

Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association

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

LATE NOTICE!

TOT LOT MEETING - APRIL 1

San Rafael's Community Services is inviting concerned neighbors to a meeting on Tuesday, April 1, 2003, 7 p.m., at the San Rafael Community Center, 628 B Street to review the improvement plans for Gerstle Park. This meeting is an opportunity to see the plans and gain understanding of the project, and to raise your own questions and concerns. Please review the 'Tot Lot Update' article on Page 3.

2003

HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORT IN GERSTLE PARK

Do you care about the old houses in Gerstle Park? Would you like to help us explore how to more effectively protect the wide range of beautiful older homes in our neighborhood? GPNA is inviting neighborhood residents to an important meeting on local historic preservation on Tuesday, April 29, 7:00 p.m., at 127 San Rafael Avenue.

ANNUAL SPRING FLING - APRIL 19, 11 A.M.

The GPNA is proud to present once again the 'hopping' with fun, Spring Fling! Save the date—APRIL 19TH! We invite all the little 'bunnies' to partake in the egg hunt, games and refreshments! The festivities start at 11 a.m. Please meet at the lower section of Gerstle Park. We hope to have face painting, a visit from the Bunny, and more surprises! Anyone who would like to help, please call Lynn Bradescu at 454-4132. See you then!

NEIGHBORHOOD SPRING CLEANUP DAY - MAY 17

Spring has sprung...and so have the weeds. The gloomy detritus of winter must be excised from our newly green yards! Let's all get to work to clean up the mess! GPNA will help: We will have debris boxes waiting for your yard waste at Short School on Marin Street, and also on B Street, somewhere near the Bocce Courts, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring your stuff over and dump it on us while saying hello — but remember, YARD DEBRIS ONLY and NO PLASTIC BAGS, OR HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE OF ANY KIND. Please contact Krystyna at 382-1929 if you would like to volunteer to help.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Apr 3:	Monthly Board Meeting*
Apr 19:	Spring Fling
May 1:	Monthly Board Meeting*
May 17:	Spring Cleanup
June 5:	Monthly Board Meeting*
June 14:	Annual Garage Sale
Jul 3:	Monthly Board Meeting*
Sep 4:	Monthly Board Meeting*
Sep 11:	Annual Picnic

* If you desire to address the GPNA Board of Directors, or to attend a Board Meeting, please contact Hugo Landecker at 456-0221 (or email: clandecker@saber.net) for meeting location and time.

Collectively, our old homes give residents a sense of the neighborhood's place in San Rafael's history, engendering a feeling of stability and ageless community. However, San Rafael's current historic preservation ordinance does little to really protect most of our old houses.

We'd like to plan for realistic preservation goals that benefit but do not burden the homeowner. Of course, any preservation effort would apply only to facades, not to interior renovation, and would not be overly restrictive. We all have to live in the modern world!

We'd plan to broaden Gerstle Park's listings in the city's 1986 Historical/Architectural Survey, then research ways to work with the city to achieve realistic, effective protection for our old homes. This all will take careful planning, legwork, teamwork, self-education about old-house styles, and a willingness to have fun.

With broad participation from you, the residents of Gerstle Park, we can make this effort a success. To volunteer, or for comments or questions, please contact Cynthia Landecker at 456-0221 or by email at clandecker@saber.net. And please R.S.V.P. with Cynthia if you plan to come to the April 29 meeting.

GOOD DESIGN STILL GOOD IDEA

In our Winter newsletter, we asked for neighborhood volunteers to help us plan ways to recognize Gerstle Park neighbors who do outstanding jobs in building, renovation, or garden design. We had no response, and figured you were busy with the holidays, so we are asking for your comments once again. Please call Cynthia Landecker at 456-0221, or email her at clandecker@saber.net. If there is no input, the GPNA Board could still choose deserving designs on an informal basis, but we would rather have broad-based opinions on what standards we should use.



THE FATE OF SHORT SCHOOL'S SITE: UPDATE

Residents and the GPNA Board have been heavily involved in the proposed plans for the 1.26 acre site located in the heart of Gerstle Park. Many thanks to everyone who has voiced concern over potential development plans (site rezoning and development of 20-40 units) as proposed by City General Plan Steering Committee members.

Gerstle Park currently has a very diverse mix of housing and is already an extremely dense neighborhood, with a density almost five times higher than that of any other census tract in San Rafael. For those of us already familiar with the effects of overcrowding, the existing density is painfully apparent. Any proposal to add more density will only add additional strain on resources while compromising the safety and quality of life in our area.

We were very grateful to Mayor Boro and Bob Brown for the productive meeting we had with them Dec. 18, which allowed us a chance to demonstrate the neighborhood's strong opposition to proposed density increases. We thank the many, many residents who came. Although the Mayor announced that the Short School site will not be zoned for more than a few units, the battle is not over — final recommendations for proposed development within Gerstle Park have not been made. Additionally, the halt on San Rafael's involvement in development of St. Vincent's/Silvera's land means that the previously planned density for that area must now be planned for elsewhere within San Rafael.

GPNA is circulating a petition opposing Short School property rezoning and development. Please contact Krystyna Barron (459-4006) or Jennifer Stroman (460-0912) if you'd like to sign. Letters of opposition can be sent directly to Mayor Boro and Steering Committee Members at 1400 5th Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901 (fax to 485-3184). Final Steering Committee recommendations are expected by the end of May — please stay connected and feel free to contact GPNA members for more information.

WHICH WITCH, DISSIDED MIST MIXUP: GPNA GOOFS

Oh, horrors! We wish to correct a ghastly mistake in our Winter newsletter. The Best Witch prize went to 11 Marin Street, not to 21 Marin, and the Best Special Effects Prize went to 21 Marin Street, not to 11 Marin. There. RIP.

WE THANK OUR NEWSLETTER DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS

For many years, the unsung heroes of Gerstle Park have been the volunteers who bring the newsletter to your doorstep four times a year. High density and high hills make this a demanding job, but saves the Association buckets of postage costs. To show that their efforts are really appreciated, the GPNA Board has voted to give these folks a tangible, edible reward — a gift certificate for either Lafayette French Pastry or Muffin Mania. In case this notice makes you hungry, please volunteer to be one of the paper boys or girls by calling Eve Zamora at 482-8391, as we have a couple of routes available.

And be sure to give them a wave and a smile should you see any of our current delivery volunteers dropping off newsletters around the neighborhood! They are:

Bruce Payne, Chandra Murphy, David Ross, Eve & Ken Goudey, Hugo Landecker, Mary Alice Nolan, Maureen Zeus, Melissa Daly, Peggy Merner, Sandy Baker, Suzanne Hudson, Tina Yesson, Tim Firman, Tom Oblatz, and Victoria Schomer.

SPRING RUSH AT WILDCARE

Wildcare, a non-profit wild animal rehabilitation center bordering Gerstle Park at 76 Albert Park Lane, takes in 75% of its annual patients between early April and late August. Food is always needed for the sick, injured and non-releasable animals. If you have corn on the cob, apples, grapes, broccoli, romaine lettuce, and unsalted nuts in the shell, and are willing to drop them off at the center, please do! Especially desirable, even in small amounts, are things that grow wild, such as acorns, walnuts, or any berry. Please, no avocados, spinach, tomatoes, and citrus fruits. Please keep the animals in mind while clearing out your Back 40! Their number is 415.456-SAVE(7283). And, they always need volunteers and cash donations. Visitors are welcome!

OPEN SPACE

On May 8 we had our annual open space day. We targeted removal of French broom from an area near D Street. Thanks to Steve Schoonover, we had 20 volunteers from Center Point who spent the day sweating and working hard. If you are visiting our open space you can see the progress. Thank you, Steve. thanks to Center Point and thanks to St. Vincent's Dining Room for good lunches! It is community work like this that keeps our beautiful open space accessible to hikers and joggers.



TOT LOT UPDATE

On February 20th the Park and Recreation Commission approved the renovation plans for the preschool playground area. The proposed plan calls for the preschool playground to be relocated to the lower portion of the park, adjacent to the large kid swings. The existing picnic tables near the children's play area will be removed. A few of these tables will be placed in the current preschool playground, and the remaining tables will be placed in the redwood grove by the tennis courts.

When the work is complete, Gerstle Park's new Tot Lot will be compliant with state safety and ADA laws. It will be closer to the older kids' playground, offering easier access for those parents who are supervising multiple children of different ages. The fence around the open part of the park will be extended to keep children from the street.

A new bathroom will be installed in the lower play area, accessible to the disabled. The current upper bathrooms will be renovated and made more functional. The plans now go out to bid, and the City hopes to start the project sometime this year. Updated plans are in the Gerstle Park kiosk.

If you have questions about the Tot Lot plans, contact Chandra at 482-8033 or by email at murphdtm@yahoo.com.

In light of some controversy, we want to clarify GPNA's role in the Tot Lot. At the City's request last year, we located two parent volunteers to help with the planning. The GPNA Board reviewed the initial plans in October and had no negative comment. These plans were presented at GPNA's annual fall membership meeting, and no member raised any concerns. The GPNA Winter 2002 newsletter invited Tot Lot comment and questions; we have no record of any response. The City sent notifications to immediate park neighbors about the project and about Park Commission hearings in December and February. The first hearing, with three park neighbors attending, revealed objections to a new ADA-accessible bathroom located too near San Rafael Avenue and to picnic table location. City staff changed the bathroom location and proceeded with the planning process.

When the GPNA president learned of detailed objections to the plan in early January, he immediately referred the person objecting to Carlene McCart of the Park and Rec Dept., who responded to the concerns by detailing the rationale and State safety and disability access guidelines governing Tot Lot decisions. The GPNA president forwarded the objections to GPNA Board members.

At the February 20 Park Commission hearing, two immediate park neighbors were in attendance, one of whom

expressed no reservation about the plans. The other submitted a petition against park changes signed by 62 people. Without mentioning the new bathroom, the petition's primary objections were to swapping locations of tot lot equipment with picnic tables and expressing the concern that park changes would cause such increased use of the park that increased park maintenance and security would be needed. GPNA knew of these objections but not of any widespread opposition nor did it receive the petition until weeks after the Commission meeting. In spite of the petition, the Park and Recreation Commission voted to approve the Tot Lot design.

At this writing, there has been an IJ article, and the issue is being raised with the City Council and the GPNA. If you have further concerns about this issue, please contact Carlene McCart at 485-3333.

If these park changes do come about, and if neighbors experience specific, concrete problems that arise from the changes, GPNA will be happy to work with the City to address them. We ask you to contact us through our web site, www.gerstlepark.com, or call Hugo at 456-0221. In the meantime, park disturbances should always be reported immediately to the police.

SAN RAFAEL GENERAL PLAN

San Rafael General Plan 2020 is still being worked on by the City's Steering Committee and is expected to be ready for the first public hearings later this year. The plan establishes policies for the future of our City. Your GPNA Board has contributed many pages of suggestions and input to the Steering Committee. We also attend the monthly meetings. Density, safety, housing and street maintenance are just a few of the many subjects covered. All of you should be aware of this plan and are encouraged to get involved. Contact Hugo Landecker at 456-0221 to learn more or if you have some suggestions.

WEB SITE HELPER STILL NEEDED

We are still looking for someone to volunteer to help keep our beautiful Gerstle Park website up to date. Its creator, Ken Goudey, does not have the time, so a great communication tool is not being utilized well. Can you help? Call Ken at 577-0002.



The Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association Quarterly Newsletter

Year 2002-2003 Number 2

All articles written by GPNA board members.

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PREPARING FOR A DISASTER:

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCE OF SURVIVAL

By Brian Waterbury, Division Chief, San Rafael Fire Department

Disaster preparedness is all about planning and taking action. How well you plan will dictate the actions you take, which in turn will dictate your chances of survival. Sound serious? It is.

We live in a risky area and we are facing risky times. Whether it is natural (earthquake, flooding, tornado, etc.) or man-made (terrorism, hazardous material, fire, etc.) living in the San Francisco Bay Area places us all at risk.

Only YOU can plan effective preparedness for your family, and NOW is the time.

Immediately after an serious emergency, essential services such as paramedics, fire, police, public works, water, sewage and power may not be available to you for at least 72 hours. Know what to do! Here are a few tips, which we'll continue in our next issue:

- **Develop a household disaster plan, with 72 hour food, water, & medication supplies.**
- **Check into your employer's and your children's school emergency plans.**
- **Talk with your family about how to respond to emergencies, and what you would do in an evacuation.**
- **Have a family contact plan and outside meeting places identified.**
- **Arrange for family members to be able to contact someone outside the area to coordinate messages.**
- **Draw a floor plan of your home, with two escape routes.**

An excellent first step in preparing for a disaster would be to enroll in the San Rafael Fire Departments Disaster Area Response Team (DART) training program. The class is offered from 7:00 PM till 10:00 PM, once a week for six weeks and is taught by professional firefighters. The course covers all the necessary basic skills you will need to survive in a disaster. There is a \$40 materials fee, but GPNA will reimburse half of that fee to the first 20 Gerstle Park people who complete the training!

The fundamental principle of the DART program is that in a disaster, it will be neighbor helping neighbor. The more neighbors trained, the safer the neighborhood.

Please phone Dawn at 485-3308 for more information regarding the DART program.

If you would like to receive the original, longer version of the above document, please email: clandecker@saber.net or call Cynthia Landecker at 456-0221.

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: **\$10.00** per household (**\$5.00** seniors) - 1 voting member

Payment Type: _____ Term of membership is from November 1st to November 1st

How did you hear about GPNA? Friend Newsletter Other: _____

Welcome to GPNA!