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Important Numbers

Constable:
  Emergency ............................................................... 281-463-6666
  Non-Emergency ......................................................... 281-463-2446
Westlake Fire Dept. ......................................................... 281-492-0560
Crest Management ......................................................... 281-579-0761
Street Lights (CenterPoint) .............................................. 713-207-2222
Poison Control .............................................................. 800-764-7661
Animal Control ............................................................. 281-999-3191

2017 HOA Directors

President James Matthews
Vice-President Victor Treat
Secretary Patrick Hughes
Treasurer Peter Caro
Director at Large Marcia Thomas
Howdy Neighbors,

I sincerely hope you all had a great and joyous holiday season! Winter feels like it has really set in lately and we haven’t even made it to our coldest month yet. If you have not done so, it is important do get your winterization done before the next hard freeze.

In the last few months the board has worked towards Bylaw and Article of Incorporation document changes. A tremendous amount of time was put in by several of our board members and I would like to think them for the time they spent. In regards to the document changes, the process involves a big hurdle of participation from all of the residents. However, this hurdle is not insurmountable. You were mailed a ballot combined with a voting proxy for a vote that will occur this Tuesday January 9, 2018 at 6:30pm at the Westlake Fire Department. I cannot stress enough the importance to have as many homeowners as possible voting for this particular initiative. You may also notice some of your neighbors going door to door collecting the ballot/proxies. 75% of the households in our neighborhood have to agree to change our governing instruments. Please take the time to vote on this measure.

In the coming months the board will be taking on some much needed improvements to the tennis courts as well as getting our pool and pool area in tip top shape for the upcoming season. Fence improvements are in the works weather permitted, to repair the columns and fences on Greenhouse. Unfortunately, this fix was delayed due to information being withheld, working with insurance companies involved, and recent below freezing temperatures.

The board appreciates the opportunity to serve and we look forward to making the necessary changes to help better serve the needs of our association. We welcome any insights or opinions on what we can do to make this community great! Any questions, comments, or concerns are welcome at brhoaprez@gmail.com.

Regards,

Barkers Ridge HOA
Support your Neighborhood’s Small Businesses!

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<td>America Ortiz</td>
<td>Cleaning Services</td>
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Barker’s Ridge Newsletter
Winter 2018

Barker’s Ridge Best Broker

Steven is a highly rated, top producing, multi-million dollar producing Realtor/Broker based in Houston, TX. Over the past 25 years, he has helped hundreds of families buy & sell homes in the Houston Metro Area. He has a 4.99/5.0 Client Review Rating, based on verified reviews per the Houston Association of Realtors. His verified reviews may easily be found through a Google search. As a resident and Block Captain of Barkers Ridge, Steven is fully dedicated to serving the community, in any way possible. His real estate services are unsurpassed whether he represents Sellers, Buyers or Landlords. As a second generation Realtor, with a combined family history of over 60 years of real estate experience, Steven is an expert negotiator and knows how to obtain top dollar for his Seller Clients. Don’t hesitate to contact him directly at 832.236.5200 when you are ready to move and experience the best of the best in real estate services.

Here are a couple of recent verified reviews, which you can find on Steven’s HAR bio page:

“Selling a home is always stressful. Having a knowledgeable and competent realtor makes a stressful situation a pleasant experience. Steve is that realtor. There are many realtors to choose from; choose wisely, I highly recommend Steve.” 5 stars

“Steve is an outstanding agent. He always goes above and beyond the call of duty in everything he does. He is committed, reliable, resourceful, dependable and does whatever it takes to get the job done.” 5 stars

BARKERS RIDGE SALES UPDATE

Month after month of HAR press releases this year indicated an ever appreciating market, with higher median sales prices and swiftly selling Properties. Why not our community? Call Steve for more details 832.236.5200

After extensive research of sales in Barkers Ridge for 2016 and year to date 2017, I can report that the average price of homes has declined across these sections. Here are the stats as of September 4, 2017. Searches are broken down as follows: One story homes with 2 car detached garages: 2016 $89,78 s.f./2017 $87,60 s.f., Two story homes with 2 car detached garages: 2016 $81.20 s.f./2017 $80.38 and two story homes with 2 car attached garages: 2016 $81.52 s.f./2017 $81.02 s.f. Oddly enough, one story homes with attached garages was the only section to show almost a 10% increase in value. Days on the market decreased significantly in 2017 for the most part. Are Sellers in Barkers Ridge leaving money on the table?

Many thanks to the community for their support of the Hurricane Harvey flood victims and the first responders! Barkers Ridge was truly blessed.
I want to be your REALTOR!

Why it's important to interview more than one Realtor

I’m amazed at how many people will hire the first real estate agent that they interview. I mean, you never buy the first car you test drive, order the first item you see on the menu or hire the first job seeker you interview. It’s been a well proven fact that most people will hire the first real estate agent they interview. Agents know this and count on it. I’ve seen it happen countless times during my career. While it provides a great advantage to the “early bird” agent, it rarely benefits the homeowner. You must talk to at least two or three agents and compare each agent’s offerings, experience and expertise.

By interviewing several candidates, you will:
- Get multiple opinions regarding home improvements
- Receive several estimates of what your house could sell for
- Be able to spot agents that will promise anything just to get a listing
- Have multiple marketing packets to compare
- Receive multiple opinions of your area’s current market value
- Be able to compare agent personalities
- Feel more confident that you hired the right agent

Global Advantage Real Estate
3322 Piney Forest Dr.
Houston, TX 77084

Call me today to schedule a free consultation.
832.236.5200

Local Advantage Real Estate
3322 Piney Forest Dr.
Houston, TX 77084

Stage For Success

If you are planning to put your house on the market, it goes without saying that you are hoping to sell your home as quickly as possible and get your asking price. Here are a few staging tips that will help:
- Curb appeal is paramount. Add colorful flowers, paint front doors and faded or rusted hardware and door bells.
- Keep your home sparkling clean. Clean windows in and out, remove or replace old or torn screens. Hire a professional cleaning service and keep everything in it’s place during showings.
- Declutter and remove all non-essential items. Hire a professional to help, if needed.
- Paint neutral colors on the interior and assess the need for exterior repairs or paint.
- Create a lifestyle statement: Generally speaking, you want to play up what your neighborhood or area is known for. Have a house in a quiet, grassy suburb? Hanging a hammock in your backyard and a bench swing on your porch could be the perfect touch.
- Beware pet odors: Plug ins are great.
- Keep property show room ready at all times, with beds made and dishes put away. Open blinds for appointments before you leave the Property. Tumining on lights and some jazz music works great. Keep A/C turned down.

My team offers free consultations for staging tips. If your home is vacant, we have a preferred staging company referral, if needed.
THEY’RE EVERYWHERE
By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

Love them or hate them, they’re everywhere! I’m talking about those funny little critters called squirrels.

As the fall baby season is coming to an end, TWRC Wildlife Center has been inundated with babies. What is normally a very busy time anyway, Hurricane Harvey only added to the numbers. Hundreds of orphans were admitted and will continue to be cared for until they are ready for release.

The Houston area is home to the gray squirrel, the fox squirrel, and the flying squirrel. About 90% of the squirrels in our area are gray squirrels. Most people have never seen a flying squirrel because they are nocturnal. They are very small and their tail acts as a rudder to help guide it in flight. They don’t have wings but rather skin that forms “flaps” that stretch between the “ankle” and “wrist”.

If you’ve ever seen a squirrel eating out of a “squirrel-proof” bird feeder, then you know how intelligent they are. They have also been known to pretend to bury food just to trick other animals. A 2010 study showed that when a squirrel is being watched, they will actually dig a hole, pat it with their front teeth and scrape dirt over it to make it look like they are burying a treasure when, in fact, they are hiding their stash in a pocket near their armpit.

Here are some things you probably don’t know about squirrels:

• A squirrel’s front teeth never stop growing. In the wild, squirrels are constantly gnawing which keeps them short.
• When you see squirrels running and zig-zagging in your yard, they are doing this to avoid capture by a predator.
• Baby squirrels are only about an inch long when they’re born.
• There are 285 species of squirrels and they can be found in every continent except Antarctica and Australia.
• Squirrels have four toes on the front feet and five on the back feet.
• Squirrels will twitch their tails to alert other squirrels to possible danger.
• Squirrels have more than one nest. If one gets destroyed or infested with insects, they always have a back-up.

TWRC Wildlife Center is a 38-year-old non-profit in Houston that rehabilitates injured and orphaned wildlife with the goal of releasing healthy animals back to the wild. If you love wildlife and want to help, go to www.twrcwildlifecenter.org or you can call 713-468-8972.
I was sitting on my back porch last night and heard the familiar “honking” sound I hear every fall—geese flying overhead. I looked up to see an almost perfect V. It instantly filled my mind with several questions. How do they know where they’re going? Why do they fly in a V shape? How far do they fly? Do they stop and rest? I decided to do some research and get some answers and I am sharing them with you. After reading about them, I have a whole new respect for them.

WHY DO BIRDS MIGRATE?
They migrate in search of food and warmer temperatures. Because of climate change and changes in farm practices that makes waste grain more available, the geese aren’t migrating as far south as they used to. Some Canada geese don’t migrate at all anymore. Lack of natural predators is another reason geese may not migrate.

HOW DO GEESE KNOW WHERE THEY’RE GOING?
One tool they use is the earth’s magnetic field. There are small pieces of what's called magnetite found in some birds’ brains. It acts like a compass. They also use the position of the sun and the stars. Birds follow the same migration path every year and use landmarks like rivers, mountains, and valleys as their roadmap.

WHERE DO THEY GO?
They follow the same path every year. There are four routes which are the Atlantic flyway (along the east coast of North America), the Mississippi flyway (named after the river), the Central flyway (along the Rocky Mountains) and the Pacific flyway (west of the Rockies).

Canada geese spend winters in southern Florida and southern North America including the southern United States and part of Mexico.

WHY DO GEESE FLY IN A “V”?
This formation is sometimes call a skein and helps them conserve energy. Each bird flies a little higher than the bird in front of him/her. This reduces the wind resistance. As an example, in a V formation of 25 geese, each bird experiences a reduction in what’s called induced drag. This results in an increase of their range by 71%. Geese rotate taking the lead position since being in front takes the most energy.

HOW FAST CAN GEESE FLY AND HOW LONG DO THEY FLY BEFORE RESTING?
Most articles I read put their cruising speed at between 20 and 30 miles per hour. For long distance flying their estimated speed is 40 miles per hour.

DO MIGRATING BIRDS STOP TO REST
Birds need to take a “pit stop” occasionally to rest and refuel. They stop where there is ample food and water, shelter and with few competitors. They normally will spend a couple of days on the ground before continuing their journey.
MEET IRIS
By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

Let me introduce you to Iris, our 9-year-old Eastern Screech Owl. She makes her home at TWRC Wildlife Center and is a “gal about town”. As one of our Animal Ambassadors, she can often be seen at schools, churches and community events throughout the Houston area.

Iris was just a few days old when a rescuer found her on the ground. Our vet staff could see that one of her eyes wasn’t developing properly. After being examined by a specialist, it was discovered that she was blind in that eye. Knowing that owls can still survive in the wild with only one eye, a dedicated rehabilitator worked with her to prepare her for release. With her eye problem and some other issues that developed, it was decided that it was in the best interest of Iris not to release her and instead “promote” her to an Animal Ambassador.

Iris lives a pretty good life. She is served with frozen mice that have been warmed. She goes to the “beauty shop” every couple of months to get her nails done (actually they’re called talons) and get her beak trimmed and shaped. She is also given a thorough examination to make sure she is healthy. We are grateful to Dr. White at Briarcrest Veterinary Clinic who donates his time to the Center to care for Iris and our other Animal Ambassadors. In the wild, Screech Owls live an average of 12 years but because Iris doesn’t have to face the challenges of life in the wild, she is expected to live well beyond 12 years of age.

Screech owls have a unique call. One source described it as a horse on helium. They let out a descending whinny capped off with a trill. If you come to our Center to visit, she may even “talk” to you. One of her favorite things is to do is to respond to sirens she hears. As soon as she hears a siren, she starts in. Wish we could read her mind to find out why she does that.

Iris and her handlers are available to come and talk to your group, your school, your church or other gatherings. If you would like pricing information, send an email to education@twrcwildlifecenter.org.

TWRC Wildlife Center is a 501(c)(3) organization.
www.twrcwildlifecenter.org
HAPPY NEW YEAR. I won’t get all sappy and personal, but the new year is often a great time to reflect and try to change accordingly. WE are working on just that in this household – best of luck to your changes and challenges in the future.

As for our neighbors, what a kind expression of good neighbors was expressed from Barkers Ridge in 2017. HARVEY presented great opportunities to BE NEIGHBORLY. Many families in BR donated their time, money, homes and other resources to help the Harvey stricken. Commend yourselves. That is part of the reason this neighborhood has grown and remained so desirable. You are fun, respectful, and keep your homes looking great! These are all qualities of good neighbors. I loved the fireworks on Dobbin Stream last night – a big kudos to EVERYONE putting on a show for your neighbors including Veronica Echevarria Fuller and all the others helping her.
Even though the immediate devastation of Harvey seems to be out of sight, its effects will be felt for years with flood map redrawing, area rebuilding and condemnation, new building guidelines and many flooded families will be looking for new homes in our area. I have already sold several to these families in the fourth quarter. More will be out the first and second quarters of 2018. The BIG question is “WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HOME PRICES?” It depends on inventory at the time. I don’t expect to see GIANT price increases, but incremental ones.

The appraisal process seems to keep huge price increases in check. That sounds like a negative to many, and it is sometimes. However, our appraisers out there will tell you that it also keeps us from having a real estate bubble where prices rise too quickly. And, we all know, what goes up, often comes down. Be sure to look at the chart at the end of this article to see the price escalation from our GREAT RECESSION (end of 2008 into 2009).

Neighbors often ask me why their home sells for less than X up the road. Real Estate is NOT an exact science with every 2500 sq.ft. home selling for Y. Condition, appeal, location, marketing, emotion, inventory… are all components of a sales price. IN GENERAL:

A. **FOR TOP $**: Be sure your home is in GREAT CONDITION. This does not mean just a coat of paint. (I know I harp on paint, and it is important.)

1. Your flooring must be updated from builder grade carpet.

2. Your kitchen must be updated.

3. In most cases, your bathrooms need updating.

4. The landscaping must be pretty, maintained, and manicured.

5. Your major components should have been replaced: roof, HVAC, etc.

6. Good location.

7. EXTREMELY CLEAN.

8. **Average Sales $**: Average does not mean ‘original everything.’ It means, ‘average’ for the neighborhood. In BR:

9. Paint in good condition, if not recent.


11. Kitchen isn’t necessarily completely updated, but appliances are not worn out, cabinets look fresh. Maybe with paint. Often solid surface counters.

12. Manicured lawn.

13. 18+ year old roofs likely will not fly. You may get lucky, but usually, they are replaced at this age in BR.

14. Could have a negative location - backing to a road.

15. Still, very clean.

**Lower End Sales $**: I need out of here(!) p
A. **Lower End Sales $:** I need out of here(!) pricing. Likely around 10% or less than our average sales prices, quick sales.

1. Not much updating.

2. Do some cleaning and decluttering – you don’t want this to be the bargain give-a-way.

3. If all of your big-ticket items are original, and the condition is poor, you will be on the low end of even this range.

4. Have your yard mowed and beds weeded somewhat. Put some “pretty” in it where you are able – things that don’t cost much money: staging, power-washing...

Thank you for all of your support and business. I have just closed out 25 YEARS IN MY REAL ESTATE CAREER. I cannot believe it. Be sure to read the last page of the newsletter for some more info on that note.

To find “INDUSTRY PARTNERS,” which are vendors we recommend, go to our company website: [www.SandersFamilyRealEstate.com](http://www.SandersFamilyRealEstate.com).

‘LIKE’ our company Facebook page BELOW to receive updated Real Estate info.

**Sanders Family Real Estate Facebook Page**

**Barkers Ridge Statistics January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017**

*(Total/F = Foreclosures)*

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Your vote is needed as well as your neighbors vote! A letter was sent from Crest Management last month requesting your vote to amend our Articles of Incorporation and our HOA bylaws. We must have 75% of Barkers Ridge homeowners vote YES in order to make this amendment. Over 200 residents signed a petition in June requesting these changes. If everyone who signed the petition would turn in their vote AND encourage one neighbor to do the same we can do this! Neighbor helping neighbor, that is what Barkers Ridge is all about. If our block captains would also help to solicit these votes that would be great. Also, any renters, please encourage your landlords to send in their votes as well.

GIVE A VOTE – GET A VOTE – TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THIS CHANGE!
Thank you, Bakers Ridge. Today, I complete 25 years in business as a realtor/broker. Ron, Austin and I moved into Barkers Ridge in July 1994. WOW! So much has changed. Austin was running around as a three-year-old, and now he is selling real estate! Ron and I are both much older, and wiser – I hope. We have had several family members, friends and pets go to heaven while living here. We have also gained family members, friends and pets.

I can’t imagine what our life would have been without Barkers Ridge – personally or professionally. A big thank you to everyone. There have been ups and downs...all learning experiences. I can’t say I wouldn’t change anything, because I would. My mouth and quick temper caused me some pain in my younger years! Thankfully, I have mellowed and learned.

On the business side – at the end of EVERY YEAR, we can attribute 60% - 70% of our business DIRECTLY to Barkers Ridge – either listing homes or bringing buyers here, referrals from current residents, selling to kids who grew up here, previous residents buying and selling in other parts of Houston/Texas and continuing to refer us to their friends, family and co-workers.

Barkers Ridge has remained a great, “small-town” atmosphere. It is populated with a wonderful, diverse mix of families who care for their community and seek to make it better. There are several great realtors who call Barkers Ridge home; that is a sign of a sweet neighborhood. My heartfelt thank you to everyone in Barkers Ridge for your business, competition, friendship and for being a good neighbor. Without you, no telling where we would be in our lives. Then, and now!

...d. Diane Sanders 😊

...thank you for your business and guidance--
P.S. Ron is doing great!