

Gerstle Park

Neighborhood Association

Spring 2011



Moratorium On Large Group Homes Voted On By City Council

On March 7, the San Rafael City Council unanimously adopted an emergency ordinance “a moratorium” for 45 days on the operation of unlicensed “large group homes.” The City will research state and federal law and may recommend changes to our Municipal Code.

Recently, 201 Marin Street, a single family home, was leased to a TLC Sober Living, LLC for use as an unlicensed sober living facility. Unlicensed facilities do not have to meet any safety or health standards and cannot provide treatment. Similarly, another LLC (Bay Area Sober Living) leased a home in the Forbes neighborhood for the same use. This has created a storm of opposition in both neighborhoods. City Hall was not prepared for these situations.

To work with the city and represent our neighborhood’s interests on this issue, the Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association has formed a committee. For those with suggestions, ideas, questions or comments and if you would like to join us, please contact Board Liaison:

Amy Likover
alikover@aol.com
909.969.8960

To further voice your opinions and for updates:

1. See our Gerstle Park website, www.gerstlepark.com, click on “Forum” -> General Discussion
2. Visit our Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/home.php?filter=app_2305272732#!/pages/Gerstle-Park-Boarding-House-Issues-Info/108337485912708
3. Participate in the online Independent Journal discussions www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_17542429
4. The Forbes/Culloden Park Neighborhood www.cullodenparkneighbors.webs.com
5. A local online new source is: www.sanrafael.patch.com

Spring Fling Save-the-Date

Our annual “Spring Fling” egg hunt event is almost upon us. This is a very popular and well attended event. This year’s event will be held on Saturday, April 23th. Expect to arrive in the playground of Gerstle Park before 10am because once the kids are let loose at 10am sharp to collect eggs, the candy will disappear in a hurry. We will supply some coffee and muffins from our own Muffin Mania. We have had success with splitting the older & younger kids in separate areas in the park for safety reasons. Contests and awards will also be part of this event.

Saturday, April 23, 2011
10am SHARP: Egg Hunt
Gerstle Park Playground



Short School Gardening Project

GPNA plans to join with parents from Short School on an up-coming Saturday to landscape the school and plant a vegetable garden for the students. Details about the date and time will be posted on the GPNA website.

In the meanwhile, please keep in mind that the shrubs and flowers you may no longer want would be welcome additions at the school, so don’t discard them. Plan to recycle, replant and beautify our neighborhood.

Dogs in Gerstle Park

Over the past year we have received many suggestions from neighbors about the issue of off-leash dogs in Gerstle Park. There are those who say that dogs should only be allowed in the park when on leash and those who say that bringing their dog to the park and allowing it to run with other dogs gives neighbors the opportunity to socialize with one another.

It would be desirable to accommodate those on both sides of the argument. In an attempt to do so, we have contacted the Parks Department for guidance. Until the Parks Department responds, please keep dogs on a leash while in Gerstle Park. Here are a few places in Marin where you and your pooch can enjoy off-leash time together.

Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD)

Public lands purchased with tax dollars and maintained as open space by the MCOSD. Most of these areas are open to people with dogs. Dogs are allowed off-leash on fire protection roads when under the direct and immediate control of the owner. Watch for posted signs. (415) 499-6387.

Marin County Off-Leash Dog Parks

Canine Commons at Piper Park, Larkspur
Remington Park, Sausalito
Dogbone Meadows at O’Hair Park, Novato
Field of Dogs at Civic Center Drive, San Rafael
McDog at McInnis Park, San Rafael
BayFront Dog Park, Mill Valley
Red Hill Park, San Anselmo
Marin Humane Society Dog Parks, Novato – *limited hours*

Call the Police!

We recommend a phone call or email to SR Police Dept if you are ever the victim of a crime, however minor. Please report it the San Rafael Police Department immediately. There are two options:

1. Online (click on file a report): www.srpd.org
2. Phone call - EMERGENCY 9-1-1 or non-emergency (415) 485-3000

The police officers who attended our annual meeting tell us that unless a crime is reported to them, they cannot follow up later. Upon arrival they will ask for your driver’s license or ID, your address and phone number before investigating.

If you’re a good neighbor, but repeated attempts of encouraging your neighbor to take care of basic responsibilities such as maintenance, garbage, illegal construction or occupancy, lawns, illegal signs, abandoned property or vehicles have been to no avail, a complaint with the City of SR can be filed online at: www.cityofsanrafael.org/Government/Community_Development/Code_Enforcement/Complaints.htm



New at the Bocce Courts

The popular Marin Bocce facility at 550 B Street has just completed a remodel, adding a new meeting room, expanding the office and finishing the interior with a bright coat of paint.

The Marin Bocce Federation, a non-profit organization that is affiliated with the San Rafael Parks and Recreation Department, operates the courts, which opened in 1994. The eight outdoor and two indoor courts are open to the public. During the height of the season up to a thousand players from as far away as Sonoma and Napa Counties, the East Bay and San Francisco use the courts during the week. For those interested in learning about the game of bocce, the staff offers instruction and an opportunity to join one of the many league teams that use the facility.

On weekends the bocce facility is a popular venue for private parties and fundraisers. The new meeting room can accommodate twelve to fourteen people and is available to groups and individuals at a modest rental cost. For more information check out www.marinbocce.org.

Long-time Neighbors Talk About Gerstle Park

an interview with Hugo & Cynthia Landecker

Forty-three years ago Hugo and Cynthia Landecker moved to the Gerstle Park neighborhood, or the “South Side” as it used to be known. The year was 1968, when they were expecting their daughter Julie. At that time, Hugo was working at the Hunter’s Point Naval Yards in SF. Hugo had served in the Navy for 3 years, then became a machinist. They knew they wanted to live outside the city after all. Cynthia had traveled the country as an “army brat,” even residing in the Presidio at the time of her father’s retirement and Hugo harkened from San Francisco.

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an interview with Hugo & Cynthia Landeckercontinued from page 3

When the time came for a decision of where to settle, Hugo took out a Bay Area map and the couple decided that San Rafael was the place for them. The Landeckers moved into a small dilapidated 1910 built house at 20 Ross Street that they lovingly restored during the next few years. "It was charming, adorable," Cynthia remarked. "We didn't know how wonderful these old houses were then."

When the neighborhood became noisier and the Landeckers wanted more space, they bought their current Victorian house at 127 San Rafael Avenue. It was in serious disrepair: divided into four units one of which at one time contained a house of ill-repute. One denizen occupied the dirt-floored basement that was without facilities. Hugo and Cynthia took on the project with trepidation but determination. Hugo added, "The house was headed for destruction."

They continue to carefully restore their home; Hugo has done all of the renovation from sanding floors to restoring rooms scorched by fire. Cynthia is interested in Victorian décor and they are both fascinated by Victorian musical instruments. Imagine their excitement discovering etched floral glass doors hidden under coats of paint and unusual wood floor patterns!

Hugo's pastimes include making ornamental iron work using his homemade forge. He built the iron fence around their home and you can see his handiwork on the sign on the rock wall at Gerstle Park.

The Landeckers are adventurous sailors, having not only braved the winds and currents in the Bay Area but are also veterans of sailing trips to Hawaii and British Columbia. Hugo teaches a course about tides and currents and knots to the Coast Guard Auxiliary. He works tirelessly to clean and maintain the open space land and its wonderful hiking trails above Gerstle Park.

What are the origins of the Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association?

In the 1950 and 1960s, houses were being torn down left and right; our neighborhood had been zoned for destruction. The official zoning designation was "R3" which meant that little lots could have one unit per 1000 square feet. A particularly egregious example was at 215 Bayview: a "keyhole development" of 90 units with a small entrance that ballooned back to abut many single family dwellings.

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The area streets couldn't accommodate the many cars and the population density was rapidly becoming problematic. Many similar apartment complexes were built in the 60's and early 70's until the Landeckers joined neighbors to form a neighborhood association in 1971. It all started when Steve and Cheryl Baker invited folks over. The group needed to name the neighborhood so Cynthia Landecker volunteered, "Gerstle Park Neighborhood (Association)." The name stuck.

The second decision was, "How big should our neighborhood be?" Hugo drew up plans. Should its boundaries be west of D or B Street? B Street was decided. The group elected a board of directors and officers. Mike Flynn, an attorney at the time, served as president and Joe Lydon was the first VP. Hugo served as a member at large. "Mike appeared before the City Council and when he spoke, people listened. He was so good, always with a mastery of the subject matter." The group drew up articles and bylaws and then a neighborhood plan.

This interview was conducted by Amy Likover on February 10th, 2011. The second part of the interview will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

GPNA's Annual Meeting

On January 27th the GPNA held its annual meeting for the residents of Gerstle Park. The purpose of this meeting is to hold elections, encourage new members, renew current members, review the events of the previous year and invite speakers of different topics to speak.

Here are highlights of the topics & speakers of this year's meeting:

- 2009 Board Members and 2010 Board Members
- Nader Mansourian, Public Works Director spoke about traffic, speed limits, street construction, trash dumping & new stop signs.
- Pepe Gonzalez, Principle of Short School. A update of that school.
- Albert Park: the issue of homeless & a hangout area.
- Open space and hiking trails around our neighborhood.
- GPNA Financial Report.
- Police Officers Ralph Pata and Brian Patterson. They came to inform our members of current crimes, city budgets and its effects on the police force and how to contact them and crime prevention tips.
- Police email alerts. Peggy Ruge of the SRPD.

These were the main topics of discussion as well as a question and answer session that opened the floor for the members and their concerns. It is always an important meeting to reconnect with the board and the neighborhood.

Earth Day Family Bike Ride - Get in Gear & Go Green This Spring!

On Saturday, May 7th at 10 AM we'll leave from Gerstle Park and ride to the CalPark Tunnel and back – optional ferry ride with bike to SF (organize this portion on your own). Meet at Gerstle Park, corner of Clark and San Rafael Streets with your bike at 9:45 AM.

Things to bring: Helmet and water bottle. Wear a bright colored t-shirt or jacket; Gerstle Park neighbors show their colors! All children must be accompanied by an adult and must wear helmets. We will ride quiet city streets and then on busy Andersen Drive, we'll ride the bike lane (Route #5).

Route:

San Rafael St. east to C Street (.2 mi)

C Street north (left) (.2 mi)

Taylor (right)

B street (left)

Albert Park Lane (right) shortcut to Lindaro (.2 mi)

Lindaro north (left) to Andersen (.1)

Anderson southeast (right) to Cal Park tunnel (1 mi)

CalPark Hill Tunnel entrance is opposite Office Depot on Andersen Drive

Tunnel to Larkspur Century cinema parking lot (1.1 mi)

Distance: approx. 3 miles one-way to Larkspur Ferry

CalPark Tunnel Info: <http://www.marinbike.org/Campaigns/Infrastructure/CalParkIndex.shtml>

Larkspur Ferry departs for SF at 11:40 am.

Fare each way: \$8.25 adults, Youth 6-18 years \$6.10. Check return times on this link: www.goldengateferry.org/schedules/Larkspur-summer.php

Contact: Amy Likover, alikover@aol.com or 909.969.8960

The Benefit of Membership

What does the GPNA offer the residents of Gerstle Park? We, as board members, often get asked this question with regard to the GPNA. Most residents are aware of the Spring Fling Egg Hunt, the annual Garage Sale and the fall Picnic in the Park. We produce a quarterly newsletter and operate the neighborhood web site. We get involved with city matters that have an impact on us.

One important item some residents may not know about with our membership is instant communication. If you are a paid member we include you and your email address in our e-blasts. If there is an important timely issue we will send a bulk email to all paid members as soon as we hear about it. A perfect example is the current issue with Clean & Sober facilities in Gerstle Park. Our board was informed about this facility opening its doors and we got the message to the members via email.

A few residents, who are not paid members were not aware of what we, the GPNA, were doing about this issue. It was obvious they were not in the loop of communication. We also e-blast about police and crime matters. If you want the benefit of this type of membership, please join the GPNA and you will be informed.

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