

Impromptu barbecues, book sales and flea markets bring Inner Sunset neighbors together

Description

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where everyone is invited. And ed by Inner Sunset residents

No one was surprised earlier this year to hear that Barbara was throwing another shindig. Barbara and her late husband started hosting backyard happenings in 2007. (Now 60, she prefers for security reasons to keep her last name to herself.) Her invitation to a barbecue was posted on the fence: â??Bring finger-sized desserts, drinks and I will supply the meat. Enjoy our friendly guitar-duo.â?• Anyone who saw the sign was welcome.

The variety of these often impromptu get-togethers tickles the imagination. Everyone remembers the Haunted House, said Martha Etherton, director of the Inner Sunset Park Neighborhood Neighbors association. It â??was so scary â?? someone reached out and grabbed my ankle.â?•

Magical exterior, mysterious backyard

A passer-by might suspect something or someone special lies behind the big blue house near Sixth and Irving. Signs of this would be the numerous mobiles, chimes and other hanging art, tickling and chiming over lovely flowering plants.

Of all the events she and her husband sponsored, Barbara is most fond of the Book Blast. â??We had so many helpers, sorting books every Thursday night for 10 weeks.â?• She and Paul sought donations on Craigslist, then picked them up in their car. â??Sometimes we had so many books in the car, Paul had to walk behind the car on the way home.â?• That year they collected 10,000 books, which were given away over a weekendâ??s time.

What makes Barbaraâ??s backyard so great for accommodating events is that itâ??s really the front yard â?? with five big doors opening onto the street. So at the last Book Blast in 2016, people could easily pull their car up and offload donations.

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All the events are completely free, she said. â??Our motto remains â??Twice a year, your money back if youâ??re dissatisfied!â?? â?•

Book blasts and group fix-its



Sunset neighbors find out when thereâ??s an event at â??The Blue Houseâ?• when the owners put up a sign.

Perhaps their most unique event was the Fix-it Fair. One day, she and Paul were repairing things in their yard with one of the doors open. People looked in, sighed, and wondered â?? aloud â?? how they could get what they needed fixed. Barbara took heed.

â??I found six women who sew and brought them over with their sewing machines. I rounded up welders, electricians, knife sharpeners, carpenters and others who were willing to fix things for free,â?• she said.

Other favorite gatherings include the Gazillion Family Flea Market, Dessert and Dancing and Sunday Silent Garden.

Barbaraâ??s skill in pulling off successful events could come from her background in writing and marketing. She wrote copy for major department store catalogs and a financial column for The Examiner when she worked for a tax attorney. Then again, she just seems to be one of those naturally good-natured types who love to bring people together. Happy is a word she uses a lot.

â??I had a very happy childhood traveling with my family to many countries when my father was in the State Department,â?• she said. â??I feel very happy to live in the Sunset. I swear there is serotonin in the water. Everyone smiles walking down the street.

Happy is the word

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â??Hearing laughter makes me so happy.â?•

Events like the Haunted House that require a lot of construction work are too much for her these days. Her husband died in 2017. But thatâ??s not going to stop the parties. â??Spreading joy and happiness while hosting gatherings in the Inner Sunset is in my blood,â??â?? she said. â??I am continuing the tradition.â?•

Thereâ??s lots of demand for another Fix-it Fair,â?• she added. To find out more or to sign up as a volunteer go to www.BarbarasList.com.

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Category

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