



IN A Nutshell



No. 212

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

WINTER 2025

Veterans Day

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the City's annual Veterans Day ceremony on November 11, hosted by Mayor Cindy Darling. The Mayor shared heartfelt words about her grandfather's service in World War I.



MAYUMI KIMURA

With a theme of "Honoring All Who Have Served," the event focused on the unity of service men and women. The keynote speaker was Mayumi Kimura, who is the Deputy Secretary of Women Veterans at the California Department of Veterans Affairs. She served in the U.S. Navy as Petty Officer First Class, and founded Warriors Insight Therapy, a post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma-focused practice for veterans.

And as always, the Walnut Creek Concert Band performed patriotic music throughout the event. We hope you will be able to join us next year.

CAPTAIN HIBBS TO BECOME WALNUT CREEK'S CHIEF OF POLICE

The City Manager has selected current Walnut Creek Police Captain Ryan Hibbs to serve as the next Chief of Police. Current Chief Jamie Knox will retire on December 30. Captain Hibbs has more than 23 years of policing experience. He currently serves as Captain of the Administration Division, overseeing professional standards, investigations, dispatch, records and department administration.

Captain Hibbs is excited to begin his new role. "I am deeply honored and humbled to be selected as the next Police Chief for the Walnut Creek Police Department. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Chief Jamie Knox for his nearly five years of dedicated service to both the department and our community," Hibbs said. "I am committed to upholding our department's tradition of integrity and community partnership, strengthening trust with residents, and supporting the women and men who keep Walnut Creek a safe, welcoming, and vibrant place for everyone."

Captain Hibbs will begin as Chief on December 31.



New Synthetic Turf Soccer Fields Set to Open at Heather Farm Park



MEASURE O IN ACTION

Your Measure O Tax Dollars at Work

Artificial turf fields will be open in December at Heather Farm Park to provide an alternative to the grass fields, especially helpful for soccer teams. Sports Fields 1 and 2 at the park will have synthetic turf to provide a high-quality playing surface. This is one of the City's projects funded by Measure O, the half-cent sales tax approved by Walnut Creek voters in 2022.

Measure O also paid for the lights at Tice Ball Field, with LED fixtures placed on the tops of poles to illuminate the field for athletic play.



HEATHER FARM PARK FIELD 2 NEARING COMPLETION. GO TO PAGE 7 TO SEE MORE PHOTOS OF THE 'PITCH' PROJECT

Work continues on the biggest Measure O funded project: the replacement of the Aquatic and Community Centers at Heather Farm Park. The City is moving into Phase 2 of this effort, with the Council having approved awarding of a \$51 million contract to Lathrop Construction to move forward with work there to replace the

aging facilities. The goal is to have the project done in 2027.

Other Measure O funded projects include 7 full time positions added to the Police Department, support for the Sustainability Action Plan, extended library hours and work on behalf of economic development.



HIGHLIGHTS

Check the cable listings for the full schedule of shows, or scan the QR code.



For original programming, community events and more, visit the City's YouTube channel at [YouTube.com/CityofWalnutCreek](https://www.youtube.com/CityofWalnutCreek). You can now also watch City programming on demand. WCTV is on Roku, Amazon Firestick and Apple TV. Search Walnut Creek TV on each site for a full list of programming from the City of Walnut Creek.

Veterans Day Ceremony

The City's annual Veterans Day ceremony took place on Tuesday, November 11, at the Leshner Center for the Arts. Keynote speaker Mayumi Kimura from Cal Vet offered encouraging words and thanks to the veterans and their families.

Measure O at Work

See how your tax dollars from Measure O are being used. There is a video posted of work underway with our artificial turf fields at Heather Farm Park, along with work being done on the lake as part of the construction around what will be the new community center.

E-bikes

There are two e-bike videos, one where the rules are explained, and one that is a guide for parents of kids with e-bikes.

Live! from the Library

Walnut Creek Library Foundation Live! From the Library: Climate and Sustainability Panel. Wildfires, drought, heat waves and storms. The City is already experiencing the impacts of climate change in Contra Costa. Learn what you can do in your homes and communities to take action and be part of the solution.

Messages from the Mayor

Each month, Mayor Cindy Darling provides a video community update, sharing the latest news and information. Find out what's happening in Walnut Creek by checking out the Mayor's Report.

Public Meetings

Catch recent City Council meetings, as well as those of our many commissions, including the Planning, Design Review, Arts, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commissions. Our public meetings are also broadcast live on YouTube, Walnut Creek TV, and on the City's website.

Here's what's happening

ARTS + REC

ARTS AND REC DIRECTOR SELECTED

The City Manager of Walnut Creek has chosen Kris Farro to serve as the new Arts and Recreation Director. The City conducted a nationwide search, and there were more than 125 applicants. She will begin on December 15.

Kris Farro brings more than 25 years of leadership experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, with a background in recreation and public art. Most recently, she served as Director of Community Services for the City of Stockton, where she oversaw the Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library system, the City's Recreation Division, and the Public Art program.

"I am extremely excited to welcome Kris Farro to Walnut Creek. Her experience and enthusiasm will serve our community and organization well. Kris is a strong collaborator and leader, and she will be

a great addition to our team," said City Manager Dan Buckshi.



Kris holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) and a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Administration. She is deeply committed to creating opportunities for connection, learning, and joy in the community and is excited to work alongside Walnut Creek's talented staff and partners to continue that mission.

"I'm honored to join the City of Walnut Creek to build on its strong foundation of arts and recreation," Farro said. "Together, we will continue to celebrate the diverse voices that make this city so special."

Carolyn Jackson has served as interim director since March 2025. She is the department's Assistant Director and also the General Manager for the Leshner Center for the Arts.

BEDFORD GALLERY



Observations of a Still Life

Closes December 14

On view through December 14 *Observations of a Still Life* explores the enduring relevance of the still life. Throughout its long history, the genre has remained a fascination for both artists and audiences, as its resonance lies in its ability to reflect the times. In contemporary culture, we're saturated with information to the point of overload. The artists in this exhibition deftly navigate our chaotic environment, transforming ordinary items into objects of curiosity and, at times, obsession. Often utilizing art historical references to embody the more traditional aspects, contemporary still life artists infuse the picture plane with elements of surprise and cultural reference that warrant reflection and contemplation. Admission is "Pay What You Can" and entrance tickets can be reserved at [BedfordGallery.org](https://www.BedfordGallery.org)



Public Art Walking Tours Return This Spring

The final Public Art Walking Tour of the season took place on Saturday, November 15, but you can always host a self-guided Public Art Walking Tour by downloading a Scavenger Hunt from [BedfordGallery.org](https://www.BedfordGallery.org). Docent-led Public Art Walking Tours will return in the spring.

Coming in January

Viola Frey: Foundations

January 10 - April 5, 2026

HOLIDAY MAGIC WITH ARTS + REC

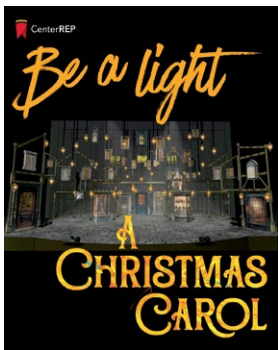
A Christmas Carol

December 10 – 21

Center REP has assembled an award-winning team of artists for this all-new production of the treasured holiday classic. In this lively new adaptation of



A CHRISTMAS CAROL, a young Tim Cratchit makes a wish on a candle, invoking a series of ghostly visitors to the bedside of miserly Ebenezer Scrooge. Celebrated playwright Harrison David Rivers' tender retelling highlights the necessity of caring for the most vulnerable among us while delivering a profound love letter to Dickens' beloved story. Nationally acclaimed director Jared Mezzocchi (Center REP's *FROGGY*) brings Victorian London and its netherworld to vivid life. Don't miss the Bay Area's grandest telling of Dickens' classic.



Your light can spark a lifetime love of theatre! Sponsor a Lantern in Center REP's all new production of *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* and help support Arts Access for students with free and steeply discounted tickets. Your donation of \$1,000 through our non-profit partner Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) will provide vital support for the dozens of lanterns that populate the set of *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*. Your gift will also support Center REP's Student Matinee performances, including our partnership with DRAA for the Arts Access program for Title I schools, reaching students with little or no access to the arts. Visit CenterREP.org to learn more and donate!

Plan ahead for 2026:

Headliners

Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood

January 9

January 9

Peppa Pig: My First Concert

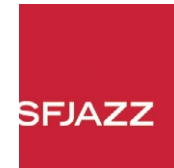
February 14

Ana Gasteyer

February 20

Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

February 28



Diablo Regional Arts Association



SFJAZZ at the Leshler Center series continues:

The Kenny Barron Trio feat. Tyreek McDole

January 10

Madeleine Peyroux

February 21

Sign up for Arts+Rec Classes:

Winter registration open now;
Spring Registration opens 2/18 at 12pm

ARTS + REC

Season 20 of Walnut Creek on Ice

November 21, through January 16, Civic Park

Celebrate 20 years of winter magic in Civic Park, with the area's largest outdoor ice rink and the only ice slide in the Bay Area.

Low-Sensory Skate Night

January 6, 2026, 6 PM – 8 PM

Join us for a low-sensory ice skating session hosted in partnership with the Downtown Walnut Creek Association. The rink will be closed to the public during this time and reserved for individuals with disabilities and their family members. Participants can expect softened lighting, minimized sounds, and sensory tools available for use as needed. Participants can expect softened lighting,



minimized sounds, and sensory tools available for use as needed. Admission is free for individuals with disabilities, please include the number of additional family members attending while registering.



Little's Skate with Community Arts

January 7, 2026 10 AM – 11 AM

Bring the littles to the ice rink for a fun morning with arts and crafts with Center for Community Arts Preschool!

Center for Community Arts' Handcrafted Holiday Sale

December 6 & 7, 10 AM - 4 PM

Kids Shopping Area (10 AM - 3 PM)

Shadelands Art Center, 111 N. Wiget Lane

Shop local artwork from over 60+ student artists and teaching artists. The sale features a vibrant selection of handcrafted ceramics, original paintings, fine art prints, unique jewelry, fiber arts, and festive glass and wood creations. A portion of the proceeds from this event benefit Center for Community Arts, the Clay Arts Guild, and the Community Arts Foundation.



Kids Shopping Area: Thanks to the Clay Arts Guild, this year's Holiday Sale will feature a special Kids Shopping Area - designed just for young shoppers! Proceeds will support ceramic scholarships through our partnership with the Community Arts Foundation and Clay Arts Guild - helping more students discover the joy of clay.

A Walnut Creek Winter Classic Turns 20 — Have You Taken a Spin Yet?

THE HOLIDAY SEASON JUST got cooler — Walnut Creek on Ice is open through January 19, celebrating 20 years of winter fun with skating in downtown’s Civic Park. With the East Bay’s only 90-foot ice slide, and a cozy winter wonderland, Walnut Creek on Ice is the perfect winter memory maker for families and friends.

To celebrate 20 years, you can take advantage of the \$20 for the 20th. Enjoy skating and sliding for only \$20 Monday-Thursday, excluding holiday weeks. Have a little one new to the ice? Bring them to Little’s Skate, for those 5 and under, on Dec. 3, 10, 17, Jan. 7, and 14. Hockey and skating lessons for adults and kids alike are also available all season long.

For an extra-special experience, reserve a personal rink side fire pit. Need more room? Walnut Creek on Ice is the perfect venue for birthday parties, company gatherings, or holiday celebrations.

Visit WalnutCreekOnIce.com to purchase tickets in advance and learn more about this season’s events.



Know the rules with e-bikes

With the holiday season coming up, many kids are likely to be hoping for an e-bike. It is important to know the rules and guidelines for e-bikes, because they are very different from a regular bike. There are 3 classes of e-bikes, as well as e-scooters, e-mopeds, e-motorcycles and e-dirt bikes. Each type of e-bike has its own rules for speed, age and equipment. Find out more at walnutcreekca.gov/ebikes. There is a great deal of information there about how to make the best use of these vehicles, especially as they are becoming more popular.

Citizens Institute

The City is wrapping up another session of the Citizens Institute. Among the topics were an overall look at the City, and in-depth visits with Community and Economic Development, Public Works, Arts + Recreation and the Police Department. The behind the scenes tours are unforgettable. Visit the City’s website and search for Citizens Institute to find out how you can learn more and consider applying next year.

Sister Cities

Since 2012, Walnut Creek Sister Cities International has facilitated an annual Youth

Ambassador Exchange program for 8th grade students with our City’s two sister cities: Noceto, Italy and Siófok, Hungary. The program’s mission is to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation — one individual, one community at a time.

For ten days in fall 2025, 25 Walnut Creek student ambassadors experienced life and culture in each of our sister cities. Each 8th grade ambassador was hosted by a family in their assigned sister city. At the October 21 City Council meeting, the youth ambassadors presented about their recent visits to Italy and Hungary, sharing about their rich cultural experiences, sightseeing, and the incredible warmth and welcome from our sister cities.



AARP Foundation planning on free tax preparation for 2026

Beginning on February 1 through April 15 of next year, AARP will offer free tax preparation services. There are multiple locations throughout the county. Service is provided by IRS certified tax counselors and is offered to people of all ages. No one needs to be an AARP member to take advantage of this program. For Rossmoor residents, appointments are made at the Clubhouse. An additional Walnut Creek location is expected as well, but the location hasn't been set yet. Get more information by calling (925) 725-3199.



International and Independent Films in Walnut Creek

Mountain Shadow Film Society launches its 13th Season in 2026. Selected films follow the international and independent film festival circuit; and are either pre-theatrical or new theatrical releases, otherwise unavailable in our locale. Three screenings are held in the Walnut Creek downtown public library each month. Annual memberships are available now; find out more at mountainshadow.org.

Walnut Creek SIR Branch 116 Seeking New Members

Established in 1983, SIR Branch 116 (formerly Sons in Retirement) has had a strong showing in the Walnut Creek and surrounding communities with a commitment to providing men age 50+ a means to stay actively engaged, socially connected to enhance your lifestyle. SIR Branch 116's members enjoy a wide range of organized events and gatherings, including Golf at Boundary Oak or Diablo Hills, Pickleball at Heather Farms, walks along the canal trails, and other activities. Behind all this is the idea that the secret to staying young and leading fulfilling lives relies upon the social relationships people maintain. Find out more at (925) 322-1160.

Community Service Day



Get Ready for Spring 2026

Join with friends and family for a citywide Spring Spruce-up

SATURDAY APRIL 18th

Registration opens Feb 17



**Projects
for All Ages**
Schools
Parks & Gardens
Non-Profits
Libraries

Fall
Food Drive
Exceeds Goals
21,000+
Meal
Donations

Sign up to get CSD emails at
www.Walnut-Creek.org/Service



Big Changes for Bigbelly Bins



Over the past several months, there have been significant changes to the waste-collecting Bigbelly bins in downtown Walnut Creek. Through a collaboration between Walnut Creek Downtown, RecycleSmart, and the City of Walnut Creek, brand new vinyl art wraps have been added to the waste-collecting stations and a pilot of two 3-stream waste stations with added composting have made their debut on Locust and North Main Street.

Maybe you're wondering, what is the "big" deal with these Bigbellies? While these bins may look unassuming, they hold approximately five times more trash than a normal bin. They do this by using energy from solar panels to compact the waste inside. They also are easy to access, having both handles and foot pedals that can open them. Proper waste sorting into these bins helps reduce trash on the street, keeping our communities and waterways clean.

Artwork for the bins was selected through a Call for Artists in Summer 2024. The colorful new bins show that one person's trash (bin) can be another person's treasure.

When you see changes downtown, do your part by following the waste-sorting information on the bin. Not sure where to put something? Scan the QR code on the bin or go to stopwaste.org to learn more and feel confident in your waste sorting.



Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban Update

WALNUT CREEK'S CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED A PROHIBITION ON the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, with the ban set to take effect on April 1, 2026. With this action, Walnut Creek has joined more than 100 other California cities that have banned or restricted the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. This marks a step towards community resilience and pollution-free air for everyone who lives, works, and plays in Walnut Creek.

Gas-powered leaf blowers produce high levels of pollution. These toxic emissions include carbon monoxide, benzene, and carcinogens that can cause health problems for people nearby, including the person using the blower.

Healthier alternatives include switching to an electric leaf blower or using a rake. Also, if you leave fallen leaves over soil or grass, this can provide habitat for local pollinators, improve soil health, help retain soil moisture, and suppress weeds.

Want to share information about Walnut Creek's gas-powered leaf blower ban with your landscapers, gardeners, or neighbors? Visit walnutcreekca.gov/leafblowers to learn more and access resources in both English and Spanish.

BEFORE THE GRASS IS REMOVED AT FIELD 2



AFTER THE SYNTHETIC TURF IS IN PLACE WORKERS GET FIELD 2 NEAR COMPLETION



'PITCH' PROJECT PICTURES FOR SPORTS FIELD 2 AT HEATHER FARM PARK

These photos show some of the work to transform the old grass soccer pitch to a new synthetic turf



The new artificial turf fields will be open in December at Heather Farm Park. Both Sports Fields 1 and 2 at the park will have synthetic turf. This is one of the City's projects funded by Measure O, the half-cent sales tax approved by Walnut Creek voters in 2022. Other projects underway at Heather Farm Park are also funded by Measure O.

NO MORE GRASS



THE SOCCER PITCH NEARS COMPLETION ON FIELD 2 AT HEATHER FARM PARK



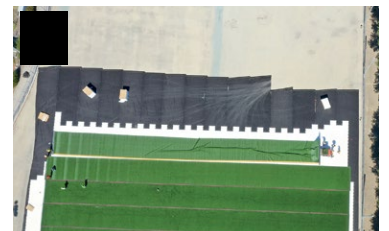
CREWS WORK TO GRADE AND BUILD UP THE BASE SURFACE. DRAINAGE IS IMPORTANT



WORKERS ROLL OUT THE SYNTHETIC TURF ON FIELD 2 AT HEATHER FARM PARK



WITH THE BASE SMOOTH, AND READY...



... THE CREW WORKS ON THE TURF STAGE.



KNOW YOUR WALNUT CREEK PARKS:

Arbolado Park

Nestled in the neighborhoods surrounding Lime Ridge Open Space, Arbolado Park is filled with a variety of modern day amenities and reminders of Walnut Creek's agricultural past.

Before Arbolado Park opened in 1993, it was a walnut orchard, true to the City's namesake. While there are still 8 acres of walnut orchards on site, Arbolado is now known for being one of the City's sportiest parks. With nearly 6 acres of sports fields, Arbolado has facilities for soccer, tennis, and basketball. Arbolado features over 26 acres of parkland, brimming with 10 picnic stations, many with built-in barbecue pits. For those who want to relax, Arbolado features a wide lawn area where people can picnic, gather, and play. Arbolado is a popular park for walking, with paved

loops around the soccer fields, and also as connections to other walking trails. The park provides access to Lime Ridge Open Space and connects to the Ygnacio Canal Trail. Arbolado serves as a staging area for the open space, where friends can meet up and hit the trails together.

Arbolado Park is located at 3699 Arbolado Drive. It is open daily 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after dusk. Recent improvements include resurfaced tennis and basketball courts, reservable shaded picnic stations, additional trees and general landscape improvements. Due to other priorities the potential extension of Arbolado Park amenities is on hold for now.

Walnut Creek's parks and open spaces have something for everyone; in each upcoming edition of the Nutshell, we will spotlight another of our 16 parks.



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The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Betsy Burkhart, 925-943-5895 or burkhart@walnut-creek.org

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