



DO YOU ENJOY YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER?

The Gerstle Park Neighborhood Association is always working for the greater good of our neighborhood. One of the most expensive, labor-intensive, and time-consuming efforts is our quarterly newsletter.

To maximize GPNA resources, we are changing from free distribution of the newsletter to personal delivery for current members only. We will continue to have newsletters available at the park kiosk, Muffin Mania and on the GPNA website. If you enjoy having community news and historical and resident stories delivered right to your door, as well as many other benefits offered to members, keep your GPNA membership active!

For more details, see page 3.

GERSTLE PARK ANNUAL PICNIC

Save the date! GPNA's annual picnic will be **Thursday, Sept. 14 at 5:30 pm.**

Join us in our park's Upper Redwood Grove for the 34th Annual(!) GPNA picnic.

Bring family and friends to spend an evening under the trees with your neighbors. After last year's great response to our own local band, *Swing Fever*, we booked them again to serenade us with their irresistible oldies while we eat, dance and schmooze.

As usual, free hot dogs, chili and soft drinks will be provided. Bring money to purchase raffle tickets for chances to win great prizes. The GPNA Board members will be there and will summarize some of the great things accomplished in the last year. We have such a special neighborhood, come out to the picnic and celebrate our good fortune!

To enhance the feast, please bring a side dish or dessert and serving utensils based on the first initial of your last name:

A-M: bring a side dish or salad

M-Z: bring a DESSERT

We hope to see you there!

GERSTLE PARK T-SHIRTS

Wear your neighborhood pride! Gerstle Park t-shirts featuring our treasured dragon are available in all sizes for \$15. To see a sample, go by the park kiosk. To purchase a t-shirt, contact Tim Firman at tim.firman@gerstlepark.com or (415) 456-1365. They will be available for sale on www.gerstlepark.com soon.



IS SMART SMART FOR SAN RAFAEL?

TOWN HALL MEETING INVITATION

When: Tue, 9/19 at 7:00 pm

Where: Lindaro Corporate Center, 750 Lindaro St.

There has been much talk about plans for the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) system, but little clarity. The Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods is hosting a public forum on the SMART plan. A Marin panel representing both positive and negatives views of SMART will answer questions from neighborhood residents about the proposal and the tax measure to pay for it. Don't miss this opportunity to get a first-hand understanding of the issues on this important November ballot item by asking your questions and hearing from residents in many San Rafael neighborhoods.

GPNA FALL CLEAN UP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Lamenting the loss of Gerstle Park's annual Spring Clean event? Based on your feedback, the GPNA Board has rescheduled our Gerstle Park Annual Cleanup as a fall event that coordinates with San Rafael's Make a Difference Day. This is a great opportunity for families to participate in our community and make a difference right here in Gerstle Park. The details are still percolating but the date is set for October 22nd, approximately 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. If you have ideas or want to volunteer to help with the planning, GPNA's VP, Tim Firman wants to hear from you! Contact Tim at: tim.firman@gerstlepark.com or (415) 456-1365

More information and signups will be coming via email, on our website and on the large signs posted at intersections. Please mark your calendar and help us make a difference in Gerstle Park with cleaner streets, litter pickup, and trimmed greenery.

GERSTLE PARK MOMS, DADS, AND KIDS CONNECT

Recently, GPNA was asked if there is a way to connect parents and kids with others that live in the neighborhood. We thought it was a great idea and are happy to help. Whether formal or informal, making a few connections is a great way for new neighbors or new parents to enjoy the neighborhood. Here's an easy way to meet others with whom you already have two "hoods" in common—neighborhood and parenthood!

Interested? Please drop us an email at info@gerstlepark.com with Gerstle Park Parents in the Subject line. If you don't have access to email, call 459-4337 (email is preferred). GPNA will facilitate making initial connections and we're happy to promote any scheduled get togethers or activities as they develop..... let's see where it goes.

NEW GPNA BOARD MEMBER

Muriel Ballard has accepted a position on the GPNA Board of Directors, filling a vacant position with a two-year term ending in 2007. When Muriel first moved to Marin in 1995, she lived in the Oakhill Apartments on Marin Street. She now owns a home with her husband Timothy and daughter Eden on Reservoir Road. Muriel is a Realtor with Frank Howard Allen and is also a Professional Life Coach, having worked for six years with clients from around the world and in a broad spectrum of industries. Muriel's hobbies include writing, public speaking, entertaining and self-improvement. Muriel's goal with GPNA is to inspire greater interest in membership for the sake of community relations, civic empowerment and social enjoyment.

STREET SWEEPING SCHEDULE

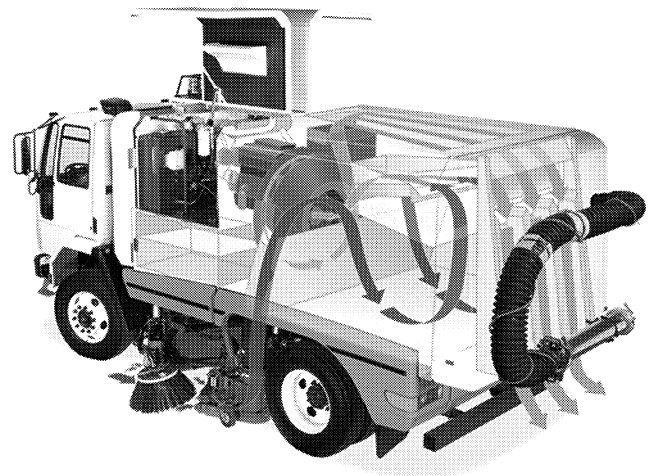
Please help keep our neighborhood clean. San Rafael only does two street sweeps in our neighborhood each fall. So it's important to move cars and push leaves, dirt and litter out to where it can be picked up! The machines cannot pick up piles of leaves or debris. Debris must be accessible and in small drifts in order for the sweeping machine to pick it up.

Our neighborhood is divided into two street sweeping routes. Here's the schedule

Rt. 11 is Clark, Woods, Miraflores and West:
Mondays, 9/11 and 10/23

Rt. 15 is the rest of Gerstle Park:
Tuesdays, 9/5 and 10/17

You can see the Street Sweeping Map, check your specific location, and note any updates to the schedule at <http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/Assets/StreetSweep2006a.pdf>. For more information about street sweeping and other things you can do to make our fall/winter cleanup more effective, please visit our website at www.gerstlepark.com





QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Gerstle Park residents enjoy a number of neighborhood luxuries throughout the year, perhaps without awareness of what is involved and the role the GPNA plays. Our most expensive, labor-intensive, and time-consuming effort is the quarterly newsletter. For years, the Board and several key volunteers have worked to research, write and edit an informative and interesting newsletter and then hand deliver it to over 1500 residents.

Recently, the Board reviewed this practice, and began assessing the costs to keep all activities going and the relationship of the number of Gerstle Park residents to that of active GPNA members. We learned a couple of things. First, current GPNA membership is a fraction of what it can be. Rallying the community is *necessary* to meet our goal to positively influence neighborhood progress, upkeep and spirit—things that affect us all. Plus, more members means more clout with the city regarding issues or programs that could improve our neighborhood and quality of life. Second, it became clear that the GPNA members and the Annual Garage Sale participants *fund* the newsletter and our great neighborhood events, which everyone in our neighborhood can enjoy.

We concluded that some changes may help GPNA

achieve better results for our members, and bring increased benefits to Gerstle Park. Since it's our biggest expense, an initial step is that beginning January 2007, the quarterly newsletter will be delivered (either to home or email) to **current** members only. Copies will still be found at Muffin Mania, the kiosk in Gerstle Park, and on the GPNA website.

Of course, the hope is that all residents will consider the benefits of membership with the GPNA. The fee for membership is very reasonable, and there are so many wonderful things that we can create as a community with a broader base of membership. Please consider joining today!

Finally, a **huge thank you** to all of our neighbors that have kept their GPNA membership active and the volunteers that donate very generous amounts of their time, talent and energy so that everyone can enjoy these amenities!

For more details about this change, future membership ideas, and information about what the GPNA contributes to our community, go to www.Gerstlepark.com

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 through December 31st

\$15.00 Per Individual/One Voting Member (\$10.00 Seniors Age 65 or Older)
\$20.00 Per Household/Two Voting Members (\$15.00 Seniors)

New Member Renewal Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Payment Type: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Date: _____

How did you hear about us? Newsletter Website Friend Event Other

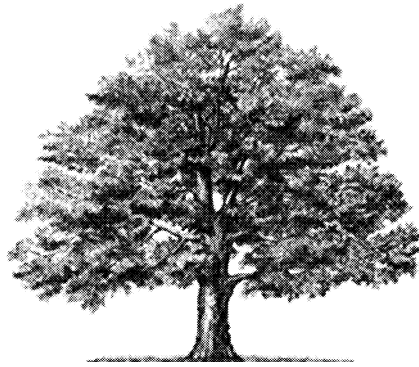
Do you wish to receive our quarterly newsletter via email instead of home delivery? Yes No

Are you interested in volunteering? Yes No

Gerstle Park T-SHIRTS have arrived! Children and Adult Sizes. \$15, delivered. _____ / _____ Quantity/Size

TREE TALK

Gerstle Park has beautiful tree canopies throughout the neighborhood. Have you noticed how amazingly cool they keep an area when temperatures are high?



In the winter, when the leaves are gone, these same trees let light into our homes, provide passive solar warmth, and save on heating bills. To top it off, our mature trees offer a lovely identity to our architecturally diverse neighborhood.

The GPNA is concerned over a pattern that has been established by the city. As some of the older trees die from age, disease, or a bolt of bad luck, they are often replaced with trees that will never grow into a full canopy. In several cases, trees are removed and not replaced at all. Replacements are commonly Crepe Myrtle, Flowering Pear and some varieties of Ash trees. While these are known as "street trees" and can be very pretty, they do little more than provide window dressing, since their growth potential is only small to medium in size. Sycamore trees are one of the better varieties for replacing lost trees on our streets. GPNA is actively discussing the future of street tree plantings with the City so that our neighborhood canopies are sustained and maintained!

The City is **now** compiling the list of tree plantings for next spring, so the timing is perfect to identify *where we need trees* in the neighborhood. If you have noticed a location where a tree should be, regardless of whether the spot has had concrete poured, please let us know. Also, if you have tree ideas or thoughts, please contact us at info@GerstlePark.com

For more tree talk and answers to maintenance, pruning, and removal questions, visit <http://www.gerstlepark.com/treeopenspace.html>.

GPNA thanks Steve Patterson, guest author and neighbor for his contribution to this article.

WHAT A SALE!

The 12th annual GPNA Garage Sale was the biggest ever and a great success. There were 57 participants and we passed out 400 fliers to shoppers from all over the Bay and beyond. This event is the biggest fundraiser for the GPNA. Many hours donated by your board members and volunteers go into the planning and execution of this event. This year the GPNA made \$1,430, which goes into the treasury to fund our annual picnic, the Easter egg hunt, and the quarterly newsletter. A big thanks to all of the neighbors who registered to participate in this event and to the board members and volunteers who worked so hard to make it happen.

A CASE FOR NATURE

Introducing a new newsletter series by Jordis Weaver

Plastics play a big part in our lives. Almost everything is wrapped, contained, and bottled in plastic. Unfortunately, most plastics are polyethylene-based (chemically derived from crude oil), do not compost, and never biodegrade. Marin has one of the highest recycling rates in the country, which we should be proud of. The Marin Sanitary Service recycles the majority of all plastic bottles; but they do not recycle plastic bags or any non-bottle plastic containers. As a result plastic bags, containers, wrappers, and debris litter our streets, backwoods, creeks, and eventually end up as landfill in Marin County or the Greater Bay Area.

Sadly, as much as one-fourth of all plastic manufactured ends up in the world's oceans. Scientists report there are garbage patches in the ocean spanning as large as 10 million square miles (the size of Africa). More than 100, 000 marine animals and 2 million birds die every year from ingesting or being caught up in plastic debris.

We can all easily reduce the amount of polyethylene-based plastic in our lives and environment. More environmentally friendly alternatives come out every day. Eliminating the plastic bags that many stores use is not an unrealistic goal. Here are a few things you can do to dramatically reduce toxic pollution and save landfill space around us:

1. Use bags and containers made from cornstarch, vegetable oil, and other renewable resources (they are available and biodegradable). Trash bags, dog clean-up bags, cups, plates, and cutlery are just a few of the items that are available in environment-friendly materials.
2. Order in bulk, maybe go in with a neighbor, and save on packaging materials and shipping costs.
3. Ask your local stores to provide biodegradable bags for shoppers.

Here are a few online stores where you can order biodegradable plastic supplies:

www.ecoproducts.com

www.biodegradablestore.com

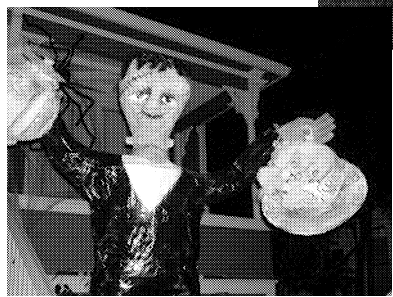
www.wildorganics.net

www.greenhome.com

If you prefer to shop locally, check out Whole Foods, the Elephant Pharmacy, and Trader Joe's all offer environment-friendly products. Also consider buying recycled paper products, such as paper towels, toilet paper, and facial tissues. Together, we can change the world, without hurting the earth! Every little bit helps. For further info, comments, concerns, and questions please send email to: toxicfri@gmail.com.

BOO!! EEEEEEEK!!!! SHRIEEEEEEK!!!!

Halloween, October 31st, falls on a Tuesday this year. The GPNA Board will be out searching for the best wicked witches, ghastly ghosts, creepy light shows, and other fun, creative Halloween decorations to be honored in the next newsletter. Remember, by your request, we brought the contest back, complete with categories, placing, and prizes! So if you make your house and/or yard look really ghostly, ghastly or gory, you may be a winner! Our neighborhood kids, especially our little trick-or-treaters, love to be welcomed by decorations that bring out the spirit of Halloween. Let's give them a real treat this year, light up the neighborhood for this fun holiday event, and please keep an eye out for goblins and princesses dashing through the night!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING LEADER NEEDED

GPNA is looking for a lively person to lead our annual Christmas Caroling event on December 14th.

We will have the caroling books, plan the route, and arrange a meeting place where we can warm up and have some refreshments. We are looking for somebody who will first help the carolers warm up, do some vocalizing and then lead the group of singers through the neighborhood. Ideally, we'll be able to hold a practice a few days before the Dec. 14 event.

If you can help with this, please contact Tim Firman at (415) 456-1365 or email him at tim.firman@gerstlepark.com

NEW EDITOR OF THE GERSTLE PARK NEWSLETTER

After three years of service, Lil Walters decided to step down as editor and put her boundless energy into other ventures. We thank Lil for her dedication, every spelling and grammar correction, and her many suggestions. Lil says she may come through with an article from time to time in the future.

Lil's assistant editor, Lisa Fait stepped in to fill the void. Lisa lives in the Gerstle Park hills with her husband, Steve, and two rescue cats. They moved into the area almost three years ago and love the neighborhood. Favorite activities include shooting the breeze with neighbors and trivia night at our local pub, the Mayflower.

Ken Goudey continues his seven-year stretch as our newsletter graphic designer and layout artist. Ken's wife, Eve continues her role of printing the newsletter in the most efficient way and managing the newsletter delivery process.

If you have article suggestions or would like to be a guest author, please write to info@gerstlepark.com.

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