

November 2013

**WENA Board 2013**

[www.wenaonline.org](http://www.wenaonline.org)

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# West End News



## President's Message....

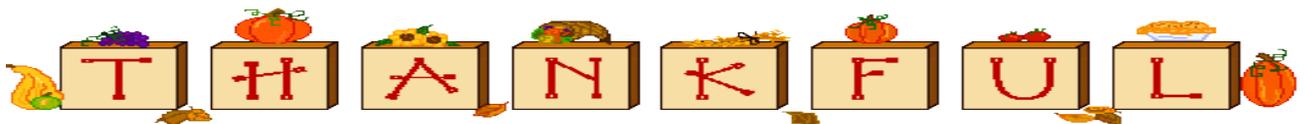
*By Dave Borton, WENA President*

Neighborliness is alive and well in the West End of San Rafael! As we reflect on WENA's accomplishments in 2013 we are mindful of the role each of you has played in supporting us. National Night Out on August 6<sup>th</sup> was a new event for WENA and was sponsored by police departments nationwide to promote safe neighborhoods with the goal of getting neighbors to meet and get to know each other. Four neighbors in different locations in the West End sponsored a potluck social from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. with the traffic circle on Santa Margarita getting the biggest turnout. (see photo gallery on page 4)

The Cecelia Winters Block Party grows each year attracting more and more neighbors. It's a proven fact that you can have fun and get to know your neighbors at the same time and even meet some new ones! Even our canine neighbors have a good time. (see the photo gallery on page 3)

Our last event of the year is the Holiday Social on December 8<sup>th</sup> hosted by David & Jill Baker on Neame. Make your favorite holiday treat and bring it to share with others along with a donation to the Food Bank. Look for an Evite in your email.

As we head into 2014, look for new initiatives for disaster preparedness and possibly a "chipper day" in the spring. Being ready and self-sufficient for natural disasters is important for our well-being and the wellbeing of our neighborhood. Ongoing projects include maintenance of the West End beautification project on West End Street and the "Six Corners" traffic circle. If have suggestions or ideas for projects where you think WENA could make a difference, send me an email to [wena.sanrafael@gmail.com](mailto:wena.sanrafael@gmail.com). Better yet, WENA always welcomes volunteers, neighbors with good ideas who want to participate and new Board Members. Election of new Board Members will be in February.



## Preparing for the Worst - Hoping for the Best! ... by Victoria DeWitt



WENA wants our neighborhood to be ready for any disaster including fires. Much of our neighborhood is in the Wildland Urban Interface or WUI (pronounced "woo-ee"). The Wildland Urban Interface describes residential areas near lands prone to wildland fire.

To increase the safety of our neighborhood, the City of San Rafael has adopted very specific requirements for property owners to manage the vegetation around their homes. Here are some things each of us can do to protect our homes from wildfires:

- ◆ Remove juniper and bamboo plants and replace with fire resistive vegetation.
- ◆ Trim trees and vegetation overhanging the roadway. The City requires that 13.6 feet above the roadway is clear of vegetation.
- ◆ Stack firewood away from your home. Stacked wood should be twice the distance from a structure as the

height of the pile.

- ◆ Remove all dead vegetation from the ground, roof, gutters and decks. Keep area under decks clear.

The City of San Rafael offers residents located within WUI a FREE "Residential Fire Hazard" assessment. If you are interested in having someone come to your home to provide free advice on how to make your home more defensible in case of fire, please contact Deputy Fire Marshal John Lippitt at [John.Lippitt@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:John.Lippitt@cityofsanrafael.org) to schedule an appointment. If you would like to get more information about vegetation management, go to <http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/fire-prevent-vegmgt-home/>

WENA will work with the City of San Rafael to help educate neighbors to make their properties safer. Stay tuned for more information in our next newsletter! If you are interested in helping with disaster preparedness in our neighborhood, please contact WENA at [wena.sanrafael@gmail.com](mailto:wena.sanrafael@gmail.com).

### Shout Out!

Thank you to a West End Neighbor, who wishes to remain anonymous, for keeping WENA's Beautification Project - Poppy Palooza alive! He had Tree Masters, free of charge, deliver mulch to West End Street and then spread it on the strip to smother the unsightly weeds and spread the poppy seeds.

## Exploring the Neighborhood.... by Victoria DeWitt



Don't miss the Red Hill Pet Center located at 1566 Fourth Street (near F St), in the West End Village. The

family owned business recently moved from the Red Hill shopping center in San Anselmo to San Rafael.

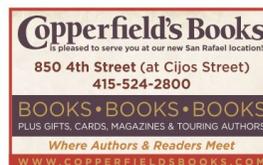


Feeling thirsty after that bike ride or walk in the neighborhood? Stop by Urban Remedy at 1904 Fourth Street, (at the old Sudsette building) for a refreshing, healthy and 100% organic juice drink.



We have a new gourmet bake shop in the West End Village called John-n-y Doughnuts, located at 1617 Fourth Street (near Rebound Bookstore). Be sure to go early - the store closes after all the freshly baked doughnuts are gone for the

day!



Copperfield's Books has opened a new store at 850 Fourth St (near Cijos - in the old rocking chair store). Check out their many book events!

# West End Neighborhood Association Events ...Photo Gallery



# The Cecelia Winters Annual Block Party - September 15, 2013



## West End Neighborhood Association Events ...Photo Gallery

### National Night Out - August 6th



Hosted by 4 West End Neighbors on Greenfield, Tamal Vista, Fremont Rd. & Traffic Circle

*National Night Out takes "Neighborhood Watch" to a new level by promoting police-community partnerships and building neighborhood camaraderie with the goal of preventing crime.*



**Coming Soon - Mark Your Calendar**  
**. Holiday Social For WENA Members**

*. Sunday - December 8th*

*. 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.*

*. Cocktails & Appetizers*

*. Hosted by*

**. Jill & David Baker**



**. Bring a Donation for the Food Bank and an Appetizer to Share**

*Neighborhood Spotlight ...by Janis Peterson*

## Lou Thoelecke - A Man of Many Talents



**W**hat started as an interview with Lou Thoelecke about the traffic circle in front of his house on

Santa Margarita turned into a fascinating conversation with a West End neighbor who is a passionate environmentalist, accomplished winemaker, a Bronze Life Master at Bridge, musician, trained chef, former competitive tennis player and real estate investor. Between sipping Six Corners Zinfandel and enjoying appetizers in Lou's outdoor spa/cabana, Dave Borton and I took notes!

**Where to begin....** Lou was born at Cottage Hospital in San Rafael and attended school in San Anselmo, graduating from Drake High School in 1967. Between College of Marin, San Francisco State and Viet Nam (joined the reserves), he didn't graduate from college until he was 26. While going to school he worked at Lucky Grocery Store when a friend talked him into working for DeSoto Cab Company in San Francisco. He started out driving a taxi and later worked in the office. Somewhere along the journey, Lou set a goal to retire at 50 which dovetailed nicely with his interest in real estate. He banked three paychecks each month, living on one and saved money to buy his first investment property, a duplex in Novato. He parlayed the duplex into a 6-unit building in San Francisco and has continued to invest in real estate ever since.

Lou purchased his home on Hepburn Heights in 1975 and has had a front row

seat to the "traffic circle," the intersection of *Santa Margarita Dr., West Crescent, East Crescent, Hepburn Heights, Scenic and Bayo Vista* where he has witnessed near misses with cars going every which way and pedestrians running for cover. The Circle was also used as a parking lot strewn with trash.

Lou shared some neighborhood history when Jerry Garcia, founder of the Grateful Dead band, lived up the street from him on Hepburn Heights. Lou remembered Jerry's friends showing up in stretch limos to party and taking over all the parking. That's when Lou decided to plant Juniper along the road which has since been replaced with grapes.

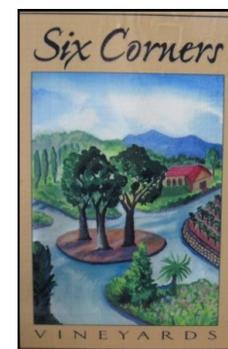


15 years ago when the City repaved the street, Lou got them to put a curb around the Traffic Circle which took care of the parking problem but not the near misses. Two years ago after getting the City approval to let him install a fence and new traffic flow signage, Lou came to WENA and asked for our support in fund raising and installation. WENA was delighted to help. Ben Negrete, WENA treasurer, walked the neighborhood with flyers soliciting donations. Lou got on Craig's List and found a good

price for the lumber and drove to Healdsburg to pick it up. Some neighbors pitched in to build the fence; the City installed the signage and painted the curb red. The rest is history thanks to Lou. While taking photos of the "Traffic Circle" two cars went around the Circle (the right way, of course) and gave me a thumbs-up pointing to Lou's house.

We finished our visit talking about wine and the genesis of Six Corners Winery! Lou's interest in wine was kindled when he served in the Army Reserves with Michael Mondavi. On their summer training at Camp Roberts, Michael would bring wine to taste. At that time there weren't many wineries. Four years ago, Lou embarked on his winemaking adventure, planting vines in his terraced yard, taking classes at Napa Junior College and experimenting. Always interested in sustainability, Lou practices organic farming/gardening and may include beekeeping in his repertoire.

What started as a simple interview about a Traffic Circle and a neighbor who made a difference turned into a story that was even more interesting. It makes me wonder how many other stories there are in the



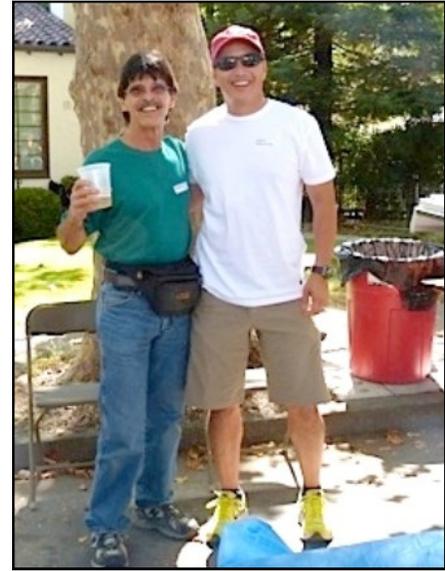
West End Neighborhood waiting to be told.

## The Cecelia Winters Annual Block Party

Another successful Block Party! Thank you to everyone who participated whether you cooked the hot dogs or ate them, sold raffle tickets or bought them, chatted up your neighbors or chased the kids. A big thanks to Victoria DeWitt who solicited 22 raffle prizes from 20 local merchants. We sold 254 raffle tickets not including the raffle tickets for the Grand Prize, Giant's Tickets. The raffle prize money helps to underwrite the cost of the Block Party.

Always there to support the West End Block Party, thank you to Barb Bischoff and Annie Danberg who supplied the crafts and supervised the crafts table, Tim Bowen, owner of Play-Well TEKnologies who set up the Lego Corner and Musician Tina Mander who provided the entertainment.

Would you like to help plan next year's Block Party? Maybe you have an idea for a new activity or would just like to roll up your sleeves and get involved. Send an email to [wena.sanrafael@gmail.com](mailto:wena.sanrafael@gmail.com).



**Ben Negrete & Mark Machado**  
Grand Prize Raffle Ticket Winners

## Neighborhood Planning Update . . . by Victoria DeWitt



**54 Fremont Road** - City Planning has determined that the plans submitted were for a "rebuild" and not a "remodel" and have requested the owner to withdraw the current application and with the help of a professional architect, submit a new application. In the meantime, ownership has changed and the new owner obtained a building permit to replace the foundation, roof, windows, doors, siding and remove the fireplace. The property is currently for sale.

**Zoning Update** - The Planning Department is proposing changes to the zoning code that requires approval by the City Council. WENA has been providing comments on proposed changes.

**Yardbirds Site** - There is no news about any proposed tenant for these buildings. Home Depot's lease is set to expire in about 2 years. The City indicates the new tenant(s) will need to make improvements to the buildings because the code will require it. For example, the roof connecting the two buildings will have to be removed which currently covers additional parking and fire sprinklers will have to be installed.

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.