

# The Signal

DECEMBER 2021 & JANUARY 2022

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Walnut Country - The Signal | Volume 2021, Issue 11 | Office Phone: 925-687-9961 | Email: [businessoffice@walnutcountry.com](mailto:businessoffice@walnutcountry.com)

## 2021 Year in Review!

For this edition of the *Signal*, we are looking back on some of the projects and accomplishments of the HOA during 2021.

While still a strange and unique year, we were able to get a whole lot done! Despite the continued county requirement for Pool Monitors, we

were able to keep all three pools open for the swim season (and even got to keep the main pool open into December).

A new landscaper started in October, after nearly 20 years of service from Landscape Care.

We continue to hold our Board meetings online via

Zoom and haven't had an in-person meeting since February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

This edition of the *Signal* will include lots of pictures of what happened this year - we hope you enjoy! As a reminder, the next *Signal* will come out at the beginning of February - so we'll see you next year!

## Walnut Country

THE CROSSINGS

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### Upcoming Schedule

#### Board of Directors Meeting

- Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm

#### Architectural Committee Meeting

- Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm

### Board Meeting Info

The Board of Directors meet on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7pm. Meetings are currently held via Zoom and owners are welcome to join by phone or by utilizing the Zoom app. Meeting information is included on the agenda, which is posted at the Business Office and also available online at the HOA's website.

The Architectural Committee meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6pm - please contact the Business Office for the Zoom info if you are interested in attending!



### Pickleball

One of our biggest projects this year was the conversion of one of the lower tennis courts into four new pickleball courts. We're thrilled with how these came out and hope that everyone has had a chance to give Pickleball a shot!

2021 Year in Review continued on pg. 6!



If you see a blue tree tag attached to a CHOA tree, please leave it be! This is for inventory purposes, and helps us keep track of all trees and their maintenance histories.

## Treasurer's Report (Year to Date) Balance Sheet as of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021

### Current Assets

Cash - Operating	\$ 124,396
Cash - Reserves	\$ 2,327,205
Receivables	\$ 54,718
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 37,754
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 2,544,073</b>

### Current Liabilities

Liabilities (Prepaid Assessments, Accrued Payables, Deposits, etc.)	<b>\$ 164,780</b>
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### Delinquent Assessments, Fees, and Fines

Total Outstanding Assessments as of 9/30	\$ (5,639)
Total Outstanding Fees and Fines as of 9/30	\$ (4,514)
<b>TOTAL OUTSTANDING DELINQUENCIES</b>	<b>\$ (10,153)</b>



## A LOOK at the BUDGET

### Year-To-Date Budget Report

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Monthly Actual
<b>Total Revenue (Accrued)</b>	<b>\$ 1,126,191</b>	<b>\$ 1,115,450</b>	<b>\$ 10,741</b>	<b>\$ 113,200</b>
<b>Operating Expenses (Abridged)</b>				
Insurance	\$ 48,788	\$ 48,900	\$ 112	\$ 4,782
Taxes & Permits	\$ 2,486	\$ 7,490	\$ 5,004	\$ -
Legal Fees/CPA	\$ 30,691	\$ 15,220	\$ (15,471)	\$ 1,841
Management & Accounting	\$ 178,500	\$ 176,670	\$ (1,830)	\$ 18,125
Office, Admin, & Mailing	\$ 37,341	\$ 28,970	\$ (8,371)	\$ 1,910
Staffing/Payroll	\$ 38,222	\$ 125,590	\$ 87,368	\$ 3,558
Security Patrol & Gates/Fences	\$ 16,076	\$ 20,003	\$ 3,927	\$ 385
Alarm Systems	\$ 7,571	\$ 7,080	\$ (491)	\$ -
Landscaping & Irrigation	\$ 135,300	\$ 133,800	\$ (1,500)	\$ 14,057
Pest Control	\$ 11,046	\$ 8,330	\$ (2,716)	\$ 1,234
Maintenance & Janitorial	\$ 15,755	\$ 21,090	\$ 5,335	\$ 4,090
HVAC & Plumbing	\$ 5,260	\$ 6,230	\$ 970	\$ 954
Building Mtnc (Roof/Carpets)	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,660	\$ 10	\$ -
Pools, Tennis Courts, & Dog Park	\$ 52,764	\$ 50,870	\$ (1,894)	\$ 5,884
Utilities	\$ 224,166	\$ 180,670	\$ (43,496)	\$ 24,697
Bad Debt (For Delinquent Owners)	\$ -	\$ 1,670	\$ 1,670	\$ -
Reserve Transfer	\$ 281,214	\$ 281,210	\$ (4)	\$ 28,121
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$ 1,086,830</b>	<b>\$ 1,115,453</b>	<b>\$ 28,623</b>	<b>\$ 109,638</b>

**Note regarding new categories:** Discerning readers will notice the categories are different from those found in previous Signals. Good catch! Common Interest Management recently transitioned over to a new accounting system, and as a result, some of the categories are displayed a little bit differently in the monthly financial reports.

## President's Corner // December & January

Hello Walnut Country, It is hard to believe that 2021 is drawing to a close. With fingers crossed, we look forward to things continuing to return to normal in 2022. The Board and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

We held our combined November and December meeting on December 2nd. Below are some of the highlights and other current events.

### Lawsuit Insurance Reimbursement

In the November Signal, I informed the Association that we had finally been able to resolve the insurance claim regarding legal fee reimbursement from 2019. Please see the November Signal President's Corner for details. For the November Signal, I had wanted to state the dollar amounts but could not because of legal restrictions. We now have permission to notify the Association membership of those details. In 2019, the Association spent just under \$250,000 in legal fees. The in-

surance company reimbursed us a total amount of \$104,000. The insurance company determined the remaining legal expenses were not related to the litigation or covered by our policy. Again, it will take the Association several years or more to make ourselves whole again. I'll repeat what I stated in that same Signal: I am glad the matter is finally over and that we as a community can move on.

### Pickleball

Four Pickleball courts were installed at the lower courts earlier this year. We have had many inquiries from residents about how they can learn the game. The Board is researching bringing in an expert to teach an introductory class on the game to those who are interested. For those who don't want to wait and would like instruction on the game as well, I did some research and found that the City of Concord is once again offering their Pickleball Clinic that starts in January. Go to the City of Concord Website and look at the Activity Guide under the Parks Department.

You likely received a paper copy of the Guide in the mail from the City in late November with the same information.

### Benches

Most of the benches located throughout our Association are from when it was built over 40 years ago and are at the end of their service life. We recently replaced one of the benches located near the lower tennis courts and also installed a cement pad at the location to alleviate the issue of mud during the winter. We are looking at replacing more benches over the next several years and potentially adding new ones at additional locations.

### Greenbelt Walkway Project

Our Reserve Fund sets aside money each month for the long term repair and replacement of major components throughout our Association. One of the line items we save for is our walkways. We have had our walkways inspected and will be making repairs where needed and in some cases replacing sections that cannot be repaired. We

have divided the walkways into groups and will be starting in 2022 with the walkways in the central greenbelt area. We will then conduct work on the walkways in the west and east side of the Association common areas in subsequent years.

### Pools

As you may remember from last month's Signal, the Board extended the operation of the main pool past the traditional closing in October. The Board reviewed the amount of usage of the main pool from the electronic fob system and found that the pool was being used by approximately 8 persons per day. Taking into account the cost of keeping the pool open and heated for a small number of persons, the Board decided to close the main pool for the season effective December 16th, 2021.

Thanks for reading. Hope to see you at our next regular Board meeting which will be on Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Mike Kindorf**  
CHOA President

## Architectural Committee Chair's Corner // December & January

As a condition of living here in Walnut Country, our deeds include requirements spelled out in our Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) that "each Lot must be properly landscaped and all planting shall be trimmed, cultivated and weeded and maintained continuously so as to provide a safe, clean and groomed appearance." The term "landscaped" is also defined in our CC&Rs to mean "make (a piece of land) more attractive by altering the existing design, adding ornamental features, and planting trees and shrubs."

To that end, our CC&Rs require that there be an Architectural Control Committee made up of volunteer members of the community. It is the mission of the Architectural Control Committee to monitor and enforce architectural rules in the Association Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) and other rules as may be adopted in order to maintain and protect the values of Association and individual properties within the development.

I'm sure we're all seeing the value of homes being sold/bought in our development now hovering in the \$900,000 - million dollar range. These

values reflect the efforts most owners have made over the years to maintain and improve our properties. However, we also know that some properties have not been maintained and sales of them reflect below market pricing.

The Architectural Committee plays two roles in our efforts to enhance our property values. First, we review and ensure that modifications do not diminish values of neighboring properties through the establishment of standards (painting a house purple would not be approved, for instance). Second, we identify and notify owners of maintenance requirements

(mostly dealing with landscaping issues) and recommend enforcement action to the CHOA Board as needed.

As mentioned above, this effort requires volunteers from our fellow homeowners. If interested in joining the committee, please contact our General Manager for information on how to participate.

Finally, the holiday season is now upon us and we see many homes with lights and decorations. These displays are just part of making our neighborhood the great place it is! Happy holidays to all!

**Ken Dixon**  
Arch Committee Chair

## General Manager's Update // December 2021

**H**ey CHOA! We made it – another year in the books! Depending on where you look, CHOA as an organization turned 49 years old (!) in October of this year (the original Articles of Incorporation for the HOA were filed on October 6th, 1972). While socially it may not have been the busiest of years, we were able to get a whole lot done, both behind the scenes and in terms of regular (and unexpected) maintenance and upgrades. The next couple pages of this Signal take the time to go through some of our biggest projects, but here's a smaller update detailing some more recent, noteworthy activity:

- The Main Pool will be closing for the year on December 16th. We are happy to have been able to keep it open a bit longer than usual, especially given the continuing issues with the pandemic. Hopefully a lot of you were able to use this opportunity to get out of the house and get some fall or winter swimming in!
- We replaced the bench by the walkway at the lower tennis courts that was slowly sinking forward with a new metal bench set onto a concrete pad. This bench (both style and the use of the concrete pad) is intended to be an example of what both future bench replacements, and new bench installations might look like as the other common area benches reach their end of life. If you like this style, your feedback would be much appreciated during any Board meeting next year!
- A large number of light poles along the greenbelt walkway have squared-off areas with gravel or decomposed granite from their original installation. Over

time, this gravel has blown away and the wood borders are starting to deteriorate. The new landscape company, Mike McCall Landscape, is helping us replace these wood borders and install new, stabilized decomposed granite that should do a better job at staying put. We're currently doing a few light poles at a time as a test run (the first batch was over by the west pool), so keep your eyes peeled for more next year!

- We recently added bark to some of the landscaped areas along the greenbelt walkway, including the eastern end by Indigo and areas in need by Sheepberry, River Ash, Stone Canyon, and Wildberry.
- Although our HOA is not subject to SB326 (the new bill regarding condos and frequent deck inspections), we had our clubhouse decks inspected to ensure that they are safe and don't require any immediate maintenance. Good news – we received confirmation that all of our decks are in good shape! The Clubhouse entrance bridge needs some concrete footings replaced, but the structures themselves are sound.
- New basketball backboards and rims are on the way for the main playground basketball court! We expect that they should be delivered and installed either this month or next.
- At the most recent meeting, the Board approved the installation of about ~5,600 square feet of decomposed granite to replace the turf at the entrance to the main dog park. The goal of this is twofold: 1) to remove turf and further reduce our water bill by removing high-water use grass, and 2) help keep the area where most dog

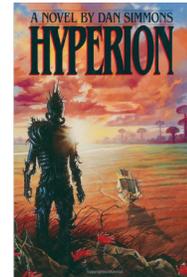
owners sit, stand, and socialize clean and as mud-free as possible. We expect this work to be completed in the coming weeks. The dog park will need to be closed for a short period of time while this is underway; we will be sure to provide frequent updates once a date has been confirmed!

- We are currently working on creating a scope of work for a big 2022 concrete project, covering most of the central greenbelt's common area walkways and cul-de-sacs. This work will include trip hazard reduction, replacement of slick/slippery areas, and repairs to parts of the walkways that have been damaged or broken off. We're also looking at replacing the galvanized metal posts at the end of the cul-de-sacs. This project will likely be discussed in more detail at the January or February Board meeting, so keep an eye out!

- Please don't forget that the HOA assessments are increasing to \$107/mo starting January 1. If you are using the new payment system that came out this year, you will need to login to your account and manually change the payment amount to reflect the new assessment before January. If you need any help with this or don't know if you have been using this system for payments this year, please contact me at the Business Office and I can answer that for you right away. If you have the old autopay through Union Bank, that will update the payment amount automatically in January. Again, if you are not sure which payment system you're on, please contact the Business Office and we can help out!

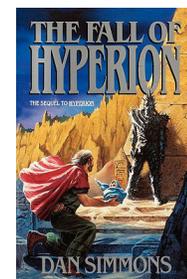
And as always, here's another book recommendation

from the GM that no one asked for but you're getting anyways....



### Hyperion

by Dan Simmons



### The Fall of Hyperion

by Dan Simmons

*Ok I'm cheating - I picked two books this month, but they're part of a series and should be read together. Technically this series is sci-fi, but it's really so much more than that...and never falls into the typical sci-fi cliches. The first book is more like a handful of short stories where you're getting to meet everybody. The 2<sup>nd</sup> book is where things get real. These books are amazing. Please read them. The Fall of Hyperion is in my top 3 books of all time and I wish I could wipe my brain and experience it again. It's incredible. I can't even begin to summarize or it properly articulate how much I loved it. It's so unique and different from what you'd expect with sci-fi. It's not breezy or light, but once the 2<sup>nd</sup> book gets rolling it's hard to put down. Simmons also wrote two more books after this that are set in the same universe but with new characters ("Endymion") which don't quite reach the same level as Hyperion, but get darn close.*

See you next year!  
-Bill, CHOA General Manager

## Walnut Country Preschool News



### Walnut Country Preschool

It is incredible to think that we are wrapping up 2021! As your family may be preparing for holiday traditions, we explore how winter holidays are celebrated around the world. We might learn about different music, lights, games and food! We try to honor traditions throughout the world to promote early inclusivity and natural curiosity of their community.

Registration dates for the 2022-2023 school year is just

around the corner. Save the date for our Open House on January 10th at 7-8pm. CHOA members are eligible for priority registration starting January 24th. Please see our newly designed website at [www.walnutcountrypreschool.com](http://www.walnutcountrypreschool.com) for more registration details or call 925-798-9686. We look forward to meeting you and your preschoolers! Wishing you happy, healthy holidays!

## Please Don't Discard Items on Sidewalk

Although the respectful readers of the CHOA *Signal* likely aren't the folks this message is geared towards, we wanted to take this time to remind all owners to please refrain from dumping any items or furniture on the sidewalks or in the Association's common area. When something like that happens, either 1) the city of Concord's public works team comes out and removes it as a part of their busy day (making it more difficult for them to get to more important projects), or 2) the HOA has to pay a vendor to remove and dispose of it, if located in the common

area, which in turn impacts your monthly assessments.

So please be courteous of your community, your neighbors, your city, and your HOA and do not dump any furniture or items on the sidewalks or common areas. Actions like these come at a cost – whether it be taxes or HOA fees, just because it disappeared after you left it on the sidewalk doesn't mean it didn't cost you anything.

FYI - you can usually arrange a free large item pickup through Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery – they can be reached at 925-682-9113.

*To all WCSJ friends, families,  
and the entire Crossings  
community:*

*Wishing you this  
holiday season abundant  
tidings of comfort and joy...  
and Happy New Year 2022!*

*Sincerely,  
WCSJ Board of Directors*





The swings at the Main Playground were replaced earlier this fall



We replaced the bench by the lower tennis courts that was sinking forward and added a concrete pad to help combat the mud



Four new double trash and recycling bins were installed along the greenbelt walkways, allowing CHOA pedestrians to recycle for the first time! We also added a recycling dumpster at the Business Office where recycling bags can be dropped off by the landscapers

The double bins are made of solid concrete and weigh about 1,440 pounds! A lift was needed to bring them in for install



## We're Impressed!

Thanks to all the owners who are spending their hard-earned time and energy keeping their properties looking great! A special shoutout to some lots that caught our attention this past month:

- 4418 Black Walnut Ct
- 4407 Indigo Ct
- 4390 Prairie Willow Ct
- 4396 N. Sugar Maple Ct
- 4402 Red Maple Ct
- 4418 Shellbark Ct
- 4403 Striped Maple Ct
- 4426 Striped Maple Ct
- 4405 Sugarland Ct
- 4407 Sweetbriar Ct
- 4416 Sweetbriar Ct
- 4408 Water Oak Ct
- 4410 Water Oak Ct
- 4407 Weeping Spruce Ct
- 4410 Weeping Spruce Ct
- 4405 Winterberry Ct
- 4413 Winterberry Ct
- 4421 Winterberry Ct

*thank you*



Replacement lights installed at the Main Pool trellis after the old light fixture broke off and fell

About 164 cubic yards of bark was installed this past month at several locations along the greenbelt walkways. Pictured below is the east end by Indigo Ct, River Ash Ct, and Stone Canyon Ct

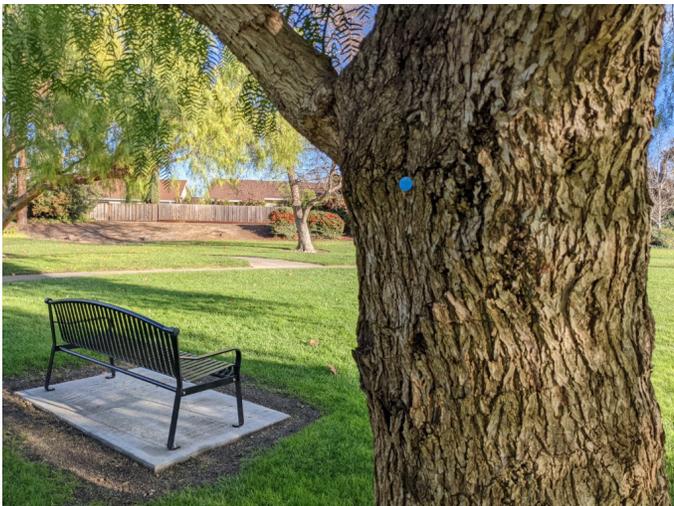




Both Clubhouse pool tables also had some work done - each got a new set of bumpers and were resurfaced with new felt

We took advantage of the Business Office and Clubhouse being closed due to COVID this year and recarpeted both facilities. It'll look great when everything reopens!

The tree well by the Smokestack Memorial was renovated with a focus on water reduction and ease of maintenance. There are a handful of other tree wells in the central walkway area that will soon see similar work done...



In 2021, the Board had an inventory made of all greenbelt trees over 15'. Small blue tags were attached to each tree so they could be easily identifiable. This helps in two big ways - when residents have a question or concern about a specific tree, they can easily specify which one. And the tags help the Association keep track of the maintenance and inspection history for each tree.



Who remembers when we had to shut the Main Pool down for a gas leak in May?

The culprit was the area where the yellow PVC pipping attached to the wrapped steel pipe coming out of the gas line.



*All of the new pool furniture ready to be unboxed...*



*One project we are working on with the new landscapers is replacing the old wood borders around the light poles, and replacing the gravel or decomposed granite that has slowly disappeared over the years...*

*Below: new tennis court benches and trash/recycling bins were installed this year! These new benches are more sturdy than the old white plastic ones and are expected to last more than 20 years.*

*The new pool furniture installed and ready for some CHOA butts!*

*This style is an improvement over what we had in the past - if the fabric is damaged, we can easily order a replacement sling for a nominal fee. It is also very easy to install.*



*Newly resurfaced upper and lower tennis courts, and new windscreens at each! We went with a nice bright "USTA Blue" color for the windscreens this year.*



*The HOA's vendor on site repairing the practice board plywood and internal structure. Dry rot was found in several areas.*

*Above: A "before" picture of the lower tennis court practice board. Below: The practice board after it was repaired and repainted*



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Nicole is a Crossings resident specializing in residential real estate, working with both buyers and sellers. She is active in the community and looks forward to helping you find home!

COMPASS

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