



Walnut Country - The Signal | Volume 2023, Issue 7 | Office Phone: 925-687-9961 | Email: businessoffice@walnutcountry.com

East Pool Gate Vandalism - October 10th

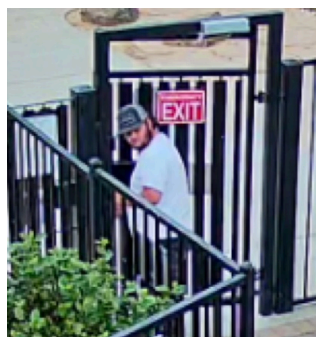
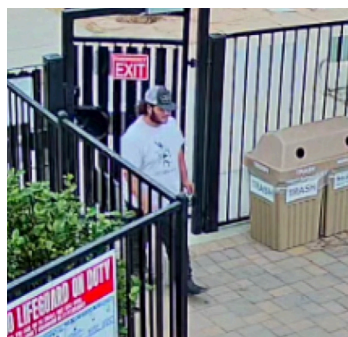
On Monday, October 10th around 2pm, two individuals, one male and one female, jumped over the fence at the east pool and used the restrooms. The male then unscrewed and stole the gate's electric strike, which is the mechanism that keeps the gate locked. These individuals then returned to the picnic table by the playground, where they remained for another 20 to 30 minutes with what appeared to be a group of their friends. We don't believe these two individuals are residents, as the pool gate could have been opened using a key fob, but they may be guests or friends of residents. The male who stole the strike was wearing dark pants, a white t-shirt, a white and blue trucker-style hat, and was smoking a cigarette when he entered the pool deck.

Their actions were caught on camera and we are asking anyone who might recognize these individuals to come forward. This act of vandalism cost the Association roughly \$800 in parts and labor to have the strike replaced and the gate repaired.

We are including some pictures in this Signal here, but please visit this page for links to higher quality images as well as a video of the event:

www.walnutcountry.com/vandals

If you recognize these individuals, please reach out to the General Manager at your earliest convenience at 925-687-9961 or by email at businessoffice@walnutcountry.com. Thank you for your assistance!



Do you recognize these individuals? If yes, please contact the Business Office! Visit www.walnutcountry.com/vandals for more pictures and a link to video.



Walnut Country THE CROSSINGS

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Upcoming Schedule

- Board of Directors Meeting
- Thursday, December 7th @ 7pm
- Architectural Committee Meeting
- Thursday, November 16th @ 6pm

Board Meeting Info

The Board of Directors meet on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7pm. As of March 2023, monthly Board meetings have resumed in-person at the Business Office, however we are utilizing a hybrid approach so that owners can still watch the meeting via Zoom. Contact the General Manager if you want the Zoom info!

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

Clubhouse Hours

Wednesday thru Sunday
12pm to 8pm

Want to rent the Clubhouse?
Visit this website:

<https://cowellhoa.skedda.com>

2023 Pool Hours

Main Pool
Open Daily | 7am to 9:00pm

East & West Pools
Open Daily | 7am to 8:00pm

WCST Fall Clinic Schedule:
8/21 - 9/15 and 10/16 - 11/10

- Monday thru Thursday
- 4pm to 6pm

Treasurer's Report (Year to Date) Balance Sheet as of September 30th, 2023

Current Assets

Cash - Operating	\$ 197,447
Cash - Reserves	\$ 1,851,842
Receivables	\$ 4,098
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 25,530
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,078,917

Current Liabilities

Liabilities (Prepaid Assessments, Accrued Payables, Deposits, etc.)	\$ 122,462
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Delinquent Assessments, Fees, and Fines

Total Outstanding Assessments	\$ (5,239)
Total Outstanding Fees and Fines	\$ (1,075)
TOTAL OUTSTANDING DELINQUENCIES	\$ (6,314)



**A LOOK
at the
BUDGET**

Year-To-Date Budget Report

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Variance	Monthly Actual
Total Revenue (Accrued)	\$ 1,058,341	\$ 1,051,815	\$ 6,526	\$ 117,093
Operating Expenses				
Insurance	\$ 56,747	\$ 47,250	\$ (9,497)	\$ 6,317
Taxes & Permits	\$ 2,451	\$ 5,247	\$ 2,796	\$ -
Legal Fees/CPA	\$ 7,167	\$ 11,633	\$ 4,466	\$ -
Management & Accounting	\$ 180,886	\$ 178,523	\$ (2,363)	\$ 19,661
Office, Admin, & Mailing	\$ 37,332	\$ 33,759	\$ (3,573)	\$ 3,605
Staffing/Payroll/Events	\$ 64,148	\$ 68,559	\$ 4,411	\$ 6,717
Security Patrol	\$ 17,335	\$ 15,750	\$ (1,585)	\$ 985
Alarm Systems	\$ 7,233	\$ 5,700	\$ (1,533)	\$ 2,255
Landscaping & Irrigation	\$ 140,752	\$ 149,103	\$ 8,351	\$ 15,025
Pest Control	\$ 11,592	\$ 12,015	\$ 423	\$ 1,302
Maintenance & Janitorial	\$ 18,767	\$ 14,063	\$ (4,704)	\$ 5,411
HVAC & Plumbing	\$ 1,854	\$ 4,650	\$ 2,796	\$ -
Roofs & Gutters	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,200	\$ (650)	\$ 1,850
Pools, Tennis Courts, & Dog Park	\$ 64,603	\$ 41,217	\$ (23,386)	\$ 10,586
Utilities	\$ 206,259	\$ 173,025	\$ (33,234)	\$ 11,527
Bad Debt (For Delinquent Owners)	\$ -	\$ 375	\$ 375	\$ -
Reserve Transfer	\$ 289,766	\$ 289,766	\$ -	\$ 32,196
Total Operating Expense	\$ 1,108,742	\$ 1,051,835	\$ (56,907)	\$ 117,437

President's Corner // November 2023

Hello Walnut Country, As I get ready to write my President's Corner, it is a day away from Halloween. I love Halloween at Walnut Country, watching all the kids in their clever costumes going up and down our courts on the hunt for treats. Then the next morning, I'm faced with the annual decision: Do I chuck the left-over candy (like I should!), or do I convince myself that Reese's Peanut Butter Cups aren't that bad for you, right?

We held our last monthly board meeting on October 26th. Below are some of the highlights and additional news for the Association.

Cul-De-Sac Post Repairs

At the end of each of our courts, we have metal posts connected by chains.

The purpose of the posts is of course to keep a motor vehicle from driving onto our greenbelt. Some of the posts have become dislodged or loose over the last few years. The Board selected a vendor at the October meeting who will be repairing or replacing damaged posts in the near future.

Heritage Oak Tree

As you will remember from a previous issue of the Signal, the heritage oak tree near Adelia Court was inspected by a top recommended arborist a few months ago and it was determined that the tree could be saved and that the risk of it falling would be greatly reduced by some very specific pruning. That work was done at the end of October. We have had a few questions about the moat that goes around the base of the

tree. That area is being left exposed to reduce mildew and rot at the base of the tree during heavy rains. Annual Budget with more information in the mail in November.

Thanks for reading. As you know, due to the Thanksgiving holiday in November and Christmas in December falling near our normally scheduled monthly board meetings, each year we combine the November and December meeting agendas into one meeting and hold it on the first Thursday in December. Therefore, our next meeting will be on December 7th. We hope to see you there, either in person or via Zoom if that is more convenient for you.

Mike Kindorf

CHOA President

Events Coordinator Hiring Announcement

The CHOA Board and General Manager are pleased to announce that we have hired Gloria Birch as our Events Coordinator, making her an official employee of the Association. This new position is part-time and replaces the prior Rec Director, which was a longstanding part-time position at the Clubhouse that for many years helped organize and put on our CHOA events. The Rec Director then transitioned into a full-time Assistant GM position for a year or so just before the Clubhouse was closed during the pandemic.

Now that things are getting back to "normal" and we are in the full swing of reintroducing our CHOA events, the Board has decided to bring back a part-time Events Coordinator position to oversee this workload. We are keeping this position part-time and have no current plans for reviving the full-time Assistant GM position, which should help keep our expenses down. Additionally, the Events Coordinator schedule is not predetermined, but rather works as needed for each event with an annual cap, ensuring this position is as efficient as can be.

A large factor in the Board's decision was the positive feedback received in the recent survey that clearly communicated the importance of our events. Nearly every positive comment received in that survey mentioned the return of our CHOA events in one way or another.

We want to thank Gloria for all the work that she has done to get this program back on track and hope to see you at the upcoming Winter Festival on December 10th! Don't forget to RSVP on www.walnutcountry.com before space fills up!

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List of Metal Posts @ Cul-De-Sacs

You likely read in the President's Corner blurb above that the Board approved replacing many damaged metal posts at the end of our cul-de-sacs.

We are replacing a total of 35 posts; some located in the dirt/landscaping, others set in the concrete walkway itself. All new posts will be set into concrete foundations and those going into the walkways will also be set in removeable sleeves, so they can be easily removed to accommodate vehicle access if needed for a vendor. Work should likely begin this winter, probably later this month or early December, pending weather.

Here is a list of all streets

that are having some of the damage posts replaced:

- Oakbrook Ct
- Spoonwood Ct
- Catalpa Ct
- Canoe Birch Ct
- Sweetbriar Ct
- Sweet Shrub Ct
- Hock Maple Ct
- Red Maple Ct
- Snowberry Ct
- Camstock Ct
- Sheepberry Ct
- Deerberry Ct
- Prairie Willow Ct
- Smoke Tree Ct
- Shellbark Ct
- Corkwood Ct
- Striped Maple Ct

Now that we have a scope and know the approximate cost for this work, future repairs should happen much quicker!

General Manager's Update // November 2023



Pictured: the General Manager "working"

Hey CHOA! Well, the cold weather is finally here. I turned the heater on here at the Business Office last week for the first time in many, many months, and I am SO not thrilled about it. That being said, I do look forward to putting on my cold-weather clothes. Certainly makes me feel a little better about my failed summer weight-loss campaign! At least I can blame that one on a newborn baby - for now ;)

Anywho, here are some updates for things that were happening since the last *Signal*:

- Grass over-seeding/re-seeding will be taking place starting November 6th, and likely is underway by the time you are getting this *Signal*. We are targeting areas of recreational, usable grass, mostly in the central greenbelt. We are seeding the struggling areas or "hot-spots". A few have developed this year. Usually it is due to irrigation issues or coverage, but sometimes we just need some new seed in there.
- We finally completed the installation of all of our new light poles and light fixtures. A total of 12 were installed this year, replacing poles that were either significantly rusted or damaged or a prime candidate for toppling over. We will continue looking at our light poles and replacing as needed, as we understand the greenbelt is an extremely important amenity, and lights contribute to safety and security
- We added a big pile o' dirt to the dog park for folks to use to fill in gopher holes and prevent any human or canine ankle breaks
- The side pool heaters are turned off as of November 1st. The pools and bathrooms are still open and accessible using your key fobs, and you are welcome to swim - it will just be a little bit on the chilly side. The main pool will likely remain heated until just before Thanksgiving. We will be sure to make an announcement via eSignal when we have a confirmed date for those heaters to be shut down for the winter, but expect it around the 20th or 22nd of this month.
- We are working on reviving the CHOA ID badge and guest pass system and will be fine tuning the procedures over the next month or two. We expect that badges will be available to pickup from the Clubhouse sometime in early 2024, with enforcement likely starting around February or March. This is just my best guess. More info to come!
- We are still working on getting two lights by the East Pool repaired, E52 and E53. These have a break or short somewhere in the line between the two lights, so we need to trench and run conduit and a new line for about 120 linear feet.
- Last week the pool vendor removed a plaster bubble from the shallow end of the Main Pool.
- We installed new light fixtures and motion-activated sensors at the West Pool bathrooms; the previous fixture covers were missing and the switches/timers were nearing their end of life. Repairs to the entry gate at the small dog park are scheduled for November 10th. This took a while to schedule because the repair is a bit involved - an entire post is being removed and replaced because it was originally

while out and about in the evenings.

installed without being set in concrete, so over the years it has shifted and now can no longer properly close.

- We are still working on a fix for the power at the key for reader for tennis court 1. This issue is likely related to the lights (when isn't it??) and is not an easy repair. A short or break somewhere in the line of light poles near the tennis courts is impacting the tennis court gate power, so that needs to be fixed before the key fob reader will be up and running again.
- We recently had a new treadmill installed at the Clubhouse gym - let us know what you think if you're already given it a try! You can access the gym from the pool deck using your pool key fobs, but it must first be activated by the Clubhouse staff after you sign a waiver.
- One final reminder that the 2024 Budget package is in the mail on its way to you and should arrive no later than mid-November. This will include the 2024 budget, reserve summary, and info on how to setup autopay.
- Our awesome Winter Festival is scheduled for Sunday, December 10th at the Clubhouse! The RSVP link is included in this *Signal*. Contact the Business Office if you have any questions or need help making your RSVP!

Hope to see you at the December 7th Board meeting! We will continue to make the meeting available in person and via Zoom, for those who find it more convenient. The Zoom info is always posed on the Board Meeting Agendas, which you can find on the HOA's website.

If you have any questions about anything at all, feel free to give me a ring at the office. Until next month!

Bill Mazza / CHOA General Manager

Pool Heating Schedule Updates

Heaters at the east and west pools have officially been turned off for the winter as of November 1st. The Main Pool will remain heated over the next few weeks, and will most likely be turned off around November 22nd as the weather turns and usage sees a significant drop off. The final confirmed date will be announced in the coming weeks via eSignal, but we expect it will likely take place before the Thanksgiving holiday.

All three pools will remain open during the winter for bathroom access

(or even those willing to brave the 50-degree water!). The pool vendor will continue to service the pools in the winter (at a reduced rate) to ensure they are clean and chlorinated.

The Walnut Country Swim Team's Fall Clinic has resumed at the Main Pool and takes place Monday through Thursday from 4pm to 6pm. The Main Pool will be unavailable to residents at this time. The clinic will finish up on November 10th.

The Monday morning Water Aerobics class is also moving over to the

Main Pool starting November 6th. This class takes place at 10am and costs \$8 per person. The last class this year will be Monday, November 20th. Check the CHOA website to sign up at www.walnutcountry.com.

We do not yet have a confirmed schedule for when the pool heaters will be turned back on for the 2024 swim season, but expect it to be sometime around late March or early April. An official announcement will come around January or February with more info.

Walnut Country Swim Team News



Monument Crisis Center Donations

Hello Walnut Country, If you are reading this month's copy of the Signal, you have already heard from me once with my monthly President's Corner. I'm writing to you separately here with a request for some help. The Monument Crisis Center is a community based non-profit family resource center for Central and East Contra Costa County. Located in Concord, the Center offers nutritious food, quality resources, and referrals to low-income individuals and families in order to help them become stable and secure in our community. I have been a member of the board of directors for the Monument Crisis Center for the last 5 years. I have volunteered and worked with MCC for almost 10 years.

This year, the Center has received record requests for food assistance from members of our community. Due to inflation and many other factors, the requests for assistance have exceeded what we were getting even during the height of the pandemic. I am going to be running a food drive for the Center here at Walnut Country. Starting on Wednesday November 8th, you will see a large blue barrel in the lobby of the Clubhouse. If you can contribute, just drop your items off in the barrel and I will deliver them to the Center. I will keep a barrel there until mid-December. Anything you can do to help is greatly appreciated.

Here are some recommended items: Dry Cereal, Canned Tuna, Canned Meals, Mac and Cheese, Pasta, Canned Soup, Oatmeal, Beans, and Rice. Please no perishables and nothing in a glass jar.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, you can go to www.monumentcrisiscenter.org. The MCC is a 501C(3) non-profit (Tax ID #41-111171). You can also use the website if you would like to volunteer to assist with food distribution by looking for "Volunteer Opportunities" under Support Us. Thank you for your time.

Mike Kindorf
CHOA President

Walnut Country Preschool News



Walnut Country Preschool

Hello Neighbors! We celebrated our spooky festivities with our annual costume parade, creepy crafts, and our performance for our preschool community parents! Integrating our preschool community with the student's family and home is essential to early childhood education. The students like working on songs to share with their family. These songs might even become part of your family traditions!

In November, we will learn about apples and giving thanks. You can practice both of these at home! Teaching with apples offers many ways to explore our senses and fundamental academics.

- Basic math principles can be taught by counting apples or comparing which apples are bigger or smaller.
- You can explore colors by sorting apples by color or noticing how some have many colors.
- Identify shapes like the star inside of the apple or semicircle slices. Smelling and tasting are a part of the sensory lesson, too!

As we practice giving thanks, we are thankful for the loved ones we gather with this season and much more. Thank YOU for being part of our community!

Mark your calendars for some important dates!

- **Open House is January 16, 2024**
 - Current Families: 5:30 – 6:00 PM
 - Prospective Families: 6:00-7:00 PM.
- Priority registration for CHOA residents is January 22, 2024, at 8:30 AM

Have questions about our program for a current or future preschooler? Please call 925-798-9686 or email us at walnutcountrypreschooldirector@gmail.com. We also have a lot of information on our website at www.walnutcountrypreschool.com.

Concord Turkey Trot - 11/23 @ 7:30am

The City of Concord's annual 5k Turkey Trot will take place on the morning of November 23rd from 7:30am to 9am. This is an annual charity 5k run/walk put on by the city that benefits Loves and Fishes of Contra Costa, part of which runs through some CHOA streets and common areas.

Several streets within CHOA will be impacted during the event. The following streets may be partially or fully closed from 7:30am to 9am on November 23rd:

- Turtle Creek Blvd from Ayers Rod to Rising Dawn Lane
- Rising Dawn Lane to North Larwin
- North Larwin to the end of Black Walnut Ct
- Sweet Shrub Ct from the cul-de-sac to South Larwin
- South Larwin from Sweet Shrub Ct to Ayers Rd
- Ayers Rd from Kenneth Blvd to Turtle Creek Blvd

Flaggers and Concord Police officers will be on course at the selected locations to assist with local pedestrian and vehicular traffic to maintain limited access to surrounding homes. If you have any questions, please reach out to Race Director John Pamer at jpamer@diablovalleyfcu.org. You can sign up for the run at www.concordturkeytrot.com.

Board Meeting Summary // October 26th, 2023

The CHOA Board of Directors meet every month on the 4th Thursday. During these meetings, all Association business is conducted. This is where your Board makes just about every decision related to the HOA – the budget, contracts, vendors, projects, rules, policies, etc. Pretty much every action taken by your board happens in these meetings, so it's always recommended that owners attend, so they have a grasp on what's going on in the community.

Of course we understand not everyone can make every meeting. After the meeting is over, the GM puts together the meeting minutes – a record of all decisions made during this meeting. Minutes are not meant to be a “summary” of the meeting, but rather a simple record of all action taken by the Board. Minutes are in draft form until approved by the Board at the following meeting. Once approved, they are signed and made available on the HOA website. This is usually about 30 days after the given meeting. Owners can always request to see a draft copy of the minutes from the General Manager, if you don't want to wait for the finalized version.

For those who didn't attend and don't want to bother with the minutes, here is a brief summary of what happened during last month's Board meeting. Important note: this is in no way an official record of the meeting – that

would be the Minutes. This is simply an informal summary from the GM's perspective.

- The Board reviewed a proposal to remove the non-recreational grass located behind the small dog park, adjacent to the walkway that leads to Turtle Creek Blvd. The Board tabled this item and indicated that it would like to revisit the topic at their next 2024 meeting, and would like more time to consider additional options for this area.
- The Board reviewed two proposals to replace 35 damaged metal posts at the end of many cul-de-sacs throughout the community, and approved the lower cost bid of the two. Work will likely begin later this month.
- The Board discussed the removal of another large beehive located in the central entryway tower of the Clubhouse, and approved up to \$2,500 for a large lift to be rented for access and beehive removal.
- The Board delegated the authority to approve of the Association's 2024 insurance policies to the Board president, since the renewal quotes and proposals usually arrive after the last Board meeting of the year and need to be approved by the year's end to prevent a lapse in coverage. The Board also directed management to work with other insurance agents or brokers who might have alternative carriers willing to provide proposals for coverage.

- The Board discussed the Association's violation notice process for homeowners who are found to be in violation of the HOA's rules or CC&Rs. Currently, the Architectural Committee performs monthly inspections and sends letters to homeowners for perceived infractions. The Board indicated that it would like to see these letters before they are sent to homeowners, as all Committees serve the Board and ultimately the Board is responsible for their actions. The Board will be given the opportunity to call out any violation letters it believes merit further discussion; these letters will then remain in the queue and discussed at the next regularly scheduled Executive Session meeting.

As a reminder, our monthly Board meetings will now resume in-person at the Business Office. Meetings start at 7pm and the Homeowner Open Forum is always the first item on the agenda. If you have any feedback or comments for the Board, that is the time to bring it to the Board's attention! All homeowners are welcome and encouraged to attend! Contact the GM if you have any questions about how any of this works.

We are also going to continue making the meetings available via Zoom as often as possible. The meeting agendas will include the Zoom login info for those who would prefer to attend remotely!

Meditation Class @ Clubhouse - November 30th @ 6:30pm

The CHOA Board has recently approved a meditation program to be put on at the Clubhouse during a weekday evening. This will be headed by resident Christine Boschen. The first session is scheduled for Thursday, November 30th starting at 6:30pm. **No RSVP needed** for this event. Anyone can drop it and participate. Any entrance fee needs to be paid directly to the instructor. We will use this class to gauge interest, with the intention of this becoming a regular weekly class for our residents.

Gravity Meditation with neighbor Christine Boschen

Gravity Meditation combines gentle movements with inward awareness to bring more harmony, peace, and connection with your whole self. As we move through our day, we can get caught up in our thoughts and to-do lists and lose track of our basic connection to our physical selves. In a Gravity Meditation session, we move through gentle shifts in our center of gravity and

pay attention to the resulting sensations in our body. Through this practice, we are supported to be more connected to ourselves. There are no set movements, and every session is different. All are welcome, and you can

(and should) modify the movements to your own body's comfort. Now more than ever, we need simple, practical tools for finding calm and peace in the midst of our day. This is one such tool! You are invited to experience it for yourself, together, with your neighbors.

Designed to fit into your schedule:

Christine will hold two 25-minute sessions, back-to-back. Don't worry if you are running late or need to leave early. Just come for one or both sessions, or part of each. We understand that you are fitting this into your schedule.

What to wear?

If you can wear comfortable clothes that allow ease of movement (including forward and side bends), that's great. If you are coming straight from work and are in your work clothes, that is fine too!

Open to kids? Christine defers to parents on this:

Whether Gravity Meditation is appropriate for kids is very much specific to the kid! Parents, please first try a session yourself and decide whether to bring your children to future sessions. As mentioned above, it is fine to be late or leave early; please just do so quietly so others can focus on their meditation.

Cost:

Sliding scale, \$6-12. First session payable by Venmo, Zelle, or cash. Future regular sessions will also have a pre-payment option on Christine's business website, convergeforward.com.

Gravity Meditation

You're invited!

Gentle Movement
+
Awareness
=
Relaxation



CHOA Red Cross Blood Drive - Success!

Thank you to everyone who came to the Clubhouse on 10/14 and donated blood during our very own Red Cross Blood Drive. We received a report highlighting that our drive collected enough units to save up to 72 lives - this is amazing news! Thanks to all who participated.

Doris was the winner of our \$50 Amazon gift card raffle that took place for all donors. Thank you for your life saving donation, Doris, and congratulations on winning! We will look into putting on more blood drives at the Clubhouse next year based on feedback we received from this event.



Fall Festival 2023 Recap & Survey

We had such a great time at this year's Fall Festival! Faces were painted, pizza was eaten, crafts were made, beer was poured, bubbles were danced in, friendships strengthened and so much cotton candy consumed. The Land Birds rocked the lawn with their 60s music and we collected bags of winter clothing to donate to GROW Concord so that those who are unhoused this Winter season have something warm to clothe themselves in and keep their feet dry.

Thank you to all of the new and repeat volunteers and Events Committee members for serving over 550 guests. Together we helped create another memorable afternoon for our community - you guys are awesome!

We created a brief survey to hear what you liked and how we can improve next year's festival. You can access the survey by following this link:

<https://bit.ly/23CHOAFallFestSurvey>



Coming Right Up - Winter Fest 2023! RSVP Link Below

Time to break out those ugly holiday sweaters again - our Winter Festival is making a return on Sunday, 12/10, this time with TWO sign up slots so we can accommodate twice the crowd, 2:30-4:30p and 4:45-6:30p.

The evening will include a fully hosted bar with holiday cocktails, catered small bites and treats, live piano playing, a hot cocoa bar, crafts for the kids, and a visit from a North Pole VIP (SANTA!) to take a photo and hear what's on your wish list.

New this year, a Gingerbread House decorating contest! Bring your decorated gingerbread house masterpiece and guests will vote on their favorites for a prize. See the RSVP link below for more details.

This popular event fills up fast so be sure to get your RSVP in for your preferred time slot today. Once the max capacity is reached (150 per slot), the RSVP page will close.

Winter Fest is a resident only event

Visit this site to RSVP:

<https://bit.ly/CHOAwinterfest23>



Increased Rodent Activity as the Weather Cools

We have been receiving reports of increase mice and rat activity throughout the community. This recent surge in rodent activity is not unique to just CHOA – Contra Costa County also confirmed that it is currently noticing a big increase in the number of requests it's getting for rat and mouse service.

Per the County's Mosquito and Vector Control District, an increase in rodent activity around the start of fall makes sense as it's that time of year when temperatures get cooler and rats and mice would rather be inside where it's warm and dry than outside where it's cool and sometimes rainy.

The county has the following recommendations for making your property less attractive to rodents:

Remove places where rats and mice can find shelter outside:

- Remove dense shrubbery
- Trim any climbing vegetation at least four feet from your home's roof and walls
- Store wood and lumber piles at least 18 inches above the ground and at least 12 inches away from any structure
- Install wire mesh around the bottom of outdoor structures including sheds and make sure shed doors are completely closed at night

Remove potential food or water sources for rats and mice:

- Harvest fruit and nuts as they ripen
- Pick up fallen fruit and nuts daily.
- Bring in pet food and water bowls at night
- Place a tarp under bird feeders to remove fallen bird seed each night

The Mosquito and Vector Control District public health service involves inspection and advice regarding rodent activity. County residents can request service by phone at 925-685-9301 or online at www.contracostamosquito.com.

com. During the rat and mouse service, the District employee will:

- Inspect the exterior of the property looking for potential food or shelter opportunities for rats and mice
- Look for evidence of rats or mice including droppings, nesting materials, rub marks, and evidence of gnawing
- Look for evidence of damaged vent screens and other openings, where a rat or mouse could easily gain access to a home's interior
- While District employees do not inspect the interior of the home, the employee will inspect the garage as long as the garage door is open.
- The employee will look for the same evidence types listed above.
- While inspecting the garage, the District employee will also look for pet food, grass seed, and other items commonly kept in a garage that should be stored carefully to prevent access by a rat or mouse.
- Trim any climbing vegetation at least four feet from your home's roof and walls
- Store wood and lumber piles at least

18 inches above the ground and at least 12 inches away from any structure

- Install wire mesh around the bottom of outdoor structures including sheds and make sure shed doors are completely closed at night

Following the inspection, the District employee will make recommendations on what the resident should do to reduce the risk of rats and mice on their specific property. The recommendations are written down and provided to the resident.



If you see this on your property, there are likely rodents nearby! Remember to pick all fruit as soon as they ripen and remove any that have fallen on a daily basis.



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NANCY'S NEWS

CROSSINGS COMMUNITY

November, 2023

Issue 171

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Pffftttt

The real estate market sounds like a balloon slowly losing air...

Things are slowing down in real estate right now with less home buyers, higher interest rates and not a lot of homes for sale.

Part of this could be attributed to the seasonality of this industry.... but it feels like it's a bit more than that to me.

The biggest factors affecting the housing industry right now:

- High mortgage rates (sitting around 8%)
- Home prices appear to be stable, not like the pace of 2022
- Housing supply continues to remain very low
- The tech sector uncertainty may weaken demand
- Exodus of residents and businesses to lower tax states
- Possibility of war-like conflict expanding

What does all that mean?

We have high mortgage lending rates, which is psychologically and financially concerning for families, and even if a family can get beyond that, they are not able to find the right home due to limited housing inventory...so they are holding firm on finding the "right house".

Other families are choosing to roll the dice and sit on the sidelines "until the rates come down".....which may not have proven a great idea if they have been waiting more than a year (when rates were near half what they are today).

Home prices are holding steady for the most part. I think that some sellers may have to lower their prices if they have not received an offer within 30 days on the market. If homes are priced right, then they tend to go pending on average within the first 18 days on the market here locally.

Employment – the tech sector has announced layoffs, closings and some companies are moving out of state. It may not affect our local market that much, but even having one or two paychecks coming in just is not going as far as it used to.

Forecasting

I don't feel that anyone can provide good insight into next year's real estate market at this time. The variables of interest rates, recessionary pressures, possibly expanding conflict abroad and decreasing consumer sentiment may continue to keep our market slow and steady with very low inventory and much higher costs to home ownership.

Until next month.... Nancy

COMING SOON!

Available and Coming Soon

- An Eichler home in Concord—\$1.2M
- Crossings, off market 5 bed home
- Vallejo townhouse—two story

NEED—

- 4 bedroom or larger Crossings home at the end of a court.
- Always have cash investors who want fixers or fast sales.

Our team has helped over 600 families buy or sell homes ! We have a unique strategy to get your home sold. Are you the next family that we can help too?

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Top Selling Crossings Agent since 2006
#1 Agent In Concord, 2014—2019
Five-Star Professional Customer Svc Award 2013—2022

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On a personal note....

Continuing the story of my little guy....When he was born, he had a number of drugs and alcohol in his system. So much so, they had to intubate him and give him morphine to help with the detox. After about a week, they removed the tube and inserted a feeding tube directly into his stomach as he was having trouble taking formula. The morphine drip continued for another 3 weeks to help with the shakes and to ease him off the drugs slower than normal. His little body was curled up so tightly. Hands clenched, feet turned in and every muscle was tight. He was a mess!

I was asked by the social worker and NICU nurse to start coming to visit him, bond with him and get to know him about a week before they were going to release him. When you get to the hospital NICU unit, they walk you through the procedure for washing your hands, getting a gown on and how to handle these little babies. The unit is very quiet and slightly dark which helps the babies that are in there for other serious reasons. The sounds of machines beeping, babies crying and nurses scurrying around is a normal occurrence as each hour passes. Most of these babies are soooo tiny! It really puts things in perspective about how precious life can be.

As I held my little guy for the first time, he was noticeably uncomfortable. The nursing staff in this unit are phenomenal and work with such grace in handling these babies. But they do not have enough hours in the day to hold most of the babies for long periods of time. The staff encouraged me to stay as long as I could each day. Typically it's for hours....these kids need to know that someone is there for them. And I began to notice the difference around day 3. The doctor then began lowering the dose of morphine so that he would titrate off of it by the end of the week.

At home I was preparing for this new baby to join our home. I was already fostering another baby who was six weeks older than my guy. Yes, that sounds crazy...two newborns at the same time...by choice? I was already up all night with one, so I figured what's the difference? Plus, the social worker had informed me that my little guy would probably be adoptable, so I took the chance! Two babies at home, both colicky and both needing a lot of love and attention to catch up on what they missed in utero. Whew! Welcome to foster care and many sleepless nights ahead! More on his story next month.

Vendor Highlight

This past week, I hired a guy named Mark to install new gutters on my home. I am very happy with his work and would like to pass on his info, in case you want to add him to your list too.

Crown Gutters—Mark Owens 925-768-4560 Crown-Gutters.com

He showed up with his truck and machine on time as promised. He actually creates seamless gutters on the street with precision. We discussed downspout placement, matching color to the house paint and away he went. He just put his head down and completed the job and cleaned up after himself as well. Mark will also clean out gutters and install gutter guards as well. Please let him know I referred him to you, and ask for the Nancy Bennett pricing that we worked out. Very happy with this man and his work!

Crossings October Market

Status	Days	Address	List Price	Sold Price	SqFt	Beds	Baths	Garage	Acres	Sale \$/SqFt	Closing Date
ACTIVE	17	4676 N Larwin Ave	\$1,160,000		2167	4	2.5	3	0.17		
ACTIVE	98	4409 Shellbark Court	\$1,498,000		2560	5	3	2	0.13		
PENDING	6	4493 Barberry Ct.	\$1,000,000		1726	3	2	2	0.13		11/6/2023
PPR	11	4476 Barberry Ct.	\$1,000,000		1805	4	2	2	0.12		12/15/2023
SOLD	4	4408 Winterberry Ct	\$1,050,000	\$1,060,000	2886	4	2.5	3	0.13	\$367	10/6/2023
SOLD	5	4404 Weeping Spruce Ct	\$1,049,000	\$1,110,000	1917	4	2	2	0.13	\$579	10/5/2023
SOLD	14	4493 SNOWBERRY CT	\$1,100,000	\$1,150,000	1805	4	2	2	0.13	\$637	10/25/2023
SOLD	0	4499 Deerberry Ct.	\$985,000	\$985,000	1567	4	2	2	0.13	\$629	10/6/2023

*PPR = pending court approval