

The Woodlands

Keeping You Informed For 50 Years

March 2019



Board Discusses Future of Woodlands Newsletter

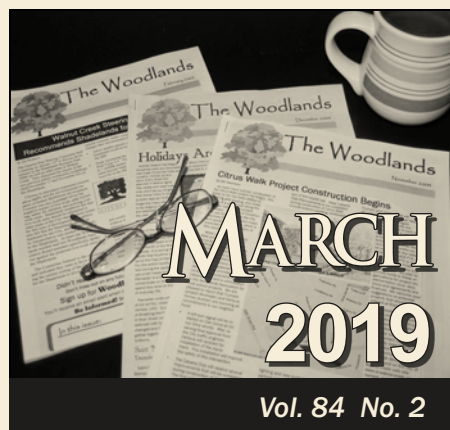
By Bill Gilmyers

At the most recent Woodlands Association Board meeting, the Board discussed the long-term viability of the Woodlands Newsletter. While advertiser and community interest in the newsletter remains strong, and the Board feels the newsletter is a valuable resource for the neighborhood, there are concerns regarding the ability of the board, and the community, to support a monthly publication produced by volunteers. It has been difficult to find dependable, engaged members of the community to do the work. The Treasurer position is currently vacant, and the members of the Board serving as President and Newsletter Editor are ready to hand their roles off to someone else within the next year. We've got to find candidates now for roles for that have typically required a long time to fill.

While no decisions were made, potential options discussed included moving to an online-only newsletter, producing a newsletter less frequently (e.g. quarterly) or shutting the newsletter down entirely. While the latter option would clearly be only as a last resort, it could become necessary if a sustainable solution can't be found. Finding volunteers to support the newsletter has always been a challenge, so this is not a new issue for the Woodlands. Nonetheless, a certain level of community engagement is necessary to support the newsletter over the long-term, few if any local communities enjoy a neighborhood amenity like this.

The Board will continue to evaluate options to determine how best to put the newsletter on a solid footing for the future. **We'll discuss it at our next Board meeting on March 2, and welcome feedback from the community there, on the Woodlands Association Facebook page or via e-mail at woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com.**





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Established in 1965,
The Woodlands Newsletter is a monthly
publication that is published by the
Woodlands Association. Archived issues
are located at www.WoodlandsAssn.org

Newsletter Advertising:
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woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com

Neighborhood Inquiries:
woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com

Woodlands Association
P.O. Box 31085
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

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(925) 256-6444

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

REMEMBER TO SET YOUR CLOCKS
AHEAD ON :

SUNDAY,
MARCH 10, 2019 @ 2:00 AM

Woodlands Association Board of Directors

Bill Gilmyers ~ *President*
Erik Ehlers ~ *Vice President*
Pete Dinapoli ~ *Treasurer*
Ron Chesney ~ *Secretary*
Jared Asch ~ *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, March 2nd
Saturday, April 6th

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

Woodlands residents
are encouraged to
attend board meetings.

Woodlands Association Seeks Newsletter Editor

The Woodlands monthly newsletter is made possible by members of this neighborhood donating their time and expertise to publishing and distributing it monthly. Our current Newsletter Editor, Susan Pfau has served in this capacity since 2017 and is ready to take a new role with the Board. So, we are seeking her replacement now to allow adequate time for her to train her replacement and ensure a smooth handoff.

This an opportunity to contribute your skills to the continuing publication of The Woodlands Newsletter each month, started over 50 years ago by the original Woodlands residents. Plus, working on The Woodlands Newsletter is a great way to enhance your resume and support the community, in the same amount of time it takes to see a movie (or two). Duties include:

- Working with Treasurer to verify which advertisers are running and ad each month.
- Emailing advertisers and contributors monthly (with some follow up) with submission reminders.
- Compiling advertiser and article files and working with the printer to produce monthly newsletter. (Bulk of the job occurs from the 10th of the month to the 15th of the month.)
- Finding graphics to add to newsletter articles.
- Proof and edit newsletter and communicate with printer during the 2-3-day proofing process.
- Verifying delivery of newsletter and uploading finalized newsletter to the Woodlands Association website

To find out more, email us at woodlandswalnutcreek@gmail.com or come by one of our monthly Board meetings on Saturday, March 2nd or Saturday April 6th, at 8 a.m. at Denica's. Whether you're a high school student looking for experience on a print publication, a professional interested in contributing to your community, or a senior with experience to share, we look forward to meeting you!



There's Never Been a Better Time to 'Cut the Cord'

By Bill Gilmyers



If you are like a lot of people, you may feel that you pay a lot of money for your Internet, cable TV and telephone service. You may also find these services to be frustratingly inflexible, only allowing you to watch programs on certain televisions, forcing you to pay for channels that you never watch. While some solved this problem years ago, switching to streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, etc. For others however, the need to watch local channels, live sports and other live broadcasts made the 'streaming only' lifestyle a complete non-starter.

With the introduction of live TV streaming services like YouTube TV, DirectTV now and others, it's now possible to have our cake and eat it too. All of these services allow for live viewing of broadcasts (along with the ability to record like a DVR), carry local channels as well as local and national sports. By cutting the cord you may find that you can reduce your costs and improve the quality of the service you get.

Here's a quick primer on how to make it happen.

The Equipment: To stream your TV, you'll need one of any number of very similar small boxes or devices to plug into your TV or home theater. These range in price from around \$30-\$150, and you'll need one for each TV you'd like to watch content on. These include Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Roku and the Google Chromecast. Depending on whose 'services' you use a lot of (Amazon, Apple or Google), you may find one device is best for you, or you may mix and match around your house. Note that you can also stream for free on phones, tablets and computers without having to purchase any additional equipment.

The Content: Once you've purchased your streaming device(s), accessing content works much the way it does on your phone or tablet- through apps. Which apps are available depends a little bit on the device, but most will allow you to stream Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and other services through the device (subscriptions required of course).

As noted, these apps now include streaming live TV services like DirectTV Now and YouTube TV. These services allow access to a range of 'standard' channels, including ESPN, CNN, the Turner networks, etc. The channel line up on each varies a bit, so you'll need to look at the lineup and compare that to what you and your family watch. For instance, we've gone with DirectTV Now (\$40 per month), because it has Nickelodeon, which my daughter watches, but I've heard really good things about YouTube TV which doesn't carry that station.

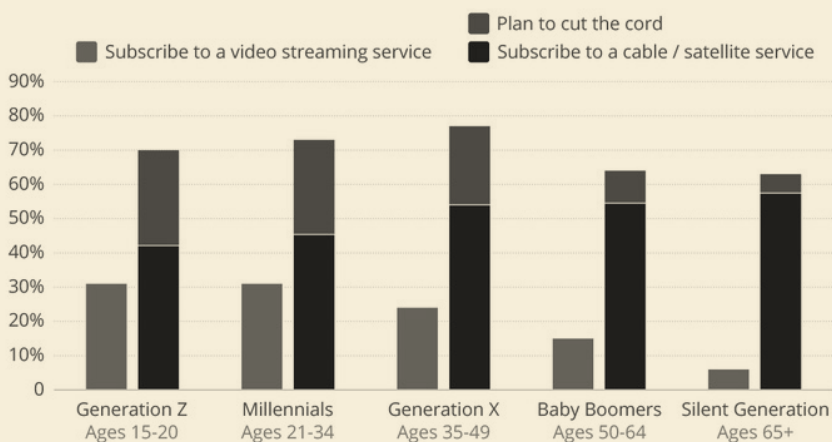
The beauty of all these services is you can watch them on any device you want, anywhere you are, at a very reasonable cost. You can mix and match the services that you use, pick up and drop services as you need to without contracts. The flexibility can't be beat.



The Fine Print: If you are like many, you bundle your TV, Internet and (maybe) phone service together. For this the cable providers will give you a small 'discount' on what you would pay for those services on an a la carte basis. So, if you cancel your TV you will find your internet service is a bit more expensive, though still less than the combined cost of both. Potentially more important, you may find that you no longer get unlimited data from your internet provider, and that you may have to pay more if you exceed certain limits. For most people these limits are high enough to be meaningless, but given that you will be using more data to get your TV and potentially saddled with a data cap at the same time, it would be smart to check your prior data usage (on your old billing statements) before you make the switch to make sure you've got 'room to grow' into whatever limit is placed on you by your ISP.

Try Before you Buy: If possible, you can sign up for and start using a streaming service before you cancel your cable. This may be a little more expensive in the short term while you pay for both services, but it will allow you (and members of your family), to get used to the new way of accessing TV and other programming. This will also give you a sense to see if you will have any issues with data limits placed on you by your internet provider. Then you can cancel your cable once you're sure the new set up will work for you.

The State of Cord-Cutting Around the World



One Man's Story: Until recently we were paying \$170+ a month for a slow internet connection and the privilege of watching basic TV programming on one and just one TV and DVR. Now I have a faster internet connection, DirectTV Now and I pay \$100. I can easily add Netflix, HBO, Hulu and Spotify (for example) and still come in much cheaper with access to much better and more robust programming. I can also watch TV wherever and whenever I want. I've also got all my friends asking for advice on how to ditch cable, which is why I wrote this article!

So, if you think that now is the time to ditch cable, you're probably right.

Pine Creek Adventure

By Ron Chesney



Most folks are familiar with the creek our town is named after, but its lesser known cousin, Pine Creek, runs right through our neighborhood and is a wonderful natural asset waiting to be explored. Now mind you, I'm not suggesting you hop the fence of the flood control basin on Citrus Avenue at the Canal Trail. Nor would I recommend you climbing down the embankment under the bridges where it crosses Parada Drive or Ygnacio Valley Road. However, there is an easy and delightful way to access it that is family friendly and a lot of fun...let me explain.

Some of you may be aware of the origins of Pine Creek; not surprisingly, it's within Mount Diablo State Park. There's an earthen dam, with an overflow spillway, that is the source of our mostly dry creek bed. Every winter, as the rains start, the dam overflows, and the water treks north. There's also drainage from the hills in route to the Woodlands which can increase the level of the creek quite rapidly, so you need to be mindful of that fact. Certainly no one should be looking at Pine Creek as a venue for rafting or any form of boating as there are many obstacles and it may even be against the law since it's fenced in, posted and could be dangerous.

The area where you can enjoy it though, where it's open and free flowing, is in Castle Rock and Mount Diablo parks. Indeed, when walking into Castle Rock, the creek you encounter as you enter the park, is Pine Creek. The main trail through Castle Rock essentially follows the creek all the way to its origin. If you've ever taken the Castle Rock main trail to the end, there is a gate that informs you you're entering Mount Diablo State Park. The same trail continues, with beauty and serenity, until you reach the earth dam. Once there, you can walk on the dam, and look out into the marsh which remains damp and green into the Fall...it's an almost Eastern forest look and easy to forget where you are or the large urban area that surrounds you.

The entire trail, once you get past the Castle Rock picnic areas, and cliffs that follow it, is a wooded secluded valley with views of the Castle Rock climbing rocks on one side, and the hills bordering Borges Ranch on the other. As you hike, you will transverse a valley of deciduous trees, ever changing with the seasons, that's quiet and peaceful throughout the year.

Ah, but the best time of the year, in my opinion, is the Spring after the rains have stopped. Sure, Pine Creek, as it dissects our neighborhood, dries up quickly...however, within Castle Rock and Mount Diablo, the water runs for a month or so later depending on how rainy of a season. The attraction is the sound of a babbling brook as you walk the route to the dam; I dare to say, it can be magical.

And, to keep it interesting, Pine Creek crosses the trail in 8 to 10 places (I've always meant to count the number of crossings!). At each juncture, there's an obstacle; that is, you need to cross the creek! No worries...it's not deep nor treacherous, but fun to navigate. Wear boots and you can walk right through; however old sneakers can work too. Hikers before you will have placed large rocks or branches; I can guarantee, so you'll be able to cross each without serious gear. The most fun though is sharing this adventure with your children; the younger they are, the more they will enjoy it. What kid doesn't like playing in a brook.

So, there you have it...the seasonal Pine Creek, typically thought of as a dry creek bed for storm drainage, is truly a gem in our backyard. This Spring, take a closer tour via Castle Rock...I trust you won't be disappointed. And if you have children, and are up for the excitement, all the better. Just don't miss the window for when the creek is flowing to experiencing this wonderous display of nature...enjoy!



CABANA CLUB NEWS!

Things are gearing up for the 2019 season down at the Woodlands pools!

Registration for the 2019 Season opened Feb 1st. You can register online now at <http://woodlands.swimtopia.com>. Note that early-bird pricing ends March 15th. Forms can be printed and sent to Woodlands, 111 Longleaf Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

In-person registration and Woodland's Open House will be held on March 10th from 1-3 PM. Come to swim, mingle, register and enjoy some hot chocolate by the pool!

Kermit's Pals evaluations will be held on March 10th at 12-2 PM. Open to all swimmers ages 5-8 that are almost ready to join the swim team; but need some extra assistance on stroke skills before joining practice with the rest of their age group. Kermit's pals is open to children under 5 if they are able to swim the width of the pool.


Woodlands Spring Clinics start March 11th through March 28th. Registration is still open at <http://woodlands.swimtopia.com>

See you at the POOL!

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- Payment is due when you submit your ad. Please pay via 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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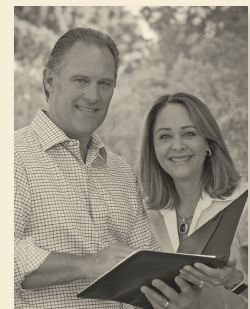
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47 Charles Hill Road
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1387 SF • 3 Beds, 2 Baths



739 Paradise Valley Court
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1769 SF • 3 Beds, 2 Baths



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3458 SF • 5 Beds, 3.5 Baths



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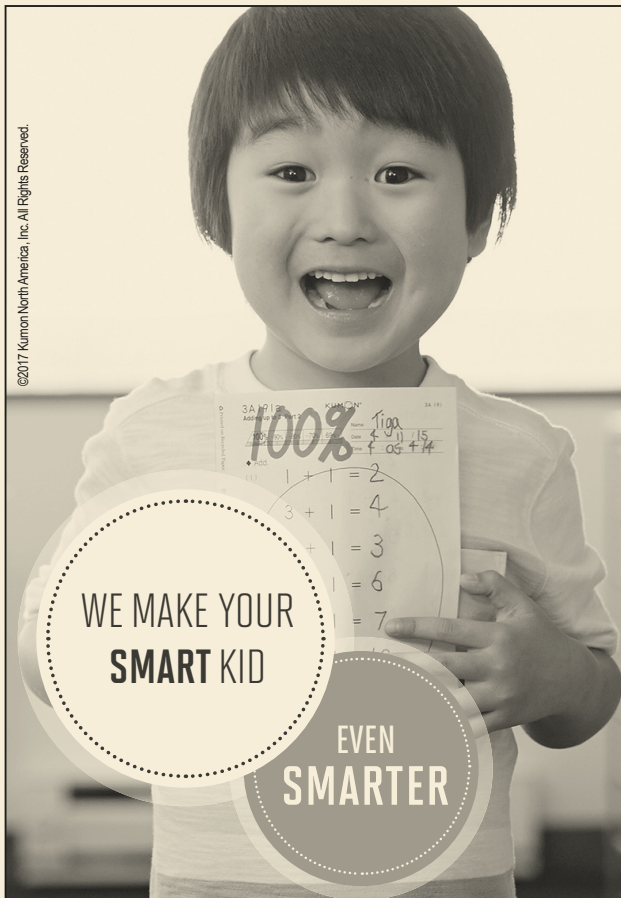
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Exceptional home with pool in the sought-after Woodlands neighborhood. The home has been tastefully remodeled throughout including a great kitchen with granite counters, solid wood cabinets, Viking gas range and dishwasher. Living room features a beautiful gas fireplace with custom mantel. French doors lead to the spectacular backyard with covered outdoor kitchen, which features a fireplace, gas grill, mini-fridge, and granite counter seating overlooking the inviting pool and spa. 2.5 updated baths, large laundry/utility room with solid wood cabinets. Designer touches include, beautiful hardwood floors throughout, plantation shutters, recessed lights, skylights, paneled doors, crown moldings and so much more. Walk to Valle Verde Elementary, Lime Ridge Open Space/Trails, Shopping, including the new Whole Foods, Safeway, Nob Hill, Trader Joe's, Star Bucks and Peet's Coffee. Top Northgate Schools.



J. Rockcliff



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Real Estate Today by Melanie Kozak

There are lots of things a potential home seller can be working on months or even years before they sell.

I often have conversations with sellers about what they can do to prepare their home for sale. You can be working on this long before your home goes on the market.

Purge, purge and purge some more: Most people who have lived in their house for years have accumulated lots of stuff. You can start working now to get rid of anything you don't use. You might want to watch the Netflix show, "Tidying up with Mari Kondo". She has lots of great ideas.

Take a good look at your kitchen and bathrooms: So many people agree to improve their home to put it up for sale. When it is done they say they wished they had done it years earlier and enjoyed it themselves. Kitchens and bathrooms are especially important.

Landscaping: Keep the grass green, weeds out and bushes trimmed. You might even plan some bushes that will hide your rear neighbor's house.

Keep your home well maintained: Putting off painting or fixing the room might save in the short term but cost much more in the long term. Fixing rotted wood can be very expensive and might be avoided with proper maintenance.

Bottom line:

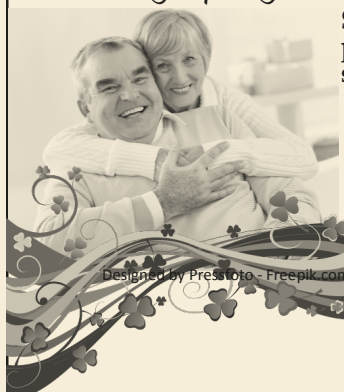
These are just a few examples. I would be happy to meet with anyone who is thinking of selling to discuss how even small investments in improving your home can pay huge rewards. If you or anyone you know is thinking of selling, please give me a call so I can help.



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