



July 2011



BLOCK PARTY

WENA Board 2011

www.wenaonline.org

Sharlene Moss, President

Dave Borton, V.P.

Ben Negrete, Treasurer

Vicki Fernandez, Secretary

Directors:

Deborah Coburn - Terrace

Jay Bellin - Spring Grove

Bill Dagg - Greenfield

Greg Reel - Fremont

**Cecelia Winters Annual West End
Neighborhood Block Party**

September 18th - 12 Noon to 3 p.m.

Neame Street

RAFFLE PRIZE - TICKETS TO GIANT'S GAME

Jumpy House for Kids

Balloon Animals & Hats

Legos by Play-Well TEKnologies

IT'S-IT ICE CREAM BY JAY BELLIN

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs & Beverages by WENA

BRING A DISH TO SHARE

SOMETHING NEW

Craft Project - Make Your Own Hat

Looking for contributions for items to glue on the hats:
beads, buttons, silk flowers, ribbon, colored tissue paper

If you have items to donate call

Hanne at 482-8009



Wildfire Prevention - by Dave Borton

The vegetation we prize around our homes can also be **destructive and deadly** because it fuels the risk of **wildfire** that can result in the loss of life, multiple structures and our environment.

San Rafael has adopted specific requirements for property owners in Wildland-Urban Interface Zones about how to manage vegetation within 100 feet of their structure. This is referred to as **'Defensible Space'**.

Guidelines and requirements include:

- ◆ Reduce combustible vegetation, trees and brush from around your home – especially Juniper and Bamboo plants (Sometimes called “gasoline plants.”)
- ◆ Trim trees, remove standing dead trees and remove vegetation from under structural overhangs and decks.
- ◆ Cut grass and weeds regularly.
- ◆ Keep your yard, roof and deck

clean.

- ◆ Maintain your woodpile away from your structure.
- ◆ Remove or cut Broom, Gorse and other highly combustible non-native plants.
- ◆ Trim vegetation along roadways for safe emergency and resident vehicle access.

Remember, the Defensible Space requires the action of all property owners.



Marin Village - Aging Gracefully and Independently In Your Home

By Trish Hibben, Marin Village Board Member

AARP Magazine and NPR have featured stories on the Village movement. It began in Beacon Hill in 2001 when a group of residents decided to help one another stay in the homes they loved as they aged. There are now more than 56 “Villages” in existence across the country.

Marin Village launched last fall with its mission to enable seniors in Marin County to age in their homes with grace, confidence and peace of mind. Marin Village is a county-wide, not-for-profit, membership organization which provides referrals to our trusted, thoroughly screened network of agencies and service providers via our interactive website and central phone number. Village members can access the private members-only page where we

offer over 14 categories of vetted services from care managers to computer gurus, fitness specialists to support groups, contractors to plumbers and handymen...plus a myriad of other services. These providers frequently offer discounts for Village members only.

MARIN VILLAGE



Our Paths - Our Choices

We partner with the local Community Village Organizations (CVO's) linking member to neighbor volunteers who assist with transportation needs

and assistance with daily activities such as grocery shopping, fixing irrigation systems, and moving furniture. Socializing with other members is an important focus of the CVO's. Members strengthen their community connections by meeting

new neighbors and friends while attending Village educational, fitness and social programs.

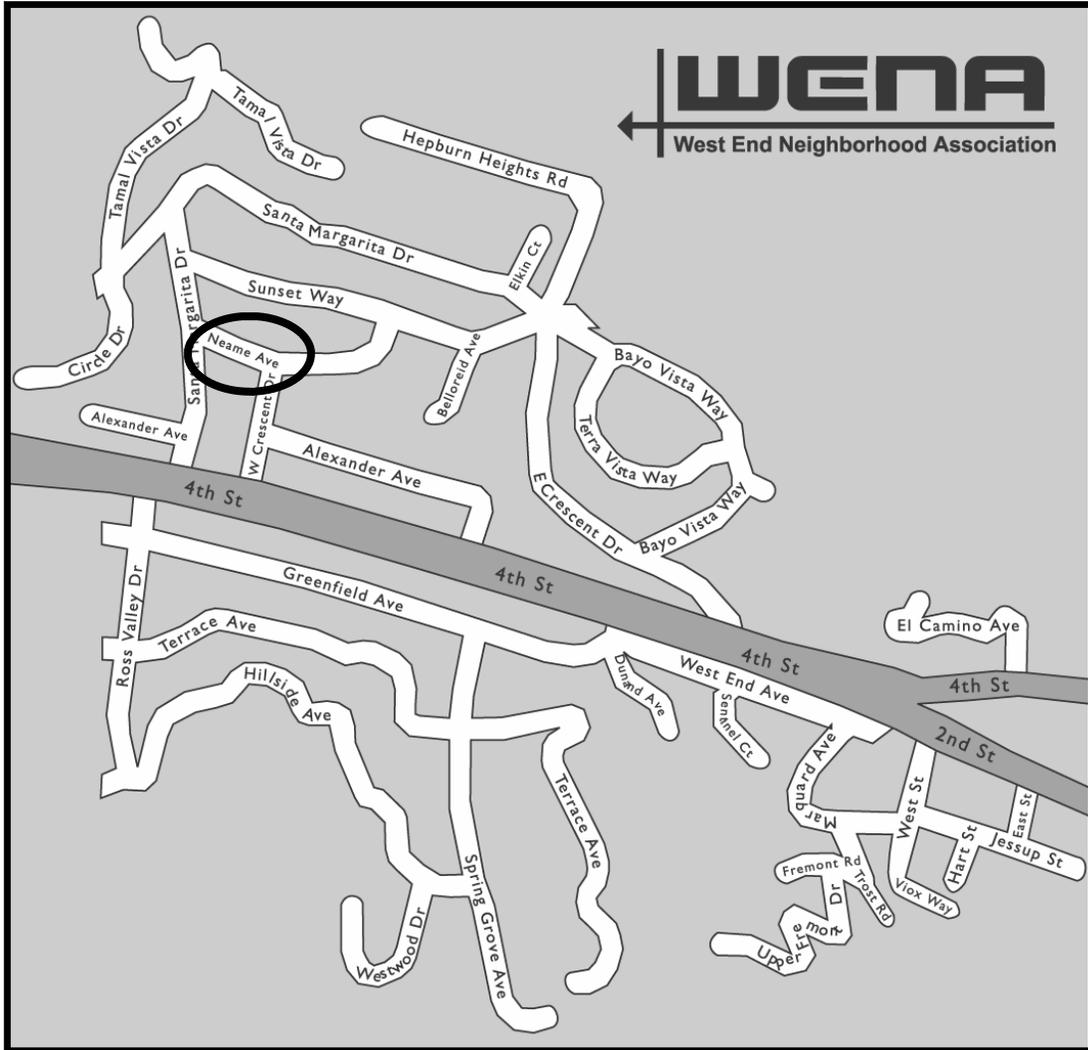
Sausalito CVO launched in October 2010 and is currently offering a rich array of social programs often for free or at a nominal charge frequently led by our own members.

These programs include yoga, painting, memoir writing, and flower arranging. Trained and screened volunteers help members with a number of transportation and shopping needs.

There are other CVO's in various stages of development: Ross Valley, Belvedere/Tiburon, Mill Valley, Homestead Valley The cost of an annual membership in the Marin Village is \$200 per household. For more information visit www.marinvillage.org or call 457-4633.

Block Party Map - Neame Street

(Between Santa Margarita & West Crescent)



WIN THE GRAND RAFFLE PRIZE

2 Tickets to the Giants Game + Roundtrip Ferry Ride

The Giants vs. The Rockies

September 27th at 7:15 p.m.

(\$150.00 Value)



Raffle Tickets - \$5.00 but don't buy just one! Increase your odds of winning.



4 Tickets for \$10, 8 Tickets for \$20, 16 Tickets for \$30

Plastic Street Trash.....*One - A - Day Will Pay™*

by West End Neighbor, Land Wilson

A perk of living in the West End is that we have convenient areas for walking and cycling. We are close to two downtowns and we aren't far from incredible open space. I covet that I can start a walk outside my door.

Some of my clearest thoughts come when I walk. Living in a house bustling with kids, I prize any clear thinking I get. Walks get me present to things like; my breathing, the smell of trees or litter.

As an environmental writer, when I see litter, I notice. I think of the West End as a clean area, but if you look closely, our streets, gutters, and sidewalks are often littered with plastics. Most neighborhoods are like this. I am talking about the pieces that seem inconsequential like; a shattered pen, torn off wrapper corners, bottle caps, packing peanuts, or debris from construction and utility line workers such as wire shavings, electrical tape, zip ties and plastic saw dust. No matter how much I pick up on my daily walk, I always find more.

I speak to schools about trash, in particular ocean plastics. Estimates are that 80% originates as on-land litter. In 2008, a study revealed that 35% of the fish from a Pacific sampling had plastic in their stomachs. In essence, there is an oil spill over vast amounts of Earth and it is in the form of plastics.

One message I share is this: If you see plastic trash, pick it up. Throw it away or recycle it if it can be recycled.

If you don't do this, usually nobody will. Then, when rains come, it gets washed into creeks, rivers, bays and many times, out to the ocean. Picking up one piece of plastic won't clean up our oceans, but you are keeping that piece from getting there. If you don't pick up that piece you see and it makes it to the ocean, over time, that one piece can break into a 100, 500, 1,000 pieces, or more - impossible to clean up. By picking up one piece, you can say that you are picking up countless pieces of plastic. You are protecting our food chain. Jean-Michelle Cousteau said, "If we protect the oceans, we protect ourselves."

Cleaning up the oceans may seem impossible, but one thing I have learned from speaking to Apollo astronauts for my children's book, *Sofia's Dream*, is that when we humans work together, we can achieve the impossible.

I recently founded a non-profit corporation called, The Earth View Society. One of its endeavors is the *One-A-Day Will Pay™* project - a project to keep plastics out of oceans by having everyone pick-up one piece a day.

If a small stone can start an avalanche, picking up one piece a day in mass can shift the buildup in our oceans. Here in the West End, we can be the neighborhood that spearheads this project. If you are interested, my contact information is at: www.landwilson.com

WENA Resource Directory

We have so many talented neighbors who make their living as a landscaper, financial advisor, photographer, music teacher, musician, contractor, plumber, realtor, electrician, web designer.....you name it.

If you would like to be in the Resource Directory on the WENA website, send your Name, Business Name and Description, phone, email address, license # if required to WENA's Web Master: Free to WENA Members , \$20 for Non-Members.

Dave Borton at borton193@yahoo.com

Dates to Remember

- August 18th Board Meeting
- September 18th Annual Block Party
- October 20th Board Meeting
- December 4th Holiday Social for Members

Inside the Marin Civil Grand Jury

Interview with West End Resident and Grand Jury Foreperson Fred Cushing

Have you ever wondered who this mysterious group of people are called the Grand Jury that make headlines whenever they release a report. We are honored to have two former members, Al Lozano and Bill Dagg and the current foreperson, Fred Cushing, as members of the West End Neighborhood Association. Fred who lives on Upper Fremont, is wrapping up his last term on the Marin Grand Jury as the foreperson. He generously agreed to be interviewed for the West End Newsletter and to share his experience and insight on the inner workings of the Civil Grand Jury.



Why did you decide to apply to be on the Grand Jury?

As cliché as it may sound, I was inspired to explore volunteer opportunities while following the last Presidential election and what I was hearing regarding volunteerism. Through my research into the topic, I learned of the Civil Grand Jury system in California and locally in Marin County. I applied, and two years later - the rest is history.

What did you find the most interesting part of serving on the grand jury and what did you find less rewarding?

The MOST INTERESTING aspect of grand jury service was learning the details of how county and local government functions. Specifically the Board of Supervisors, and other agencies at the county level, but also the towns and special districts. Every year the jury inspects the County Jail & Juvenile Hall, and San Quentin State Prison - a FASCINATING experience unto itself!

The MOST REWARDING part was meeting so many **amazing** individuals inside and outside government. Most impressive was Mary K. Sweeney of *HOMEWARD BOUND of Marin*; someone who inspires me with her dedication to making life better for all citizens of Marin, especially our homeless population. LEAST REWARDING or INTERESTING aspect was dealing with the many, complicated levels of bureaucracy inherent in a democratic government.

How frequently do the grand jurors meet, what is the time commitment and what is the process for picking topics, researching topics and writing reports? Who does what and is there someone "in charge" who makes assignments? Is there a budget and how far reaching in terms of cost goes

into researching and creating the reports?

- The Grand Jury meets 3 days a week for regularly scheduled group & committee meetings. When we are conducting our investigations, and writing and editing our reports, we often meet 5 days a week.
 - The Time commitment is advertised to be 25 hours a week. It was often much more, especially for the Foreperson.
 - Topics are chosen through a combination of complaints received from citizens, suggestions from the current and past juries, issues we hear about in our communities and in the press, and by "paying attention" to what is happening around us. Topics for investigation must be approved by a "super-majority" (12) of the 19 seated jurors.
- Research is conducted by committees that review documents, websites, and agency history & organization. The Grand Jury also conducts many interviews in the course of our investigations, and has subpoena power, which is rarely used if we have an "uncooperative" witness.
- The Foreperson is essentially "in-charge" of the overall day to day operation of the jury. We have a Presiding Judge if we need advice. We also work very closely with the County Counsel's Office for legal advice, and have the services of a county worker who provides day to day support and aid to the Grand Jury.
- The Grand Jury has a limited budget to cover expenses such as travel, supplies, our county aid's salary, our per-diem (\$20 a day + mileage), and other expenses associated with publishing our reports.

Who chooses the Grand Jurors? Are there more people who want to serve than get chosen?

This year 70 citizens applied for Grand Jury service (the year before we had over 100). That group goes through a series of interviews before being whittled-down to 30. Of those 30, 19 are chosen by lottery to be seated jurors with the remainder held over as alternates to fill in as jurors resign during the year.

Continued on page 4

Inside the Marin Civil Grand Jury Continued.....

The entire group goes through an intensive two weeks of training sponsored by the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Association - an organization comprised of former Grand Jurors (they have a website). West End resident, Al Lozano serves on the Board of Directors.

What happens to the Grand Jury's Recommendations/Reports? We always read about them in the newspaper but who gets the report and who determines if any of the recommendations get implemented?

The power of Grand Jury's reports, and our findings and recom-

mendations, lies in the press coverage we receive. Each report identifies agencies and/or individuals responsible for responding to the report. In their response, the agency/individual must state if they will implement our recommendations. If they decline to implement our recommendations they must state why. The Grand Jury cannot compel an agency to change. However, they better have a compelling reason why they intend not to because all responses become public record and are posted on the Grand Jury website. www.co.marin.ca.us/grandjury.

Summer Social 2011 for West End Neighborhood Association Members

Membership Has Its Privileges

A beautiful June day greeted West End neighbors at the Summer Social hosted by Board Member Dave Borton and his wife Hanne at their home on Tamal Vista Drive. Neighbors on both sides of the Miracle Mile had the opportunity to mingle, renew friendships and make new ones. Good food, drinks, and a dip in the pool combined to make this another great Summer Social. And...as Dave likes to remind us, no one got tossed in the pool!



The West End Neighborhood Association (WENA) is a non-profit, non-partisan association dedicated to fostering community and to enhancing the quality of life for our residents, both homeowners and renters. WENA provides a forum for voicing issues between residents and our local government. Our mission is to keep neighbors informed and connected so we can work together to solve problems, to safeguard our community, and to promote activities which beautify and respect our environment.