

It's natural for some people to want to get more involved in a new community when they first move in. Unfortunately, not everyone has the time to join the executive or to attend community league meetings. However, a convenient way to contribute is through the community newsletter.

More personal and less expensive than a newspaper, a community newsletter has the potential to be a great forum. Indeed, a highly specific forum to discuss ideas and decisions that impact the community in some way. More generally, it can be used as a way to understand the community a bit better and to document the history of how it is evolving.

It's a great opportunity for people to reach out and explore where they live and the history of what makes their community what it is. The newsletter is an historical document of sorts and by sharing our insights and opinions we make that history much richer.

Let me tell you a bit about our house and our experience in our community.

Like other houses on the block, our house was built in 1954. We bought it during a seller's market right when prices were at their apex. The previous owners, an affable couple in their eighties, bought the house in the fifties off of a man who owned it briefly after it was apparently used as a show home.

The couple made home-made wine, and from what I could tell they enjoyed it. I mean this with the utmost respect, but whenever we would come over to have another look at the place – and we did a few times because this was our first big purchase as a couple - each had a small glass of wine on the go. Considering how spry the husband was when he showed me around the house maybe a glass a day is the secret to vitality. At any rate, they told us they enjoyed entertaining – excellent, I thought to myself, this is a tradition I can easily continue as my wife and I enjoy doing the same thing.

Prior to buying the house we looked at a number of others, but we kept coming back to this one. The community was established, well maintained and despite the fifties era décor in the house, the previous owners had managed to cultivate a home that was imbued with a warmth and lived-in-feel that we had yet to experience in our extensive search for a home.

Even though we weren't expected to take possession for a few months, on the night that our offer was accepted my wife and I joined the old couple for an official welcome-to-the-house, treat-her-well sort of symbolic transition. It was a brief event, one that involved them asking if they could leave a few things behind after they moved. Of course, we said. Although, there was no wine involved we walked away with a warm feeling confident that we'd made the right choice. This would be our new home.

When we finally took possession we found the few things the couple left behind: a fully furnished third bedroom replete with impossible to peel wallpaper emblazoned with giant flowers and dusty rose walls; a completely furnished basement with a shuffle board printed on the linoleum, an ancient stereo system, an acoustic guitar and a banjo, a stack of records and a giant picture of the husband as a slightly younger man tending to his guests behind the bar, which hung, appropriately enough, behind the bar for a year after we moved in.

Talk about the history! We couldn't be happier.

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