

# The Woodlands

Keeping You Informed For 50 Years

August 2019

## Marge McDowell- Retiring after 52 Years of Service to the Woodlands Association

By Bill Gilmyers



**Marge with her trophy from 1967 Woodlands Fourth of July Parade**

With the Woodlands Newsletter winding down next month there is one person who, perhaps more than anyone, has meant the most to the Association, Marge McDowell. An original owner and resident of the Woodlands since 1965, Marge has been a Newsletter Delivery Lead since 1967 when the Association first began publishing the document. Month-in and month out, year after year, Marge has diligently bundled the newsletters up, handed them off to her Block Captains and made sure they got out to all of her neighbors. "I guess I'll have to figure out what to do with my time now that I'm being 'forced' into early retirement" says Marge with a smile.

A lot has changed in that time says Marge. When she moved in 1965 the Woodlands was only 250 or so homes, before expanding to 500 and then eventually over 900 homes today. The Cabana Club was already open, and several neighbors became officers of the newly formed Woodlands Association. Marge describes helping Carole Gray, the original Secretary on the Board, produce the Newsletter in her garage on a mimeograph machine. The original newsletter was funded with neighborhood dues of \$5 a year, collected by the team of block captains who now deliver the newsletter. "They didn't like that part of the job very much" Marge noted. Eventually the Newsletter began collecting advertising, negating the need to collect any more dues.

Marge describes a vibrant and active social life in the neighborhood, almost from the git-go. Neighbors worked with the police to set up a bicycle obstacle course in the parking lot of the Cabana Club so that local children could learn to ride without having to risk being out on the streets of the Woodlands. She also told me about the 'float' by the residents of Rock Oak Rd, a train of wagons and bicycles dubbed the 'Rock Oak Line' which won first prize in the 1967 Woodlands July 4 parade, and later participated in the Walnut Festival Children's parade. Marge still has the trophy, dated 7-4-67, to prove it!

After all the time she has spent, and work that she has done, it is still Marge who is the one expressing appreciation. "We are all very lucky to have a place as terrific as the Woodlands. With a Cabana Club and elementary school so close and actively involved in all of our daily activities. I will miss the newsletter and all the people involved with it."

It is with great appreciation that the Woodlands Association and its Board thank Marge for her many years of service. We will also miss the newsletter, and those like Marge who have made it possible all these years. The Woodlands really is a special place, and it's because of neighbors like Marge.



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## In This Issue...

- Thanks to Marge McDowell . . . . . 1
- Board Election Results . . . . . 3
- Fourth of July Recap . . . . . 3-4
- Cabana Club News . . . . . 5
- E-mail/Phone Scams . . . . . 5-7
- Living with Rattlesnakes. . . . . 7-8
- Advertiser Index . . . . . 9

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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](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](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**



## Woodlands Association Board of Directors

- Bill Gilmyers ~ *President*
- Erik Ehlers ~ *Vice President*
- Vacant ~ *Treasurer*
- Vacant ~ *Secretary*
- Vacant ~ *Members at Large*
- Todd McNeill ~ *Webmaster*
- Susan Pfau ~ *Newsletter Editor*

Jennifer Zotti ~ *Newsletter Distribution Manager*

## Upcoming Board Meetings

**8:00 - 9:00 a.m.**  
**Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>**  
at Denica's,  
2280 Oak Grove Road,  
Walnut Creek  
(in Citrus Marketplace)

Woodlands residents  
are encouraged to  
attend board meetings.

## Board Election Results and State of the Woodlands Union

By Bill Gilmyers

Results are in for this year's Woodlands Board and this seems like a good opportunity to share some of the projects that the Woodlands Association is working on in 2019. First, the election results. For Vice President, current incumbent Erik Ehlers, running unopposed, received 9 votes and has been re-elected as Vice President of the Association. Thanks to those of you who took the time to mail in a ballot. The Treasurer and Community Affairs Director position, currently vacant, had no candidates and received no votes, write-in or otherwise. The role of Newsletter editor, currently filled by Susan Pfau, will be going away as the newsletter winds down. We anticipate that Susan will be taking over the role of President when I step down at the end of the year.

Looking at the rest of 2019 and beyond, our major work centers around recruiting volunteers to serve, and pivoting to Woodlands Association 2.0 now that the newsletter will be winding down next month. Lack of neighborhood engagement and involvement continues to be a significant challenge, forcing us to end publication of the newsletter after almost 50 years. Fortunately, the time commitment to serve on the Woodlands Board, always modest (2-4 hours a month, plus our monthly Board meeting), will also now be increasingly flexible as we are no longer tied to the month-in, month-out cadence of producing the newsletter. **We hope you'll consider raising your hand to help. If so please e-mail us at [woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com](mailto:woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com), or attend one of our monthly meetings, the first Saturday of the month at 8 AM at Denica's.**

We'll also be redesigning how to communicate with the neighborhood. We've got our website, [www.woodlandsasn.org](http://www.woodlandsasn.org), a Facebook page and continue to be active on NextDoor. We'll be looking at all of these channels, and others, to get the word out regarding important issues like the proposed new housing at Citrus Courtyard, tenants coming and going at Citrus marketplace, and quality of life issues like crime and speeding on our streets. Keep an eye on all of these to stay current on the local issues of greatest interest to residents of the Woodlands.

I am reminded again and again how special a place the Woodlands is and how lucky we are to live here. Thanks to all who give their time, money and effort to make it so, be it through the Woodlands Association, the Cabana Club, the PTA or any of the other volunteer led organizations that serve our community.

## Woodlands 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade

By Erik Ehlers



Wow, America, has it been 243 years already? You don't seem a day over 237.

Of course, as any patriotic American knows, if you're going to celebrate your nation's birthday, and it doesn't involve frequent use of the guilotine, you deck yourself in some red, white and blue and prepare for a celebration. Sure, you can turn up some Kool and the Gang like you're grooving after a win at the Coliseum, or maybe Miley Cyrus is more your speed. Did you ever notice that the Boss's most famous song seems like a victory lap when you listen to the chorus, but when you listen to the verses, that is an extremely cynical screed? You have to feel fortunate if you were a little too young to have a real perspective on Vietnam, right?

While many Americans enjoyed the 4<sup>th</sup> by watching tanks roll through the swamp, a little known fact (copyright – Cliff Clavin) is that our nation's best annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration can be found in a little town known as Walnut Creek, in a neighborhood you may know – Scottsdale. Nah, just kidding, checking to see if you're paying attention. It's actually the Woodlands. I'm fairly certain that back in 1908 when the Cubbies started talking about "Flying the W" it was done as a

*(Continued on Pg. 4)*

(Continued from Pg. 3)



homage to the Woodlands, despite the fact that the neighborhood was still almost three score from the lovable hamlet you know today.

The 4<sup>th</sup> is usually marked with fireworks, but back up to earlier in the day and you really get the flavor of the festivities. If you come to the front of the elementary school around 11 you'll see a mass of humanity on bikes, most of whom are under the age of 12. You'll see their parents milling about, with hand pulled wagons pulled behind them. All the vehicles, whether they have two wheels or four, are adorned with bunting, stars, streamers and the like. At this point, if you remember the time that Homer invented a makeup shotgun, you get the idea, except instead of foundation, mascara and rouge, the celebrants are covered in red, white and a whole helluva lot of blue.

The parade was a joyful cacophony, with children leading the way after the traditional fire truck and parade of classic cars, with the capper being the Rattaros in a float. This year's gloat theme was, quite appropriately, "U-S-A", just days before that chant would laud the victorious Women's World Cup team. Once the parade wound its way down Candleberry to Citrus, and then, quickly for the kids on bikes and more lazily for their attendant parents, down Dogwood to the Cabana Club, the boisterous ballyhoo ballooned into a blast. With the grill literally cooking with gas, the scent of meat cooking wafted throughout the club, with neighbors catching up over a cold beverage and a shared joke. Children who might have been a bit hesitant to swim a year ago now confidently powered around the pool, and the traditional games sent the excitement to a fevered level.

While no one died in the annual dive for coins in the pool, naturally celebrated by age group, numerous children did treat it as a life or death mission to work on their college savings account. The water balloon toss was an epic bout destined to determine future friendships, and those were mere precursors to the grand finale – the boat races. Of course, everyone enjoyed watching the different age groups of kids racing from one side of the club's middle pool to the other, but it was the contest between adults that everyone really anticipated most eagerly. Your Woodlands Association President was in the winning boat, or rather powering it from just outside of it in the pool, and he modestly credited his team's third straight victory to eating his vitamins.

It seems quite hard to imagine that this country's 244<sup>th</sup> birthday party could outdo this year's, but the challenge has clearly been laid out. It will be up to the Woodlands to once again raise the bar in 2020.

## E-Mail & Phone Scams

By Todd McNeil



Email and phone scams are not new, and they've probably been occurring since the invention of these respective technologies. It used to be that I would get an email seemingly from a legitimate business that wanted me to respond with some personal information, or passwords. These were unsophisticated and fairly transparent attacks, and easy to identify. However, it seems recently as if we've been inundated with more sophisticated, targeted, and threatening attacks. I know I've received both emails and phone calls, each with personal information, that have attempted to extort money from me and my family. The first time I received one of these newer attack emails, I was genuinely

frightened, as the email contained information I thought was protected, in this particular case a password to an online account. It seemed at first glance to indicate that the senders had indeed done what they threatened in the email. After taking a deep breath, performing some online searches as well as some financial checks, and looking at the email a bit more closely, I realized it was a hoax. The personal information in the email was real, but the claim was fake. But how did the senders get this information?

Your personal information is out there, and much of it is publicly available. Many companies and institutions use this public information, in addition to information they collect by doing business with you, to build a fairly good picture of who you are and how you behave. Additionally, companies will trade or sell this personal information with other organizations in a quid pro quo fashion to build a more comprehensive picture in order to target you for increased business. None of this is currently illegal. But it seems not a month goes by without some breaking news about a major institution being hacked, or private information being leaked to the world. Given the nature of technology today, bad actors are organized and frequently global in their scope, and given the nature of global communication systems, these actors are always attempting to breach the security of any computer system they can reach in order to steal more information in an attempt to monetize it. The security professionals protecting this information are constantly racing to identify and fix holes before the bad actors can breach the systems, but sometimes, either through lax security practices, or by a determined attack, these security attempts fail, and information is stolen. Once this information escapes into the wild it is rapidly utilized by bad actors in order to enrich themselves. These thefts and leaks turn into targeted emails and phone calls, or even identity theft. When these attacks are executed with no real personal information, it is called "phishing" (pronounced just like "fishing"). If these attacks are personalized, it is called "spear phishing".

So, what do you do when you receive one of these troubling or threatening emails or phone calls? Here are some, but by no means comprehensive, suggestions:

First, in the immortal words of Douglas Adams: DON'T PANIC! These actors are sending out hundreds, if not thousands of emails a second, or are using automated robocalling systems to place hundreds of phone calls an hour. Don't respond. Hang up the phone, or flag the email for follow up, but do not respond immediately. These actors are not sitting there waiting for your immediate response. They are casting a very wide net. Take a deep breath and realize this is happening to hundreds, if not thousands of people simultaneously.

Second, verify. If a request for information looks suspicious, it never hurts to verify the source and request. Most companies have a policy that explicitly states that they will not request or solicit any personal information from you over the phone or via email. It's easy to verify the request by going to that organization's website and calling one of their contact numbers or using the Federal Trade Commission anti-fraud sites to search for similar attacks. Using a well-established fact checking site like Snopes to determine the validity by searching on key phrases included in the email or

*(Continued from Pg. 5)*

phone call can also be helpful. Never reply directly to the suspicious email, click on any of the links embedded in the email, or use the phone numbers included in the email in an attempt to verify the source. Most importantly, don't do any of these things and supply personal information.

Third, be vigilant. Your personal information has possibly escaped into the wild. Check your credit report and financial institutions for any irregularities. The FCRA requires the credit agencies to supply you with a free credit report annually, but this may be too infrequent. Check with your financial institutions. One of them may offer free credit reports more frequently. Additionally, free credit report sites can be very helpful, and there are several them to choose from, but you may need to sign up to a few to get a complete picture. The credit report sites only provide access to the information found on the specific report of the credit reporting agency they're partnered with, and because they have secure access to your financial information, you should be aware that you will be pushed products, mostly credit cards, that are tailored to appeal to you and your financial situation. I use Credit Karma regularly, and just ignore the pushed advertisements. The benefits of these services to me highly outweigh the slight annoyance of the ads.

Fourth, protect yourself. Use complex passwords and change passwords regularly. There are so many online services, and so many passwords to remember. Everything is available online, from banking to shopping to meal delivery. And each of these sites require a password in order to authenticate. It is really easy to fall into the trap of using a single password for many sites and keeping it simple in order to easily remember it. And this is incredibly common. Once a password is compromised, bad actors realize that since they know one of your passwords, they may know them ALL! Scammers and hackers use these known compromised passwords in an attempt the steal information from other sites or services you may use.

Password databases can help with this. These databases can generate unique complex passwords, store them for you, and some can even perform the entire authentication sequence for you, eliminating the need to remember tons of passwords.

Finally, if you believe you've been a victim of a scam, report it. Various state and federal agencies are tasked with preventing fraud, and a significant portion of their cases are online scams and theft. They have information, resources, and guidance to help you navigate through the issues that may arise from the scam.

There are a number of solutions to help address these problems, but none of these solutions are comprehensive, and it's inevitable that your information will escape into the wild. Financial institutions dedicate enormous resources towards anti-fraud efforts, and there are paid services that will help in case of identity theft, but they can't keep all of your information secure, or protect you against yourself. By using these techniques and resources, and it may reduce your chances of being scammed. Stay safe!



Here are some resources and links that may be helpful:

Credit Resources:

- Credit Karma: <https://www.creditkarma.com/>
- NerdWallet: <https://www.nerdwallet.com/l/free-credit-report>

Anti-Hoax& Fact Checking Resources:

- Snopes: <https://www.snopes.com/>

(Continued from Pg. 6)

- FactCheck: <https://www.factcheck.org>

#### Anti-Fraud Resources:

- FTC Consumer Fraud Site: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts>
- FTC Complaint Registration: <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>
- Fraud.org: <https://www.fraud.org/>

#### Password Databases:

- LastPass: <https://www.lastpass.com/>
- KeePass: <https://keepass.info/>
- 1Password: <https://1password.com/>

## Living with Rattlesnakes

By California Herps

[www.californiaherps.com](http://www.californiaherps.com)

**“Rattlesnakes are also among the most reasonable forms of dangerous wildlife: their first line of defense is to remain motionless; if you surprise them or cut off their retreat, they offer an audio warning; if you get too close, they head for cover. Venom is intended for prey so they’re reluctant to bite, and 25 to 50 percent of all bites are dry - no venom is injected.”** Leslie Anthony. *Snakebit: Confessions of a Herpetologist*. Greystone Books, 2008.

Rattlesnakes are the only kind of native California snakes that we typically refer to as poisonous, but actually, they are not poisonous they are venomous. A poisonous snake is one that is harmful to eat. A venomous snake injects dangerous venom into its victim.

Rattlesnake bites can be extremely dangerous, but rattlesnakes should not be characterized as aggressive and vicious, striking and biting without provocation, as they are often shown in movies and TV shows. If rattlesnakes are given some space and some time to escape to a safe place, they will usually just crawl away as fast as possible and avoid confrontation. Rattlesnakes will not strike without a reason: they will strike at a potential meal and they will defend themselves from anything they perceive as dangerous. They avoid striking and biting because it uses up their valuable supply of venom which they need to kill and digest their food. Rattlesnakes are often portrayed with the body partly coiled, the tail rattling loudly, and the head raised up and ready to strike, but they do not need to coil this way to strike. This display is a warning not to come any closer. It’s a defensive



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*(Continued from Pg.7)*



It's a defensive behavior that some rattlesnakes use when they sense that crawling away would put them in danger of attack.

Rattlesnakes do not always rattle. Often, they will rattle loudly to warn potential enemies of their presence, but they will often remain silent when they sense a threat, using their cryptic color and pattern to blend into their surroundings to hide from the threat. In this situation making noise risks advertising their presence. They also use their natural camouflage to hunt by sitting still and not rattling, trying to remain invisible as they wait for a warm-blooded prey animal to pass close enough for the snake to strike it.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention page about venomous snakes (accessed 4/23/2015) "It has been estimated that 7,000–8,000 people per year receive venomous bites in the United States, and about 5 of those people die."

A 1988 USC Medical Center study (L.A. Times "Rattling the Snakebite Victim" January 23, 1988) resulted in a profile of the average American snakebite victim. It found that 44% of snakebites were accidental, more than half resulted from the victim handling a snake, 28% of the victims were intoxicated, and 90% of the victims were male, most of whom were in their 20s. Many of the victims were trying to feed captive snakes.

This profile of the typical American snakebite victim as an intoxicated young man who is handling a snake may not be entirely accurate, considering that it only dealt with snakebite victims taken to one southern California hospital, and it does not consider any other part of the country or any other venomous snake other than rattlesnakes, but it has become a standard profile that is frequently cited. I suspect that many of the snakebite victims who were feeding the snakes were experienced snake handlers who were not intoxicated, but just did something careless.

The bottom line is - most snakebites can be avoided if you leave the snake alone - don't try to catch, kill, handle, or otherwise provoke a rattlesnake into acting in self-defense by striking at you. And always watch where you are walking and where you put your hands when you are in areas where rattlesnakes are present. And be extra careful when feeding or handling a captive venomous snake.

# ADVERTISING

## Advertiser Contents

ACUNA REGALI . . . . .	18
BELFAST PLUMBING . . . . .	18
BRUCE LESSER - REALTOR . . . . .	17
CITRUS MARKETPLACE . . . . .	10
DAVID GALINDO GARAGE SALE . . . . .	12
DAYNA WILSON - REALTOR . . . . .	15
GOLDEN PALM LANDSCAPE . . . . .	9
HI TECH HEATING AND COOLING . . . . .	18
KUMON - WALNUT CREEK NORTH . . . . .	16
MARC GRAVES - REALTOR . . . . .	13, 20
MINUTEMAN PRESS PLEASANT HILL . . . . .	20
RENEE WAGNER - REALTOR . . . . .	11, 20
STEVE HANSEN - J ROCKCLIFF . . . . .	19
TESSA PAWS CONSULTING . . . . .	14
TISH KANAT . . . . .	14
VALLE VERDE CHILDREN'S CTR . . . . .	16



## NEW Advertising Deadline

Please submit all ads and payments for the next issue by  
**August 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

1/4 Page on back cover - \$55/month

1/8 Page – 2.5 x 3.5 - \$22/month

Classified Ads maximum 30 words:

\$5 Woodlands Residents, \$15 Non-Residents

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## Submission Guidelines

- Please submit your ad in the actual size/dimensions listed.
- Please email a digital file of your ad to: [woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com](mailto:woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com). We accept PDF and Microsoft Word documents ONLY.
- Payment is due when you submit your ad. Please pay via [www.woodlandsasn.org/advertise/](http://www.woodlandsasn.org/advertise/) or make checks payable to "Woodlands Association" and mail to: PO Box 31085, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.



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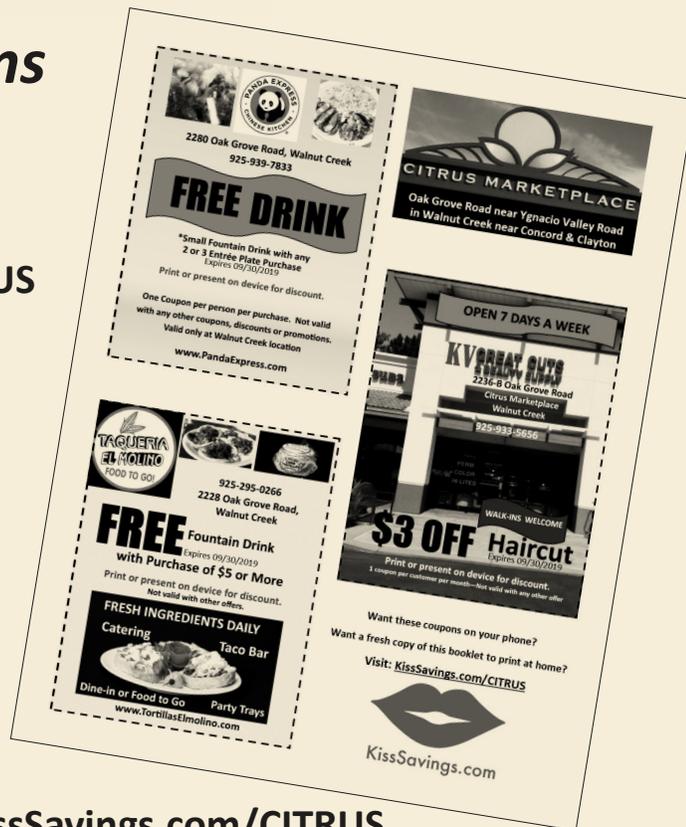
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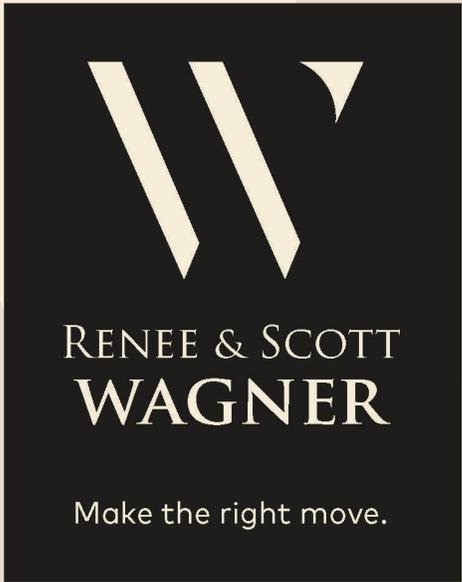
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# Woodlands Top Real Estate Experts

Renee and Scott learned the truths about owning a home and investing in real estate when they were youngsters and new to the business. Now, they bring to the process an adult lifetime of relevant study and knowledge of real estate, pricing, marketing, negotiating, and reviewing the documents of a sale and purchase. They bring the experience of countless escrows past. They offer a seasoned temperament annealed in the heat of time. Through it all, they've preserved an elegance of style. They counsel and serve clients throughout the San Francisco Bay Area but "home court" is the East Bay, mostly Contra Costa, Alameda and Solano Counties. They're associated with Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate, an internationally renowned real estate firm. It offers the benefits of large family connections, state of the art technology, moment to moment trend analysis, and a range of financing advice. It's a marriage of experience and technology. And it makes for a winning relationship with and for their clients.

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# Woodlands Annual Garage Sale

Sunday, October 6, 2019

*A map of the neighborhood, identifying the locations of those who are participating in the garage sale is created to aid buyers to find your homes. Maps will be provided to the participants to hand out to buyers. To get on the map you need to register. You may still participate without registering.*

**Starting on Tuesday, September 3rd**

**call 945-4575 To Register**

**Please do not call prior to this date**

**Registration Ends Sunday,**

**September 29th**

*When you call, please leave (1) your name, (2) home phone number, (3) address, & (4) a brief description of the items for sale.*

*You will receive a call back to confirm the information within a few days.*

*Garage sale hours are advertised as 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

*You can open and close your garage whenever you wish.*

**Because of the details involved in setting up this event,  
Please Call No Later Than 6:00 p.m., Sunday, September 29th**



**David Galindo CRS**

**Jan Williams GRI, CRS**

**J. Rockcliff Realtors**

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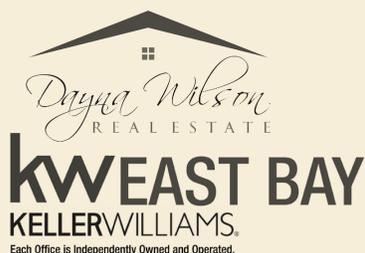
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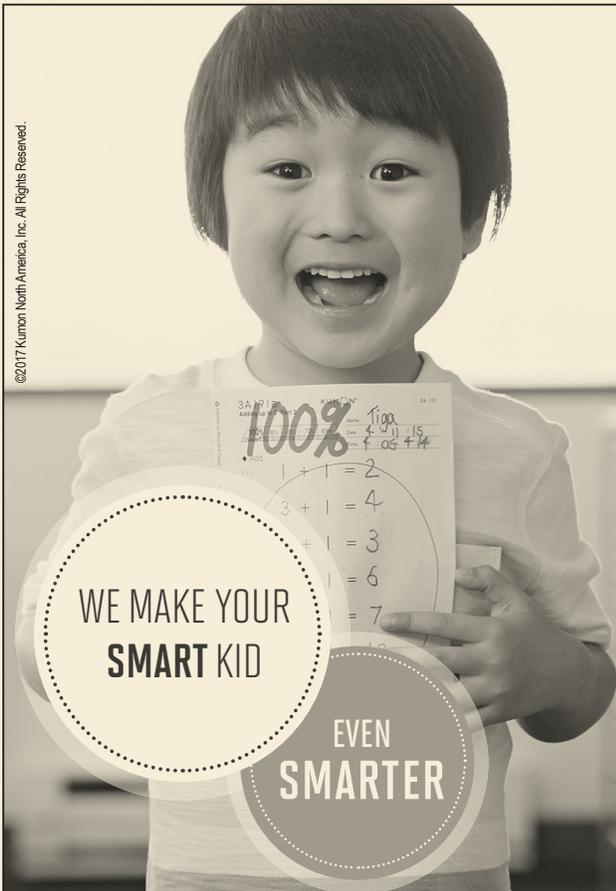
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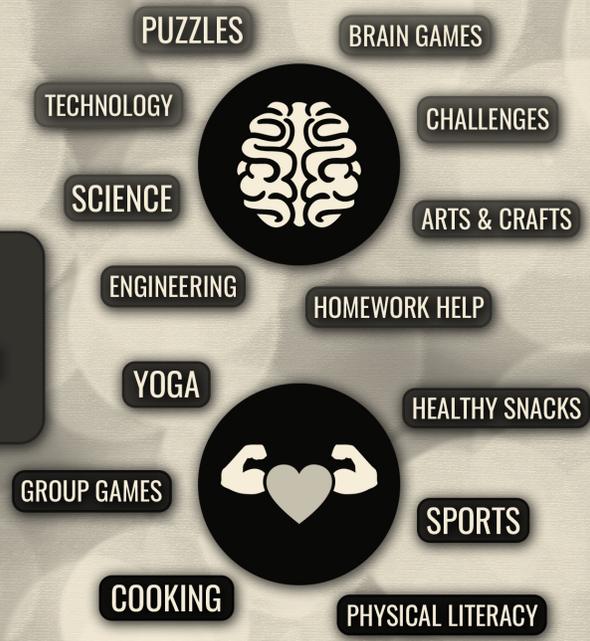


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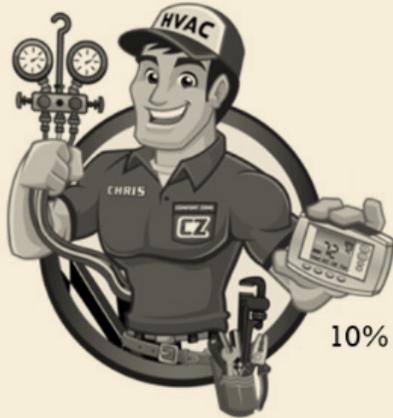
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