who contributed to this very successful event. This by far is GPNA's best fund raiser, and it enables us to function as a volunteer neighborhood group. This year we bought brand new yard sale signs, and we thank everyone who proudly displayed them.

However, we would also like to make this event even better. A number of members who live on the hilly, upper streets away from the lower area of Gerstle Park are reluctant to take part in the garage sale because of low turnout due to their location. We are looking into having an area in front of Short School where they can display their items next year. We also would like to have a cookout area to sell hot dogs & soft drinks. All members are encouraged to send me their ideas on how we can make this better for everyone. Also, if anyone knows how many years the garage sale has been going on, please let us know. Send your ideas & comments to Bob Beyea at bobbeyea@yahoo.com or mail them to GPNA, P.O. Box 150644 San Rafael, CA 94915-0644.

EAT, DRINK & BE MERRY!

Mark your calendars to join us for the Annual Picnic, which is scheduled to take place on September 14th, starting at 5:00 P.M. This year we're thinking Bluegrass music, no veggie hot dogs (they went over like a lead balloon!), and maybe some volleyball on the lawn??? For those of you who love Swing Fever, as we do, we're hoping they'll play again next year-- and we thank them for allowing us to cycle some different flavors of music through, just to keep folks on their toes!

WORLD WIDE WOW!

We are beyond delighted to announce the arrival of our wonderful new website! The look and feel suits the character of our neighborhood very nicely. We are now able to manage the content ourselves, which will allow swift and dynamic updates, making the site more interesting and relevant. Look for a photo gallery chronicling neighborhood events (you will be able to submit photos to be included), a history of the neighborhood section with historical photos, an interactive forum to discuss hot topics such as TRAFFIC, as well as the calendar of events, Board info and more. Visit us at www.GerstlePark.com.

ARE YOU READY?

San Rafael is offering two excellent programs to help you and your family prepare for disaster, and the recent fires all around us in the state serve as a potent reminder that a disaster could strike at any time.

Get Ready Marin is a two hour training that will give you disaster survival knowledge. At the end of the program, you'll know what to do before, during and after a regional disaster. You will also be provided with a shopping list so you can assemble an emergency supply kit or you can purchase a ready-made kit at the training session. You'll also learn how much food and water you will need in order to last three days, depending on the number of people in your household. You'll be provided with a shopping list so you can assemble your own or you can purchase ready-made modules.

A great way to get to know your neighbors is to organize a group and host a **Get Ready** training at your home.

(Are You Ready? continued from page 1)

If you're feeling more ambitious, or you've already taken the **Get Ready** training and you want to expand your knowledge, consider taking the **CERT** training (formerly DART). This program covers basic skills that are important to know when a disaster strikes. You will learn to work as a team member and you will be able to do the greatest good for the greatest number after a disaster, while protecting yourself from becoming a victim. Attending a **Get Ready** class or reading the **Get Ready** manual is a prerequisite for the **CERT** program.

Skills you will learn:

- How to work as a team member, doing the greatest good for the greatest amount of people after a disaster
- Fire safety and suppression
- Search and rescue
- Disaster medicine
- Lifting heavy objects
- How to organize a CERT team in your neighborhood

*Included with your \$100.00 registration is a **CERT** response kit with supplies such as: a helmet, **CERT** vest, goggles, gloves, a flashlight, poncho, emergency blankets, duct tape, light sticks, utilities wrench, first aid kit, emergency water, triage tags and more. The next **CERT** program will start on October 7.*

*As a special thank-you for taking **CERT**, the GPNA will reimburse you for half of your tuition, so the cost to you will be \$50.00.*

For further information, or to sign up for either program, call 458-5002 or email Angela Del Ponte at Angela.DelPonte@cityofsanrafael.org

FIRE IN THE HOLE!

Campfires in the backyard? I don't think so...or can you? After hearing about a neighbor holding charming campfire chats in their backyard, we decided to look in to the legality of that. Fire pits are rather "the rage" these days, and according to the city of San Rafael, there are no restrictions on outdoor barbecues or outdoor fireplaces--which would include fire pits. With vegetation dry and fire risk high it would make sense to not use these near any kind of brush or wooden fences. It is extremely inadvisable to build a fire directly on the ground. To contact the Fire Prevention Division, please call (415) 485-3308.

NEW FENCES AND RETAINING WALLS

Several months ago the City of San Rafael adopted a new ordinance that could affect your plans for a new fence.

GPNA strongly suggests that you be aware that your front property line rarely coincides with the edge of the sidewalk or street. In most instances there is a publicly owned planter strip between the front property line and the sidewalk. For those of you that don't have a sidewalk there are situations where the front property line could be 15 feet or more from the pavement.

The ordinance states that any fence or wall placed on a public right of way that is 3 feet or higher becomes a "major continuing encroachment". These fences/walls require an encroachment permit from the Department of Public Works. There are rare instances that such fences/walls can be allowed.

Fences/walls less than 3 feet in height on the public right of way are classified as "minor continuing encroachments." These fences require that the owner obtain an encroachment permit from the Department of Public Works prior to construction.

KA-CHING

Marin Sanitary has created an award winning recycling center and has gone to great lengths to make it easy for us to participate in this important activity. However, we've received numerous reports of petty thieves rifling through our containers in the middle of the night in order to cart these valuables to the recycling center themselves to make a buck. This presents a problem for a few reasons: noise pollution, child labor (as there seems to be a family employing their small child in their efforts) and putting Marin Sanitary in the position of paying twice--once to supply the buckets and have them picked up, another to pay these "entrepreneurs". We know the trucks come really early making it prohibitive for many of us to put them out in the a.m., but if you should see these folks out raiding the cans, maybe say something to them. If they get caught/embarrassed enough times, maybe they will cease their nocturnal pillaging and move on.

LATEST NEWS ON THE LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH

After months of protests and concerns voiced by Marin County residents and groups, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced recently it would not spray pesticide over incorporated areas in the Bay Area, in an attempt to eradicate the Light Brown Apple Moth, or LBAM.

According to government reports, the LBAM could ruin farming in California if it spreads, possibly leading to millions of dollars in agricultural losses. Numerous groups though, including Stop the Spray-Marin, continue to be skeptical about the severity of the threat posed by the LBAM. Activists remain concerned that no long-term studies have been done about the health effects of the pheromones being proposed in twist tie campaigns by CDFA.

In terms of Gerstle Park, a hearing took place at the Coleman School on February 13, 2008 about plans to deal with the LBAM in San Rafael. The closest area for twist tie treatment extends from Westwood Drive, around Newell Road, a portion of Crest Avenue and Madera Ave. Feel free to contact GPNA for a map of the affected area, or call the CDFA Toll-Free Hotline with your questions at: 1-800-491-1899.

The state had originally decided to rely on aerially spraying a pesticide enclosed in a plastic microcapsule every 30 to 90 days for three to 10 years until the LBAM became extinct.

The new plan, which CDFA officials say will be released soon, will begin in the Bay Area on Oct. 1. The new plan will include techniques such as releasing 20 million sterile moths every seven to 10 days in hopes of stopping the reproduction cycle of the moth, and aerially spraying in rural areas. The CDFA is also considering using a ground spray and a spray from utility poles, as well as a pheromone to confuse male moths and prevent them from attracting a mate.

Last year, the Santa Cruz area was sprayed with the pesticide, called Checkmate, and 643 people reported illnesses, although there is strong disagreement between CDFA officials and activists about whether the spray caused or contributed to these illnesses.

31 cities in the Bay Area have passed resolutions against the spray, and four cities have taken legal action against the spraying of the Bay Area.

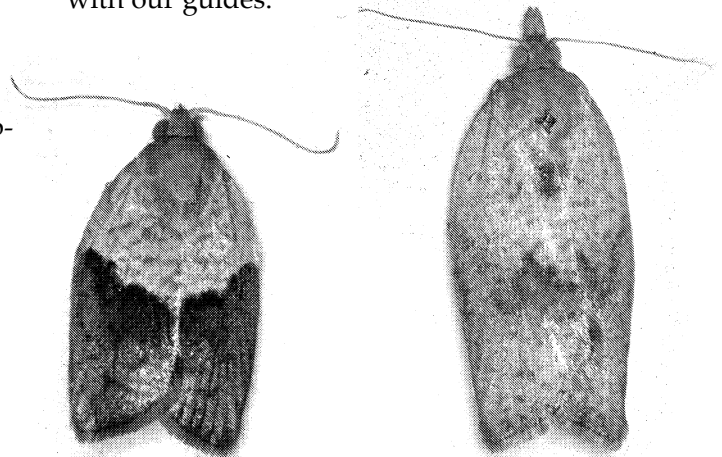
***Much of the information in this article was excerpted from an article by Izzy Bronstein in the San Rafael/Terra Linda News Pointer, July 10-16, 2008 edition.*

GOING TO THE DOGS by Bob Urban

Our two dogs take us on grand tours of Gerstle Park and beyond. They have introduced us to fellow dog walkers who take a minute to exchange greetings. People often tell us our dogs look like foxes, but we reassure them that they are quite tame. Nearly everyone uses a leash and there is seldom a growl in passing. We know where all the neighborhood dogs live because they exchange barks with our dogs as we walk by. Our male dog, Kodo, looks for cats but he's smart enough not to approach them. We never leave the house without plastic bags to pick up after our dogs, and we have used them to pick up after others on occasion.

Albert Park is a favorite early morning destination, where expanses of lawn encourage ball chasing and Frisbee acrobatics. Later in the day the dogs must share the park with people, so the exercise is more sedate. The neighborhood squirrel population is a special source of excitement for our dogs – they wait for a squirrel to fall from a utility wire but the squirrels haven't accommodated them yet.

The best thing about our tours is finding interesting places we probably wouldn't visit without them. They've taken us through all the scenic paths in the hills behind Gerstle Park and beyond. We walk throughout the neighborhood, but best of all is a visit downtown for shopping at Pet Pro, where they are welcomed with a delicious free dog treat. What a great way to enjoy the neighborhood, explore the hills and parks of San Rafael, and get the exercise we need to keep pace with our guides.



Male

Female

NEW FEATURE: "Love Thy Neighbor"

Repeated efforts to interview and acknowledge certain neighbors for their wonderful contributions toward keeping the neighborhood beautiful have led us to believe that these aestheticians are correspondingly humble. As such we have decided to test a new feature in the newsletter where neighbors can publicly appreciate one another for either their good efforts in maintaining or beautifying their property, or simply for good neighborly deeds. If there is someone in your corner of the neighborhood you'd like to acknowledge and appreciate for creating a more beautiful environment, or simply for being a good neighbor, we'd love to know about it so we can thank them for their efforts. Please email to Muriel Ballard at mballard@fhallen.com or mail to GPNA, PO Box 150644 San Rafael, CA 94915-0644.

GPNA CALENDAR

September 3	Wed	Board of Directors Meeting*
September 21	Sun	Annual Picnic
October 1	Wed	Board of Directors Meeting*
October 31	Fri	Hallowe'en Decoration Contest
November 5	Wed	Board of Directors Meeting*
December 3	Wed	Board of Directors Meeting*
December TBD		Christmas Caroling

* Guests are welcome! If you would like to address the GPNA Board of Directors, wish to attend a meeting, or need more information on Gerstle Park Events or Community Meetings, please contact muriel.ballard@gerstlepark.com

Check out our New Website!
<http://www.gerstlepark.com>



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