



Dominican Black Canyon Neighborhood Association



DOMINICAN AREA SPRING NEWSLETTER

WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The year in review and plans for this year

The nine Board members of the Dominican Black Canyon Neighborhood Association (DBCNA) and volunteer neighbors have competently planned and implemented our plans with enthusiasm this past year. It's a pleasure and honor to work with this dedicated group. The ice cream social in August last year was well attended: we will be holding the same event (with more ice cream!) on August 19th. Our Fall newsletter, covering neighborhood news and events, was distributed to each of the 938 homes in our Dominican Black Canyon area by volunteer walkers, as was our Spring newsletter which you are reading. Our February "Cocktail" party at the Marin Tennis Club was once again a remarkable success with some 160 neighbors renewing acquaintances.

The goal of our newly formed FireSafe Committee is to make Dominican Black Canyon a FireWise community with all homes understanding and adopting defensive space

measures. To this end, under the leadership of our V.P. Jay Hubert, the committee is writing a fire risk appraisal report leading to a neighborhood-wide informational meeting on the morning of May 5th at Guzman Hall.

The annual dues of \$20 henceforth will be for membership in the calendar year

**SAVE THE DATE!
JOIN US FOR THE
ANNUAL MEETING ON
FIRE SAFETY
MAY 5TH
GUZMAN HALL**

from January 1st to December 31st. Therefore, beginning this year (2018), dues paid on or after January 1, 2018 will carry membership status through December 31, 2018.

The DBCNA boundaries include 938 homes and yet only about 250 homes join the DBCNA by paying the \$20 dues each year. These dues pay for our hosted events, and, if folks do not

partake in our free ice cream social or the food at the annual "Cocktail" party, surely every resident benefits from our newsletters, our recent security camera forum, and now our new initiative to prevent wildfires from destroying our homes and our lives.

But still I have been asked "What's in it for me?" or "Why should I join?" For \$20, consider that by joining the DBCNA, you support, influence and enlarge everyone's sense of community. What better goal could we have than to enhance the livability of our community, foster community pride, and encourage getting to know one another? To put this matter in perspective, \$20 barely buys two glasses of wine or one fancy cheeseburger. So please join us in strengthening this sense of community, our Dominican Black Canyon community. Please become a member of your Neighborhood Association. We thank you.

Jack Nixon, President



A forum on fire safety in our neighborhood will be held on Saturday, May 5th starting at 9:30am in Guzman Hall on the Dominican University campus. The forum will follow a brief annual meeting of the Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood Association. The forum will provide information on creating defensible space, improving fire resistance of your home, and preparing for evacuation should it become necessary. This event moves our neighborhood toward certification as a FireWise community. Other communities in Marin are already certified, for example: Scott Valley, Sleepy Hollow, and Pacheco Valle.

Another certification step is documenting the history of fires in our neighborhood. Dominican FireSafe Committee member John Contini reviewed the following sources: Marin Journal (1861-1922), Marin County Tocsin (1861-1918), San Rafael Pointer (1977), and the Marin IJ index card "database" of articles (mid 1970s –mid 1990s). He also reviewed original newspaper articles on fires within Marin County that are held in the California Room of the Marin County Free Library. Here is a partial history of fires in our neighborhood:

July 28, 1917	Black Canyon	Aug 18, 1984	Dominican hills
Nov 27, 1919	Black Canyon	May 23, 1989	Dominican hills
Jan 8, 1920	Dominican campus	July 12, 1990	Dominican campus
April 15, 1920	Dominican campus	May 25, 2011	Dominican neighborhood
June 28, 1958	Black Canyon		
July 6, 1968	Margarita Drive	April 5, 2014	Dominican neighborhood
June 17, 1975	Margarita Drive		
Nov 4, 1978	Dominican hills	Nov 28, 2015	Black Canyon

Fires in Northern California last October are stimulating support to reduce the threat from fires that will surely come again. The Marin County Board of Supervisors recently formed a subcommittee to improve county planning and funding in this area. On March 6th, the subcommittee held a public forum to a full house at the Civic Center. Many public agencies participated and discussed their plans and recommendations. Virtually all agencies encouraged neighborhoods to work toward FireWise certification. Public agencies have all increased funding to mitigate fire threats, but homeowners also have an important role. Failure to create defensible space around our homes increases risk not only for ourselves, but also for our neighbors. Widespread creation of defensible space is a community responsibility.

One fascinating presentation at the Supervisor's forum was from attorney who represents homeowners in their claims against insurance companies. He said that 74% of the claimants in the October fires did not have sufficient insurance to cover all losses. He recommends that homeowners review the limits on their policies and consider increasing them. Current construction costs may be \$300 per square foot or more. The cost of increased limits can be partially offset by increasing policy deductibles. This tradeoff reduces coverage for smaller, more affordable losses, and increases coverage for rare, but catastrophic events. Homeowners may also consider adding a rider for "code upgrades." Building codes have changed significantly over the years, but many policies do not cover the additional costs to comply with the required upgrades.

Many neighbors have already expressed ideas and concerns about fire safety to the committee. If you have ideas or comments, please contact the committee chair, Jay Hubert at j-mhubert@att.net.



Native Plants for the FireWise Garden

Many neighbors are responding to increased awareness of the danger of wildfire and are beginning to plan changes to reduce flammable vegetation and materials surrounding their homes and create defensible zones. This creates an opportunity to create a beautiful landscape and incorporate more native plants into the garden to attract pollinators and provide habitat for beneficials. Most natives are drought tolerant with low watering requirements once they are established.

The California Native Plant Society lists several fire resistant species that can be planted in home gardens. For sunny locations they include low growing forms of manzanitas, ceanothus, sedges, buckwheats, irises and sages. For

part shade huckleberry, irises, snowberry and alumroot do well. Western bleeding heart and western sword fern both do well in shady locations.

Not all nurseries carry natives. The Marin Chapter of the Native Plant Society will be holding a native plant sale at Falkirk on Saturday, April 14th. The Marin Master Gardeners conducts Marin Friendly Garden Walks in partnership with the Marin Municipal Water District, with a focus on water conservation. They can provide literature on low-water plants and have a brochure on planting natives.

Find out more at:
<http://bit.ly/MarinGardenWalk>
or phone (415) 473-4204.

Two nurseries that focus primarily on natives are The Watershed Nursery in Richmond and the Mostly

Natives Nursery in Point Reyes Station. Watershed Nursery was founded in 2001 by wetland and environmental scientists who, working in local restoration projects, discovered a gap between the need for high quality restoration-grade native plant material and the plants available. They do their own propagation with a focus on plants for Northern California. Mostly Natives Nursery recently changed ownership and moved from the remote community of Tomales to Point Reyes. They focus on growing drought-tolerant plants and coastal natives keeping this beautiful park open.



CRIME STATISTICS

Dominican, like the rest of Marin, is concerned about crime in our area. Crime numbers are available for general areas but not specifically Dominican only. The following statistics are for the Dominican and the surrounding areas and are from January 1st, 2016 to the present:

- ✓ Robberies: 10
- ✓ Assaults: 113 (Simple and aggravated)
- ✓ Sexual Assault: 8
- ✓ Burglary: 104 plus 4 attempts
- ✓ Thefts: 150 plus 3 attempts
- ✓ Vandalism: 55
- ✓ Stolen Vehicles: 27 plus 2 attempts

We, as neighbors, need to watch out for each other and report any suspicious activities or individuals. Always call the San Rafael Police department (415-485-3000) and make a report on Nextdoor.com. If we all work together and watch out for each other, hopefully these numbers will drop.



NEWS AROUND TOWN

The vacant lot at the corner of Mission and Lincoln (1203 Lincoln) is finally getting some attention. The lot was once home to an historic old motel, but was slated for redevelopment as a 36-unit condominium. That plan did not survive the financial crisis of a few years back. Now, an application is before the city for a large residential care facility for the elderly at the site. It is proposed to be a story lower than the planned condo, but the exterior may otherwise look much the same as the condo would have looked. One suspects that the interior will be quite different. BioMarin and Whistlestop are jointly developing the lot at 999 3rd Street. Whistlestop will get 54 senior residential units and an area for their community service operations. BioMarin will end up with roughly 200,000 square feet of office and laboratory space. A six story, 138 residential unit is being considered for 703 3rd Street. This is the plot of land roughly bordered by 2nd, 3rd, Lincoln and Tamalpais streets, excluding the Marin Color Service building. **ANDERSON DRIVE CLOSURE** In early January, Andersen Drive was closed temporarily as SMART performed rail welding work along the rail line. Starting February 26th, Andersen Drive is closed, 24-7, for an estimated three months. SMART will be constructing the actual rail crossing across Andersen Drive and utilities will be performing important work relocating several key utility lines. The same traffic detours during the January closure will be put in place again on Woodland Ave. and Francisco Blvd. West. The road should re-open by the end of May, if all goes well. Businesses along this portion of Andersen Drive will remain open and accessible from the DuBois St. closure. Questions or comments? Contact SMART at (707) 794-3330.



SAVE THE DATE!
JOIN US FOR THE
SUMMER SCOOP ICE
CREAM SOCIAL
SUNDAY, AUGUST 19TH!



Coleman Corner

THE COLEMAN FESTIVAL Coleman Grade School's Annual International Festival is morphing into the Coleman Festival, with a much greater emphasis on the ARTS. It will be held on the school grounds on Saturday, May 19th, from 11:00am - 4:00 pm. The Coleman Festival will be a fun event for the entire neighborhood and will showcase ART, food, games, and crafts from around the world. The Coleman Festival will also feature raffles with fabulous prizes and a silent auction. Bring your family and friends to enjoy many new festival games, a delicious lunch and celebrate the cultural diversity that hallmarks both Coleman and the city of San Rafael. Coleman School is located at 800 Belle Avenue near Rafael Drive. Admission is free. For more information, call 485-2420. Proceeds benefit music, art, and physical education at the school.

COLEMAN YEAR UPDATE The Coleman Elementary School on Belle Avenue has had a wonderful year. In addition to the high level of academic performance exhibited by the students, the parents, faculty and staff have provided many educational opportunities that exceed the standard curriculum. For example, the School held its Third Annual Science Fair in March. There was the Beatnik Café where the kids could read their poetry, an after-hours Art Show and much more. We hosted Chelsea Clinton, who visited our campus and presented biographical profiles of successful women who had a positive impact on society. These women are featured in Ms. Clinton's new children's book, "She Persisted around the World." Many neighbors also contributed to our "Book Swap", by donating children's books to the school, which were then re-circulated as free literature to all the kids. We distributed thousands of books this way to very hungry and eager young readers! We will be doing another Book Swap before the end of the year, so we will put our book requests out on Nextdoor.com.

CLUB Pops Up in Dominican!

Surprised? Me too. When I first heard about a 21 Club in Dominican I was thrilled. Thought it might be a cool place for teenagers UNDER 21 to hang out and socialize. Not to be, I'm sure planning commission would have put a kibosh on that idea. So I investigated what a 21 Club means. Well, you probably know if you can figure out what basketballs, hiking, Lancaster, Sacramento, Hawaii, non-profits, surfing, websites and degrees all have in common. The Real 21 Club is located at 21 Clyde Avenue - It is a house full of interesting students and graduates loving their communal living situation and doing great things in our Dominican and San Rafael community. Made up of the following people, 21 Club puts forth energy into the University and local non-profits.

David from Oahu, Hawaii is Vice-President of DU's debate club. Works at a non-profit that teaches middle schoolers about drugs and alcohol. (why NOT to take them, not HOW to) In his minimal free time, David practices mixed martial arts, hikes and surfs.

Chris, from Sacramento, graduated in Marketing and is now a successful freelance web designer. Chris has played basketball since elementary school, and continued at DU for 4 years. He is currently the third highest scoring male basketball player since DU moved to division 2 in 1009, with over 1,000 points in his career. Luckily, he keeps up his skills playing for a Novato men's league.

Hallie came North from Lancaster, Southern California. She is the Student Body president of DU and played soccer for 3 years, quite good I was told. Hallie currently continues as one of the leading Ambassadors for Dominican, not to mention a great conversationalist! Future politician? Perhaps?

Melissa ventured out of Sacramento to complete her bachelors at DU. Luckily, she found full-time employment afterwards at the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership and is grateful she is able to remain at the 21 Club. She is continually impressed by how many Marinites are so passionate about their careers and the place they live. She commented that it feels like everyone strives to make Marin a better community to live in, learn and grow up.

Common feelings shared by the whole 21 Club are that San Rafael has lots packed in to a small space. Great history, new hikes all the time, hole in the wall places to eat, quaint shopping on 4th Street, and lots of community events from music to art to sports. Even after four years of school they continue to find cultural subtleties that keep the exploration of new places in Marin interesting and fun. Not only is San Rafael a small and inviting town surrounded by natural beauty and breathtaking views, the quick drive to SF makes it perfect for over 21 year olds! Dominican neighborhood is the extra bonus and magical touch to living in San Rafael.



local

There are several reasons to support local businesses. They bring growth and innovation to the community, they are unique, they provide more personalized service and you get to know the business owners and get to ask questions. They also help build a stronger economy by hiring local workers. In addition to staff for the stores, they usually hire local architects and contractors for building and remodeling, local accountants and insurance brokers to help them run the business, and local ad agencies to promote it. They're also more likely than chain stores to carry goods that are locally produced, according to the American Independent Business Alliance. All these factors together create a "multiplier effect," meaning that each dollar spent in a local store can bring as much as \$3.50 into the local economy. By contrast, large chain stores tend to displace more local jobs than they create because they often drive local retailers out of business.

When you invest money in your local economy, you're not just helping local business owners – you're also helping

yourself. You're making your town a better place to live in, with a rich character, a thriving economy, and a tightly knit community. And the more local businesses prosper, the more new ones will open – making it even easier to continue shopping locally in the future.

From brew houses to ramen to Latin fusion to sushi, there

From the City of San Rafael, here is a list of new restaurants opened in 2017 or to be opened in 2018:

- 1.) Atalaya Cafe - 901 B Street (undergoing tenant improvements)
- 2.) Chonmage - 1020 Court Street
- 3.) Iron Springs Tap Room - 901 Fourth Street
- 4.) The Kitchen Table - 1574 Fourth Street
- 5.) Shiro Kuma Sushi - 1518 Fourth Street
- 6.) Woking - 418 Las Gallinas
- 7.) Yuzu Ramen - 908 Fourth Street
- 8.) Bombay Grill - 1444 Fourth Street
- 9.) BBQ-N-Curry - 1026 Court Street
- 10.) Tamalpais Brewery - 1300 Fourth Street (undergoing tenant improvements)
- 11.) Pondfarm Brewery - 1848 Fourth Street (undergoing tenant improvements)

has been a surge of new businesses cropping up in downtown San Rafael. In addition to the amazing restaurants that have been open for years, there have been several new restaurants that have opened or are to open soon. The Association would like to lend its support by encouraging all of our neighbors to check out something new, a favorite 'go-to', or simply something local.

Here are some of the Board's favorite spots in San Rafael...

- ✓ Lunch or morning coffee and a pastry at Arizmendi
- ✓ Green Chile
- ✓ LaVier
- ✓ Le Comptoir
- ✓ Los Moles
- ✓ Magnolia Park
- ✓ Uchiwa
- ✓ Vin Antico

And then there's always Dominican's own...

Caleruega Hall on the Dominican University campus, which is open to the public. The dining hall, located at 100 Magnolia Avenue, has been the dining hall for the University for decades. It is open to the public for breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well

as brunch on weekends. The menu offerings are seasonal. The dining hall provides an all-you-can eat menu featuring a wide variety of selections, including vegetarian choices. Locust Ave resident David Wolfensperger has taken his boys there several times. David says, "It's a good alternative for when you don't want to cook. Plus, it's fun because it kind of brings you back to your college days."

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY NEWS



New developments and events at Dominican University – in “our backyard”!

- ⇒ Are you interested in local short-term courses in Music, History, Politics, Art History and more? OLLI has a variety of courses beginning March 19th. For more info go to: Dominican.edu/osher and click “Spring 2018 Registration Info” or “Spring 2018 Course Brochure”. Phone 415-458-3763
- ⇒ The Lines Ballet BFA in Dance showcase is on April 27th at 7pm and April 28th at 3pm at Angelico Hall. This is the final showcase for the students receiving a Bachelor’s in Fine Arts in Dance.
- ⇒ The Spring Lecture Series continues with Maria Shriver at 7pm at Angelico Hall, and Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood at 7pm on April 12th. Both at Angelico Hall.
- ⇒ The Dominican Choral Spring Concert is April 20th at 8pm at Angelico Hall. Works by Beethoven, Randall Thompson, and Mozart will be performed.
- ⇒ More info can be found in the events section of the Dominican University Facebook page.



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General Manager
(415) 457-5160
marintennisclub.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

This year the Neighborhood Association increased its annual budget by \$700, anticipating \$6,000 in income and expenses. The additional funds will support increased participation at our events. In addition, we are

budgeting \$500 to help get our FireWise Neighborhood project started. If we are successful, we will be able to secure grant funds to further develop our fire safety program. Membership dues and occasional donations support the Neighborhood Association's activities. In addition to covering the cost of publicizing and

holding events, the dues cover costs for our P.O. box, insurance (required for holding events), newsletters and online presence. The Association has no paid staff and is grateful for the time donated by the volunteers on our Board and Committees.
Bonnie Marks, Treasurer