

Gerstle Park

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Winter 2011



GPNA Annual Meeting

Join us on Wednesday January 25th for the GPNA annual meeting. At this meeting we'll elect new members to the GPNA Board, talk about new GPNA efforts for 2012, and enjoy a special presentation of the year in review. We always have special guests and members and non-members are invited to attend. This is a perfect time to join the GPNA or re-new your membership. The GPNA Board of Directors are always looking for new board members.

This is the ideal time to join and get involved.

Wednesday January 25, 2012

6:30 Mingle, Drinks & Snacks

7:00-8:30 Annual Meeting

Trinity Church

333 Woodland Avenue

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 these decorated homes. A special thanks to the following addresses in our neighborhood.

119 Clark

9 Madrona

39 Pleasant Lane

Bayview: 217, 341

D St.: 421, 508, 532, 538, 533, 343

Clorinda Ave. 31, 51

115 San Rafael Ave.

12 Ross

A Salute to Retiring GPNA Board Members

Three of the Board's stalwart members are reaching the end of their three-year terms in December and they plan to retire from active participation in the Association's affairs.

Bob Beyea, the current chairman of the GPNA, has served on the Board for six years, first as a Board member and then, for the last three years, as its chairman. Bob has been a dynamic leader, guiding the Association during a period when Gerstle Park is challenged with controversies about traffic, group living facilities and an expanded baseball program in Albert Park.

Tracy Loy, the Board treasurer, has been a member for six years, serving two consecutive three year terms. In addition to financial responsibilities Tracy has worked diligently to organized and support GPNA events such as the annual picnic in Gerstle Park and the Board's annual January neighborhood meeting.

Stacey Lauman, is currently Vice President and has been a Board member for three years. She served as the Board's secretary for a year and a half as well. She has been an enthusiastic supporter of neighborhood improvements, especially the rerouting of auto traffic on First Street which reduced congestion and improved safety in this busy area.

We salute Bob, Tracy and Stacey and thank them for their dedication to our neighborhood affairs.

A new Board chairman will be elected after the upcoming January GPNA Annual Meeting. We invite any and all Gerstle Park residents to consider joining the Board to replace these departing members. The GPNA needs your help to insure that our neighborhood remains the wonderful place that we all enjoy.



Fragile Street Trees

Over the years, a great amount of city and neighborhood effort has gone into the planning, planting, and care of the street trees that beautify, shade, and cool Gerstle Park streets. Street trees also help to absorb harmful greenhouse gases. Please don't harm these trees by tacking or nailing signs to them! Yard sales and lost cats can be advertised on inanimate objects like telephone poles!

Baseball in Albert Park

In October, after postponing presentation of their proposal for minor league baseball in Albert Field, Centerfield Partners decided to revise their proposal before seeking Council approval. The new proposal cuts the lease agreement to one year (from three), reduces attendance from 1500 to 800, keeps all concessions inside the field area, and limits field rental credits to \$5000 per year.

The City Council unanimously approved this new proposal. Letters from two attorneys, one from The Lofts at Albert Park, were submitted to the Council, stating that the proposal is still subject to an Initial Study under CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) guidelines.

After promises by both Centerfield and mayor Boro that the study would be completed residents expressed that they — even those who are in favor of the proposal. The lack of a defined process for vetting the project and of any sort of evidence to back up claims of economic gain for the City has spurred some residents in the neighborhoods surrounding Albert Park to take the only route available to appeal the decision: litigation.

To pursue this avenue these residents have formed a non-profit organization, Albert Park Neighborhood Alliance (www.albertparkna.org). This is a separate organization than Communities for Albert Park (www.communitiesforalbertpark.com), who originally organized residents, and which will continue to serve as an organization to steward the park through all issues — from baseball to insufficient lighting to the excess of transients in the park.

Albert Park Neighborhood Alliance has filed paperwork with the Superior Court of Marin County and has served Centerfield and the City of San Rafael. Since the City is indemnified by Centerfield it will be Centerfield's responsibility to retain an attorney and respond to the suit. Centerfield must respond to the county by December 18th. A court date is set for April 2012 should a settlement not be reached.

In the meantime Centerfield is proceeding as planned and has hired a manager and coach.

Clean & Sober Living Facilities

Early in November Amy Likover, representatives of the GPNA Sober Living Facilities Committee and our pro bono attorney met with Paul Jensen, San Rafael Director of Community Development to discuss the issue of Clean & Sober Living Facilities (SLF) which have opened in our community.

There has been a temporary moratorium on the establishment and operation of "unlicensed large group homes, serving more than 7 or more residents not including on-site managers" in residential areas of San Rafael since March 7, 2011; the moratorium expires December 31st. At the December 5th City Council Meeting, Paul will recommend the extension of the moratorium on new sober living facilities (SLF) in San Rafael. Further study is necessary of federal and state law as it might affect city zoning and regulations. Were the City to recommend a municipal code change, several months of public hearings are required.

Paul Jensen is serving as the committee's conduit to the City Attorney's office and asks we report parking issues to him. All after hours complaints should be called in to the police; Paul will track these statistics. Mr. Jensen will also meet with all area de-tox facilities to explain their role in informing residents about the moratorium and the misdemeanor consequence of starting such a SLF in San Rafael. "Good neighbor issues" such as parking on the wrong side of the street, and also building and fire code concerns — safety issues for facility residents and their neighbors — were raised. According to the operators, there may be 10 client residents at 201 Marin and 9 client residents at 200 Marin. Were fewer adults residing in each single-family SLF, there would be considerably less stress on and parking congestion in an individual neighborhood, in this case one corner, Marin/Ross.

Paul Jensen mentioned a new initiative from County Department of Health Services to serve as a clearing house for individual placement in county sober living facilities. Our committee is interested in bringing the county department into the conversation.





Follow your Nose to Ponsford's Place

Gerstle Park residents are beginning to discover a new bakery at the edge of our neighborhood: Ponsford's Place, located in a cute little building at 117 Shaver Street. Craig Ponsford opened his bakery last year, after a long career as a "Master White Flour Baker" that has included stints in Sonoma bakeries and as a participant in international baking competitions.

Craig is not resting on his laurels. He is using his new space to develop new approaches to healthy breads and pastries, as well as to give baking classes for the home baker. He uses only whole grain flours in his products and is minimizing the use of sugar. The result is surprisingly wonderful! His wares include both sweet and savory delights, as well as an ever-changing array of breads. No fancy espressos, but a most excellent cup of real coffee is available. Seating is limited.

The bakery is only open for retail sales on Thursdays and Fridays, 8 to 6; and Saturdays, 9 to 5. Check out the store's web page at www.ponsfordspice.com for a schedule of special events (like pizza night!) and a list of classes. One can also follow "ponsfordspice" on twitter or Facebook.

Living Locally – What's your Local Business?

There are so many talented people in Gerstle Park, like Craig Ponsford, with services to offer: accountants, contractors, garden designers, therapists. Wouldn't it be great to do more business locally? We'd like to build a local resource guide so that Gerstle Park residents might spend more time and dollars right here. If you'd like to include your business in this list, please email info@GerstlePark.com and provide us with your business description and contact info. We'll compile the local resource guide and make it available to the neighborhood. Free advertising? Yes, essentially. Let us know you're out there!

Volunteer to Support our Vibrant Community

If you're reading this newsletter, you might realize that several of your neighbors volunteer to help make Gerstle Park a lively, connected community. Without new board members, the Association may cease to exist in 2012! The Summer Picnic, the Spring Fling and the Garage Sale are all brought to you by fun people that want to contribute to the vibrancy of Gerstle Park. But several people currently on the neighborhood board are moving on. Now it's YOUR TURN to participate!

What's the commitment?

GPNA board members are elected in January after the Annual meeting. The term is 3 years. Board members attend a monthly meeting and also help out at neighborhood events about 3 or 4 times a year.

When?

Meetings are once a month, currently Wednesday nights from 7-9pm.

What do we do?

Meet at a member's house or local cafe to plan upcoming events, discuss neighborhood concerns or initiatives and ways to support the neighborhood. It's sort of like a monthly cocktail party with snacks, wine or tea! If you choose to, Board members also attend other city meetings on issues that interest them, as a Gerstle Park representative.

If you like the fact that people organize parties so that you can meet your neighbors, join our board.

If you like the traffic improvements that happened a few years ago, join our board.

If you want to keep our open space safe and available, join our board.

If you like that people questioned the City's handling of the baseball plans, or are looking into how rehab facilities affect our community, join our board.

Contact Stacey Lauman at staceykate@hotmail.com or go to www.GerstlePark.com if you are the volunteering type.

We look forward to voting you in at the annual meeting!

GPNA's Annual Neighborhood Picnic

On September 10th Gerstle Park celebrated with a picnic. 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, play pin-the-tail-on-the-horse, join in the sack races, and meet old friends and new. We also had special guests who were running for major and city council seats. Everyone chipped in to make this a special event. Thanks to all! And remember, we'll do it again next year...see you there!



Gerstle Park House Fire

One of Gerstle Park's oldest houses suffered a dangerous fire recently, and we can all learn a lesson from it. The cause of the fire was a high-intensity lamp that had fallen on a bed and ignited the mattress. Yes, high-intensity lamps do get dangerously hot! We are not sure what caused the lamp to fall over, whether a pet knocked it over or it was just placed carelessly. But it is a lesson for all that these lamps need to be securely placed and monitored when in use.

In this instance, the house had a fire alarm installed but it didn't seem to be operational — another lesson for all of us.

Finally, since many of us use cell phones now as a sole source of phone communication, we need to be aware that dialing 911 on a cell phone may rout your call to the CHP in Vallejo instead of to your local emergency centers. The CHP then has to forward your call to the appropriate jurisdiction while your emergency continues to escalate. We should all have the local police and fire emergency numbers programmed into our cell phones. San Rafael's police emergency number is 485-3393 and our fire emergency number is 453-1515.

In the D Street fire, our SFRD responded rapidly and efficiently and soon had the fire out. We are very grateful to them for saving this charming old house and its neighbors, and possibly the lives of residents. The estimate for damage was \$50,000, and a resident had to be hospitalized for burns.

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

One Vote Per Household - \$20/year (\$10 seniors age 65+)

NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

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

Payment Type: CHECK CASH

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____