Sorry Money Magazine

Even if you are a “gold digger,” Milpitas may not exactly be the place to grab a rich single

Money Magazine’s editors must live a rich fantasy life. Just sit by the computer and let those census statistics lead you to the best 25 cities in which to do just about anything your heart desires. The top 25 cities where the big money is. The top 25 for the best home deals. Best schools. Safest streets. Charm. Money mag has the list for you.

Milpitas may have actually been caught unaware by the fact that it was such a Mecca for rich singles, especially male. Most of our town fathers and mothers place a primary emphasis on Milpitas as a family-oriented city. But that just goes to show how easy it is to live in the past.

The prior decade in Milpitas has pretty much said goodbye to the traditional free-standing single-family home with its pretty lawn in front and barbecue in the spacious back yard. Many thousands of apartments and tiny condos now fill our skyline. These are occupied mainly by single men and women who have reasonably good jobs in Silicon Valley.

The census data shows that more than 30 percent of the 67,503 local population is single. That combined with the community-wide household income average of $113,735 puts Milpitas high up the list under the criteria chosen by Money’s editors. It would appear that the income number does include “households” which in many cases represents two earners. Not that the editors mind a few facts that get in the way.

The odd choice of economic model for this “survey” obviously shows its skew in favor of Santa Clara County cities since Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Santa Clara and San Jose were also on the list for the same reason as Milpitas.

The Money editors also like the fact that Ed Levin park, east of Milpitas, provides great hang gliding and the city has a favorable ratio of parkland to residents. What that will do for a “gold digger” to lure a rich single is a bit unclear.

Money editors, should they ever get to Milpitas, should definitely get over to Dave and Buster’s at the Great Mall. It is the liveliest of our regular after-dark venues and one of few spots that don’t roll up by 8 p.m. It is interesting to note that Bay Area singles organizations that arrange parties here seem to favor Milpitas many hotels for their ample facilities and the swinging crowds they draw. So maybe the Money editors, if they arrive on the right night with the right line, might get some digits after all.

2010 A second, larger Home Depot for Milpitas has been turned down by the planning commission but the company vows to appeal to the city council. The staff recommended approval but commission members were reflecting complaints by neighbors at the existing Home Depot on Landess Avenue. The second Home Depot would be on an outlying parcel of the Great Mall.

Only Yesterday

These were the stories that were making headlines in the pages of the Milpitas Post this fifth week of July, 50, 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago.

1970 Milpitas planning commissioners are suggesting that hillside subdivisions should have a minimum of two acres per three homes. Present rules call for a total of two per acre.

1980 Hard times in the auto industry have virtually closed the Milpitas Ford plant. Only 100 staff members are still on duty. Across the nation, more than 15,000 auto workers have been laid off.

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Dave Cortese represents Milpitas, Berryessa and North San Jose on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

Keep your family safe from fires

Flames leaping off firewood in a barbecue offer a relaxing atmosphere in the back yard or on a camping trip. Unfortunately, fire can too often lead to sadness and destruction. Whether it is a cigarette butt that is dropped and destroys homes and habitat or a wildfire started by lightning that destroys a community, fire can have a devastating effect. Fortunately there are things that you can do to minimize your risk of loss due to fire.

Here at the county, the Department of Agriculture runs the weed abatement program that aims to reduce the risk of fires spreading across multiple properties. In rural areas, grass fires spread extremely fast. This program educates residents on the importance of maintaining firebreaks along roads and property lines and around buildings. These firebreaks are typically suggested to be 10 feet wide on either side of roads and 30 feet wide along property lines and around buildings. By keeping weeds down and removing other flammable materials from firebreaks, you can dramatically slow or stop the progress of a grassfire, allowing time for the fire department to extinguish it.

Likewise, in heavily wooded areas such as the Santa Cruz Mountains, it is strongly recommended and often required by the state to clear flammable and dry brush around your home to a depth of 30 feet. Also, to a distance of 70 feet beyond that, it is recommended to thin out plants, shrubs and trees, to reduce the spread of fires. This creates a 100-foot defensible space around your home. The defensible space slows a wildfire as well as provides a safe location for firefighters to help protect your home from burning.

Even if you live in the city, these guidelines can help to protect your home if a neighbor’s house catches on fire. Often embers will travel in the smoke and will fall onto other properties. If there are dry shrubs next to your house, they can catch fire and spread it to your home. And by keeping tree branches at least 10 feet away from your chimney, it reduces the chances that the relaxing fire in your fireplace will ignite the tree that can spread back to your house.

Speaking of your fireplace, if you plan to use it, it is important to have it inspected regularly. How often depends on numerous factors including how often you burn a fire, but it is generally recommended to have it inspected every year. This will reduce your risk of a chimney fire or chimney failure which can result in fire and damage to your home.

Common sense will go a long way toward preventing fires in your home. For example, do not leave candles or fireplaces unattended and ensure that all embers are completely extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house. Also, keep matches, lighters and chemicals out of reach of children or in a locked cabinet.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that the risk of fires can be reduced but cannot be completely eliminated. Therefore, it is vital to prepare yourself and your family to be able to safely escape in the event of a fire. First, you need to be warned of a fire. Smoke detectors are a cheap investment when you think about how they can save your life by giving you time to escape. Also keep in mind that fresh batteries need to be installed in order to function properly.

Fire extinguishers are important in high-risk areas such as the kitchen and garage, as well as on every floor. Last but not least is to have a fire escape plan and to regularly practice it with your family. By routinely practicing the plan, in the moment of panic, you and your loved ones will be more likely to remember what to do to safely escape. These are just a few tips to keep your family safe from the threat of fire. If you would like to learn more, please visit my website at www.supervisor-cortese.org. If there is something specific you would like to know about fires or any other topic, please contact me at 299-5030 or dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org.

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Target, a major chain outlet or leaving the house. Also, do not leave candles or fireplaces unattended or stop the progress of a grassfire, allowing time for the fire department to extinguish it.

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