

The Woodlands



Keeping You Informed For 50 Years

January 2019



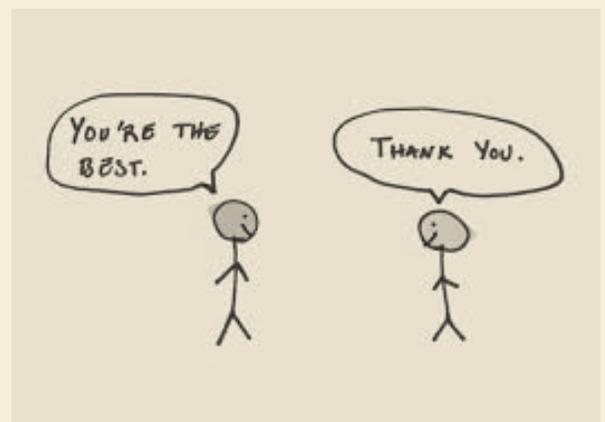
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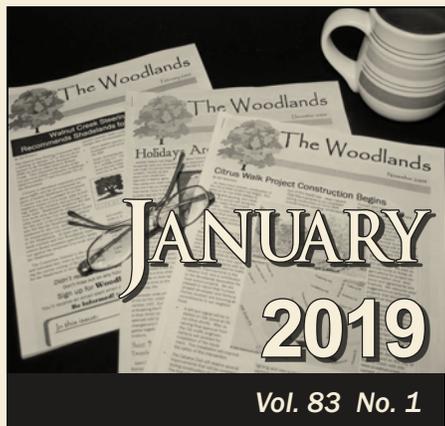
The Woodlands newsletter would not arrive on your doorstep each month without the dedication of dozens of 'block captains', resident volunteers who each deliver between 6 and 38 copies of the newsletter to homes throughout the neighborhood.

This system is managed monthly by Jennifer Zotti, the Woodlands' Newsletter Distribution Manager, who receives the entire count of newsletters from the printer. She then breaks the newsletters into two groups and delivers them to Marge McDowell and Bill Schasteen. Marge and Bill then divide their stacks into individual bundles, which are hand delivered to each block captain. And then the block captains hand deliver them to your doorstep.

Thank you to these exceptional residents for volunteering their time to make sure the Woodlands newsletter arrives at your home every month:

Helen Malboeuf, Ann Raymond, Barbara Johnson, Mark Scafidi, Sue Stuart, Carol McNeil, Corey Brooks, Dave Wong, Debbie Full, Thomas Malott, Ellen Diamond, Gloria Lamm, Jan Warren, Jan Ondeck, Jane Cops, Janet Dolliver, Jennifer Zotti, Jason Roberts, Stella Scafidi, Pankti Clerk, Jerry Ossinger, Mike Benincasa, John Casey, Judy White, Julie Ehlers, Kat Sellis, Kathy Shields, Lisa Peachee, Sam Chan, Lois Mitchell, Margaret Brown, Margaret Scott, Marge Smith, Marlene Berkman, Kathy Master, Sandra Fairall, Nancy Treadwell, Panya Sawan, Pat Coyle, Patty McDowell, Paul Parkus, Rich Coulter, Ron Chesney, Sam Pitluck, Sandy Wagner, Sharon Nelson, Steve Carter, Sue Gardella, Terri Payne, Tony Lansang





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Walnut Creek, CA 94598

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Who to Contact?

The Woodlands Association receives some emails and questions about many issues that are best resolved by contacting the following agencies directly. The following is a reference guide:

Walnut Creek Code Enforcement, 925-256-3508 or 925-943-5863

The Code Enforcement Division of the Community Development Department is responsible for enforcing provisions of the Walnut Creek Municipal Code involving quality of life and neighborhood quality issues. http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/cd/nuisance_abatement_n_code_enforcement.asp

Walnut Creek Police Department, 925-943-5844

<http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/police/default.asp>
To report a suspicious circumstance, call 925-935-6400

Oversized Vehicle Reporting, Sandy Mulligan: Parking Lead Services Officer, 925-943-5874

Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District (Pests and Insect Issues), 925-771-6196
http://www.contracostamosquito.com/programs_services_index.htm

Contra Costa Water District, 925-688-8000

Water conservation, information, gardening resources, moneysaving tips. <http://www.ccwater.com>

Allied Waste Services of Contra Costa County, 925-603-1144

<http://www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com>

Valley Waste Management (recycling and yard waste service): 925-935-8900

Canal Maintenance, 925-313-2235

The canal is part of the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Maintained by the Public Works Department

Graffiti Reporting: City of Walnut Creek, 925-943-5854

Contra Costa County Animal Control, 925-335-8300

After business hours, contact the Walnut Creek Police through Dispatch Center at 925-935-6400.
<http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=59>

Street Maintenance: 925-943-5854



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- Pete Dinapoli ~ *Treasurer*
- Ron Chesney ~ *Secretary*
- Jared Asch ~ *Members at Large*
- Todd McNeill ~ *Webmaster*
- Susan Pfau ~ *Newsletter Editor*

Jennifer Zotti ~ *Newsletter Distribution Manager*
Ryan Park ~ *Intern*

Upcoming Board Meetings

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.
Saturday, January 5th
Saturday, February 2nd

at Denica's,
2280 Oak Grove Road,
Walnut Creek
(in Citrus Marketplace)

Woodlands residents
are encouraged to
attend board meetings.

Holiday Lights Spectacular - Thanks to the Rattaros and the Rest of Neighborhood!

by Bill Gilmyers



A Woodlands tradition continued on Sunday, December 2 as the Rattaro's on Rock Oak Ct held their annual tree lighting and collection of toys for the Monument Crisis Center. Residents from around the neighborhood gathered to enjoy holiday music and see the lights come on to the amazement of young and old in equal measure. Holiday spirit was enjoyed by all, with a few of the adults sharing a few holiday spirits as well.

As is his custom, Santa Claus paid a visit and took orders from all the good boys and girls who eagerly scrambled onto his lap. My daughter asked for Hatchimals, which are little collectible toys that come out of an egg. She already has about a million of the little buggers, so it was unclear as this article went to press if he'd be delivering any more this year. At least it's not *Frozen*. If anyone was concerned by the rumors that Santa increasingly outsources his present distribution to Amazon, nobody mentioned it.

As the Woodlands Association Board member assigned to the 'holiday lighting beat' (for more, see my expose of the Halloween Light Industrial Complex in the November 2018 issue of the Woodlands Newsletter) I also spent a lot of time walking around the neighborhood looking at all of the other fabulous displays in the Woodlands. And by a lot, I mean in the evenings within a half-mile radius of my house on the days when my dog's Fitbit, which is actually a thing, tells me he needs to get a few more steps in to hit his daily goal. But still, what I saw was solid.

My friend Mike, for example, was just killing it, with lights on his house and even a few on his bushes for good measure. You know you are serious about decorating when you are even lighting up the hedges and stuff. Not to be outdone Erik, next door, put up a colorful display and even had this flashing star thing that looked like it was made of icicles. Glad he was able to put that thing in the shopping cart before any tariffs can kick in and price him out of the 'icicle star thing' market.

My favorite however, was a motif of falling snowflakes against the side of house near the corner of Citrus and Perada-BUMP! Serene, peaceful and beautiful I think even my dog enjoyed looking at it, to the extent that he enjoys any activity that doesn't involve trying to lick food off the plates in the dishwasher before I close the door on his head. The lights around the neighborhood were fantastic across the board but that snowflake thing was really top notch. Gonna have to get me one of those.

Hope you had wonderful holiday season, filled with lights, laughter and love. Check back in March for a recap of the best in Woodlands' President's Day lighting displays.



Festivus

By Erik Ehlers

Now that December is over, and we all look ahead with some mix of trepidation and excitement, I want to look back for a moment, if you'll indulge me, to an important tradition which strengthens our community, brightens the lives of those who have experienced tough times and makes for a very entertaining end of the year. While most people celebrate Christmas or perhaps Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, and my family and I do enjoy the traditional trappings of the guy in the red suit, trees of green and yule filled excitement, I'm actually writing to you about the importance of a healthy Festivus celebration.

Festivus is the most wonderful made up holiday on the calendar today. It cannot be understated how important it can be to building the bonds between friends and strengthening families. First among the weighty aspects of Festivus is the "Airing of Grievances". While this could be an explosive on ramp to ugly disagreements and unsightly candor, it actually is a beneficial conduit to letting people know what their peers, their friends and their families truly think about them in an honest and open way. Going back to ancient Athens, Parrhesia was the idea that candor was the lifeblood of society. While today only burner accounts on twitter seem to enjoy this sense of straightforward honesty, Festivus aficionados value that same closeness and willingness to speak their minds, offering unvarnished truths.

For example, my good friend Bill-BG now knows that his friends find him to be very prepared for anything that might happen, but they'd prefer he occasionally stay up beyond 7pm. I wouldn't want to devalue the sanctity of the Festivus table by revealing his identity here, but we can all appreciate a friend who can't seem to stay up later than their own 7-year-old child, and the value it might bring if they occasionally made it to the late local news hour time slot. He's also worth of approbation for his offensive support of the Patriots, Red Sox and Celtics, but his fandom endures the straightforward flagellation from his fellow man.

Another highlight of the Festivus revelry is the "Feats of Strength". While the original Festivus featured a wrestling match, I would suggest you will be better off with alternative approaches if you meet somewhere public. From watching two adult men try to wrestle on asphalt, I can say that in so many ways, it wasn't pretty. If you seek to avoid a trip to the emergency room as part of your celebration, there are many cromulent choices that embiggen us all. One favorite that is plenty active without a high likelihood of disfiguring injury is a trip to play laser tag. There aren't the welts associated with paintball, and there is a computerized tracking system that lets everyone know who won and lost. There's also the bonus that you won't show up to the arena to play only to discover that two teenagers have brought their own high powered paintball guns, ensuring your groups annihilation.

If you'd prefer a more sedentary selection of proving grounds, you can always harken back to the playground favorite of rock paper scissors. While nowhere near as punishing as the other options, in your other hand you can maintain control over your celebratory chalice of choice. After all, it increases your direct approach with your chums and allows you to at least get something out of the time spent with the folks whose main skill may be converting oxygen to carbon dioxide. I mean, sure, you may be a little upset after they all told you what they really don't like about you, but perhaps it is time to make new friends, or at least learn to have a bit thicker skin as they take aim with their quips and the like.

Festivus may seem like a dangerous intersection of criticisms, drinking and potentially painful physicality, but don't be afraid to take a lap around the old aluminum pool and experience what life might be like if social media came to life and wanted to wrestle with you. After all, it would be a Festivus miracle if everyone decided to come back and do it all over again next year, wouldn't it?

Ron Chesney - Woodlands Association Secretary

Hello Woodlands...I'm your new Woodlands Association Board Secretary. It is my pleasure to be serving the community and to be working with our fine board.

My wife Lori, son Benny, and I, moved to the Woodlands in Oct 1999...hard to believe we're here almost 20 years. We came to Walnut Creek after living in San Francisco, the Golden Gateway Apartments near the Embarcadero Center, for 9 years. Originally, Lori and I moved here from the New York City area, Cranford in northeastern New Jersey, where we grew-up and lived as young adults. We commuted into NYC and Newark (very much like SF and Oakland, but bigger!), and welcomed the opportunity to live the California lifestyle.

I'm a Technical Project Manager by profession; over the years, I've worked at Visa International, Charles Schwab & Co., and now Kaiser Permanente right here in the Shadelands! It's a treat to have such an easy commute after years of public transit usage here and on the East Coast. It's been incredible to see how much our area has changed...both here and back East. I consider myself, and my family, very fortunate to have experienced both coasts...and to be able to make Walnut Creek our home.

Lori works as a Communications Director for a non-profit organization, REDF (Roberts Economic Development Fund), in San Francisco. Their mission is to provide support for social enterprises that hire people with high employment barriers (including histories of homelessness and incarceration) ...it's a great organization and a very rewarding career for her.

Our son Benny did the Valle Verde/Children's Center, Foothill/The Creek, Northgate route graduating MDUSD in 2015. He's now studying at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff AZ, in their Mechanical Engineering program. We're very proud of our boy, who's turning into a young man as he was 21 this past June!



Time certainly flies by; it seems like just yesterday that Benny was a little boy and there was an abundance of wild mustard every spring along Oak Grove Road (prior to ARF and The Orchards). I remember those days fondly, but also have confidence that equally memorable days are ahead, as I look forward to serving our community as your board secretary,

Walnut Creek Beat 32 Update

By Walnut Creek Police Department



Hello Beat 32,

Officer Transue, Officer Martin and I (Officer Godinez) would like to keep you informed regarding the diligent work we have been doing to keep our Beat 32 community safe. Currently 61% of Beat 32 households are on Nextdoor. We would appreciate if you would encourage your neighbors to sign on to Nextdoor. As a reminder, all patrol services are based on geographical areas within our City, which are broken down into beats. Officer Transue, Officer Martin and I signed up to be your Beat 32 officers. Beat 32 consists of the geographical area East of Bancroft Road to the Lime Ridge Open Space and North of Ygnacio Valley Road to the Contra Costs Canal Trail. Finally, Beat 32 consists of three main subsets, which are The Woodlands, The Shadelands, and The Ruth Bancroft area (Refer to below Beat 32 Map).



We compiled our last two months activity to bring you up to date with the actions we have taken. Our shift cycle began on October 7, 2018 and lasts six months. Since the beginning of our shift cycle, we have focused on areas of concerns that you have brought to our attention. For example, speeding vehicles on Sugarberry Lane and Perada Drive. As a result, you may have noticed the traffic trailers that were placed on these streets in order to make sure drivers were paying attention to their speed. We also focused on traffic violations occurring in front of Valley Verde Elementary, Peachwillow Lane, Perada Drive, Citrus Ave, N. Wiget Lane, Ready Road etc. We conducted multiple traffic enforcement stops at or near these locations. We also contacted some residents during our shifts as we noticed their garage doors had been left open. Based on our experience, we know that some residential burglaries occur by way of garage doors that have been left open. Our goal has been to make sure your quality of life is not negatively affected by those who are looking to commit crimes.

Since October 7, 2018, we have responded to 255 calls for service in Beat 32. The top service call was traffic stops, which totaled 40. We had 27 service related calls, 25 suspicious circumstances calls, 22 alarm calls and 10 suspicious vehicle calls. Whenever a vehicle appears out of place and like they may be up to no good, it's great to call us, even better if you obtain a license plate and direction of travel or last known location!

Baked Macaroni and Cheese

Words and Images By Skinnytaste (Gina Homolka)

Total Time: 35 minutes

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

This easy, homemade, baked mac and cheese recipe adds broccoli to the mix, a great way to sneak veggies in a kid's favorite dish! It's also lightened up, so less calories than traditional mac and cheese.



INGREDIENTS:

- 12 oz high fiber elbows like Ronzoni Smart Taste
- 1 1/2 tbs butter
- 1/4 cup minced onion
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups skim milk
- 1 cup fat free chicken broth (vegetarians use vegetable broth)
- 8 oz (2 cups) reduced-fat sharp cheddar (Cabot 50%)
- salt and fresh pepper to taste
- 12 oz fresh broccoli florets (I used pre-cut bag)
- 2 tbs grated parmesan
- 1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- cooking spray

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook pasta and broccoli together in a large pot of salted water, according to package directions for al dente (or slightly under cook 2 minutes). Spray a baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F.
3. In a large, heavy skillet, melt butter. Add onion and cook over low heat about 2 minutes, add flour and cook another minute, or until the flour is golden and well combined. Add milk and chicken broth and whisk, raising heat to medium-high until it comes to a boil; cook about 5 minutes or until the sauce becomes smooth and thick. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Once the sauce is thick, remove from heat, add cheese and mix well until cheese is melted. Adjust salt and pepper to taste, add cooked macaroni and broccoli and mix well. Pour into prepared baking dish. Top with grated cheese and breadcrumbs. Spray a little more cooking spray on top.
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes, then broil for a few minutes to get the breadcrumbs golden.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Amount Per Serving:
Freestyle Points: 8
Points +: 8
Calories: 315 calories

Total Fat: 10g
Saturated Fat: 1.4g
Cholesterol: 7mg
Sodium: 216mg

Carbohydrates: 44g
Fiber: 6g
Sugar: 4g
Protein: 18g

Ginger's Gelato

By Lori Warren



It gets dark at 5PM and it's cold and damp out, so you're probably not thinking about gelato, but maybe you should be.

Ginger's Gelato recently opened in Citrus Plaza shopping center, where Tutti Frutti used to be. After so many years, and so many ounces (was it just me or did you also wind up with way more yogurt in your cup than you intended, thanks to the easy gluttony of "self-serve?"), I was really sad to see Tutti Frutti go. I mean, a neighborhood must have some sort of ice cream/frozen yogurt establishment in order to be complete, and although I like Ice Monster as much as the next person, it's not the same thing.

So I was excited to welcome Ginger and her gelato to the neighborhood, and I am here to tell you, it does not disappoint.

Ginger's Gelato is the real deal. Just like you get in Europe (the gelato of Italy is the inspiration for the place). After a 25 year hiatus, this summer my husband and I went to Barcelona to celebrate a big anniversary. Like Italy, gelato is part of the Spanish culture – there are shops everywhere and the display of gelato occupies prime window real estate—better to entice people to sample the myriad of flavors—each one looking (and tasting) more delicious than the next.

Ginger's Gelato is just like that. Authentic, creamy, fresh, and delicious. Notice I didn't say decadent? Probably like you, I had the impression that gelato is more fattening than ice cream, and therefore more of a special occasion treat than a "Let's have something sweet after dinner practice" But after doing a bit of internet searching, I discovered that gelato is actually healthier than ice cream! That's because it's made with milk instead of cream, and typically doesn't contain egg yolks, so it has less saturated fat. Also, because it contains less fat, the flavors are more, well, flavorful.

The last time we enjoyed Ginger's, the flavors included hazelnut, coconut, sweet crème, sea salt caramel, cookies and crème, tiramisu, peppermint, stracciatella, and a variety of super fresh sorbets.

Beyond the delicious gelato, Ginger's also has a lovely atmosphere. The colors are warm and inviting, the tables and chairs are hip yet comfortable (there is even an adorable little table and four chairs so Ginger's kiddie fans can have their own seating). The place is sparkingly clean and lovingly decorated for the holidays—including a sweet little mailbox to the North Pole.

It's clear a lot of care and thought went into designing the space. It's about as far away from a franchise as you can get (so welcome in Walnut Creek). On top of that there is a variety of classic board games, including chess, checkers, Jenga, Yatzee, Sorry and more—to encourage patrons to connect, linger, and put their phones away. There are also a variety of Italian travel books, just in case the gelato has gotten you in the mood. And if you aren't into gelato (my sympathies) Ginger's also offers fresh baked cookies, Italian candy and soda, and coffee and teas.

So come for the gelato, stay for the atmosphere, and welcome this lovely business to the Woodlands!

Happy New Year!

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NEW Advertising Deadline

Please submit all ads and payments for the next issue by **January 10, 2019**

Advertising Rates & Sizes

Please note: the actual sizes below allow for binding/bleed space.
Size = height x width in inches

- Full Page – 10 x 7.5 - \$99/month
- 1/2 Page – 5 x 7.5 - \$55/month
- 1/4 Page – 5 x 3.5 - \$33/month
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- Payment is due when you submit your ad. Please pay via www.woodlandsassn.org/advertise/ or make checks payable to "Woodlands Association" and mail to: PO Box 31085, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.



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Lavender Drive, Walnut Creek 94596 - Single level, 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom with beautiful landscaping and pool on large flat lot. Easy access to freeway.

Red Bark Court, Lafayette 94549 - Mid-century modern, 4 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom in Lamorinda. Quiet court location, pool.

Bancroft, Concord 94518 - 2 level, 2 bedroom, 1.5 bathroom townhome. Remodeled kitchen. Close to shopping, BART.

Stanley Dollar, Walnut Creek 94595 - 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom condo in 55+ Rossmoor boasts updated kitchen and baths, patio and no-steps in.

Remington Loop, Danville 94526 - Classic West Side single level home lovingly maintained and updated. No rear neighbors. Walk to Livery & Mercantile. Close to historic DT and freeway.

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2019

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I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a Happy New Year!

Opportunities abound in this changing market, and I have the necessary skillset to help you navigate through it and find success. Whether you're looking to buy or to sell, I'm here to help you or anyone you know.

As always, I'm never too busy for any of your referrals!



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Dear Woodlands Homeowners,

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

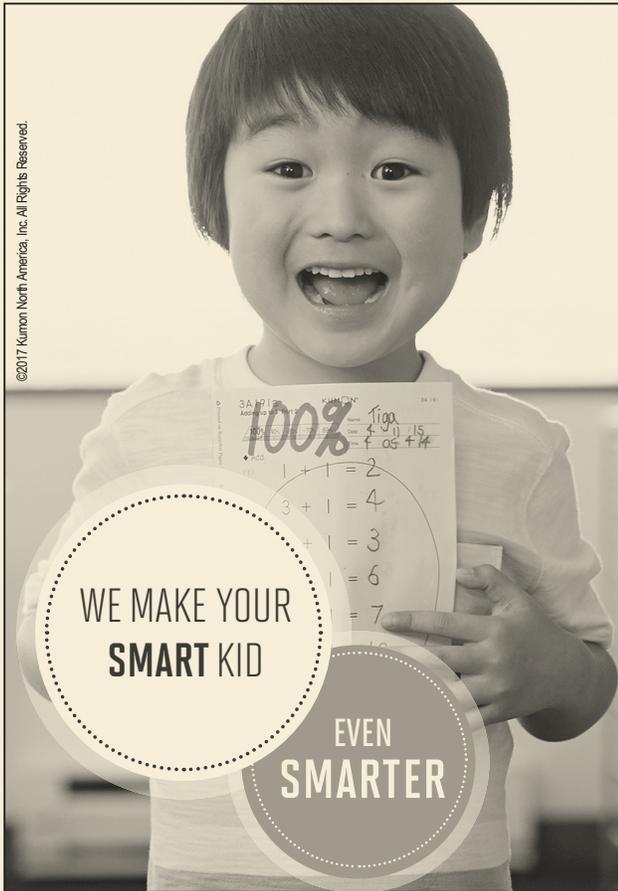
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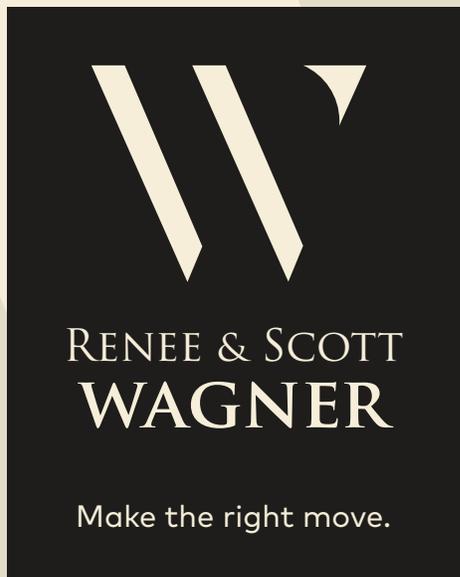


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Real Estate Today by Melanie Kozak

Do millennial home buyers want to live in the city or the suburbs?

The answer to this question is, it depends on what the person is looking for. Here are some of the pros and cons to consider.

Pros of Living in the Suburbs: It is generally better to live in the suburbs if one wants to start and raise a family. Schools are often better, there is typically less crime and there are usually lots of grocery and shopping opportunities.

Cons of the Suburbs: Commuting can be an hour or more to the main employment areas. Buyers tend to move to a larger home in the suburbs so they will have to buy more furniture and utilities will be higher.

Pros of the City Life: There are generally more job opportunities in the cities and more room for advancement. One can probably take a bus, train or Uber where ever they need to go.

Cons of the City Life: The cost of living is generally much higher in the city. Many people find city living more stressful. It is a fast-paced environment and is not for everyone.

Bottom line:

Deciding on whether city or suburb life is better depends on where one is in life and what short and long-term goals they might have. I can say that there is no shortage of people wanting to move to areas like The Woodlands in Walnut Creek but there are others who say they will always be city dwellers. I love discussing the pros and cons of this with them and giving them the information they need to make that decision.



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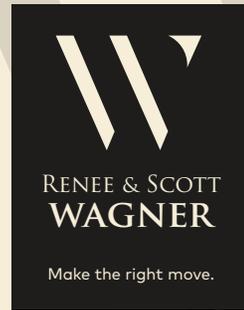
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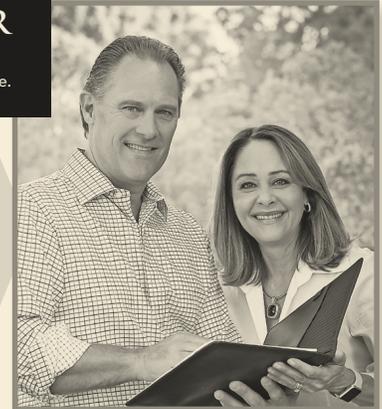
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