

DANA Newsletter

Diamond A Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 75
Sonoma, CA 95476

Summer 2015

President's Message

It has been years since the Association has published a newsletter, and the Board thinks the time is right to start again. While we now have other forms of communication available (such as email and our great Diamond A website), a newsletter can serve as a consolidation of topics of interest to our membership. We will try to keep it informative and responsive to membership perspectives. So please let us know of any suggestions you want to make.

Current Topics

One of the items we want to include is a summary of the issues that the board may be working on, or which might be otherwise of import to the membership. At this writing at least three topics should be of interest:

Emergency Preparedness:

A committee has been established and is working diligently to formalize plans for the community to respond to emergencies. You may soon be asked to provide information for a database of properties/residents so that we can provide safety for, and direction to, residents during any emergency. Please respond as you feel appropriate.

DANA membership expansion

The broader Diamond A area has three sets of properties which were created from the original property--Diamond A Estates, Diamond A Ranches, and those not part of the Estates or Ranches. But the DANA today does not provide for owners or residents from all those properties to become DANA members. As we all know, and as emergency preparedness highlights, we are all interdependent in many ways (like having only one access road). The board is looking at the advisability of allowing membership expansion to the larger Diamond A community.

Vacation Rentals

This is a topic of great discussion not only in Diamond A, but in the county as well. The board is communicating with members (both for and against), and the county, to make Diamond A perspectives known on this issue. We will be providing updates via email and the website as information changes.

John Walsh

President, Diamond A Neighborhood Association

Treasurer's Message

Our thanks to all who have paid their 2015 membership dues. Your support allows the association to better serve the Diamond A community. As a DANA member, your dues will go towards:

- Two hill warming parties for current and new residents
- Online access to the DANA telephone directory (and a hard copy for residents without email addresses)
- Maintaining the web site: www.diamondasonoma.com
- Maintaining the Neighborhood Watch & Emergency Programs
- Diamond A DANA Google Group email system
- Maintenance of a large medical kit in Rec Clubhouse for disasters
- Maintaining the Critical Issues resident email list
- Architecture Review Committee administration: to encourage new projects to be in conformance with County & Diamond A standards
- Keeping the county apprised of the conditions of our roads & grounds
- The cost of running a board

If you have not done so, please send your dues (\$40) to:

Diamond A Neighborhood Association
PO Box 75
Sonoma, CA 95476

If you are unsure about the status of your membership, please shoot me an email at 4deeyoung@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks,
Dee Young
Treasurer, Diamond A Neighborhood Association

Diamond A Trail Blazer Committee **by Dee Young**

We thank you for your generous donations that have so far provided some funds needed to clear our easements. We are still in need of funding to complete this year's easement clearings!

Our trails are important not only for recreation, they also create natural firebreaks, provide passage for wildlife and add value to your property. The work never ends, so if you would like to contribute, we would greatly appreciate any amount. Please make checks payable to Dee Young, C/O Diamond A Trail Blazers, 19320 Kenleigh Drive, Sonoma, CA 95476.

Look for the Barn Party invitation this summer. It will be held at the Lyon's Barn on September 19, 2015: SAVE THE DATE! This is an event that should not be missed. Proceeds from this event go to yearly easement maintenance such as the removal of rocks, trees and general debris that Mother Nature decides to put into the path after the winter season.

News from the IT Department **by Bruce Hoadley**

Dee Young (4deeyoung@sbcglobal.net) has become the manager of the Diamond A Information Technology (IT) Department. The systems covered include: (1) Database; (2) Directory; (3) Gmail Account; and (4) Google Email Group. Bruce Hoadley will still manage the Web Site, but a reorganization of that function is in the wind. The web site diamondasonoma.com is under continual development. Some recent additions include: (1) A navigation tab called "Living Here," which contains everything you need to know about living in Diamond A – with emphasis on the CC&Rs; (2) Water Company Board Postings; and (3) Many more scenic and wildlife photos.

Emergency Preparedness **by Barry Reder**

Do you know what you would do if a fire was coming up the hill and Grove Street was closed? Are you prepared to subsist if an earthquake or landslide were to seal off Grove Street for a couple of weeks?

As Diamond A residents we love the serenity and beauty of our wonderful setting. But one price we pay is the limited access we have from our one-way-in/one-way-out location. Any situation that effectively cuts off Grove Street – whether a fire sweeping through the neighborhood (or properties below us), an insurmountable landslide, or significant destruction from an earthquake – will affect all of us equally.

The best way to combat the effects of a natural disaster is *preparation* (remember fire drills in school?) – having the right supplies, equipment, information, and networks to cope with emergency situations within our community. During this past year, the Diamond A Neighborhood Association (DANA) began putting together plans and volunteers to form an initial DANA EP (Emergency Preparedness) committee, with the basic goal of helping Diamond A residents be ready and able to respond for their own well being—and that of their neighbors—in the event of an emergency.

The DANA EP initiative got its start this spring at the association's Annual Meeting as questions were raised by several residents concerning access/egress in the event of an emergency. Several interested DANA volunteers began meeting to lay the groundwork for a community-wide emergency preparedness system that would encourage Diamond A residents to help themselves and their neighbors in an emergency. In early May this EP initiative was officially launched in an e-mail message from DANA president, John Walsh; by the end of June, the volunteer group expects to begin contacting residents for ideas, feedback and information sharing.

What's involved in creating and maintaining an effective EP system – and what does the DANA EP initiative look forward to accomplishing in the coming months? The volunteer committee's initial efforts will be to orient residents, gather preparedness information, and get ideas from residents. To aid this effort, the committee has mapped Diamond A into seven zones and has assigned 'zone captains' responsible for contacting residents within each one.

The DANA EP zone captains will be contacting the residents in their respective zones during late June and July, providing each with a questionnaire designed to collect preparedness information for supporting a community response in the event of an emergency. With exception of names and addresses, all information will be 'non-personal', and all will remain confidential and be used only in connection with emergency preparedness and response.

Our EP volunteers have been carefully weighing how DANA can best provide residents with useful support while respecting privacy. The group is working to be a facilitator / communicator, not a dictator – the goal is to help, assist, inform, and communicate. As the year progresses, the group has plans for educational events, contact and resource lists, and other activities aimed at giving residents all the tools and knowledge they need to be prepared to help themselves and their neighbors.

What can you do to support Emergency Preparedness in Diamond A? First, be on the lookout for a 'zone captain' volunteer who will contact you within the next few weeks. We want to fill you in and answer all questions. Second, we want your ideas – many Diamond A residents have been individually pro-active in being ready for emergencies, and can really contribute their knowledge to us all. Finally, please participate in the DANA EP effort, whether as a volunteer or as a neighbor – we need your support!

DANA Annual Meeting 2015 **by Robin Layton**

The DANA Board held its annual meeting at the Diamond A Recreation Center on Sunday, February 22nd from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm. In what has become an annual tradition (it is the 2nd year!), the Board meeting was preceded by a brunch for all DANA members including quiche, fruit, pastries and Mimosas and Bloody Marys.

Tom Jones, Bruce Hoadley, Dee Young, Bob Kraynak and John Walker were elected to the Board, joining John Walsh, Marcie Waldron, Liz Treacy and Robin Layton who are in the 2nd year of their 2-year terms. Outgoing Board members Jack Nisson, Susie Merrill and Kevin Wilson were thanked for their service.

Amendments to the by-laws, principally naming the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) as the only DANA standing committee (with the ability to form standing and ad hoc committees as necessary), were unanimously approved. Other highlights of the meeting included participation opportunities for residents on the Trails, Emergency Preparedness and Communications ad hoc committees, transfer of the leadership of the DANA IT Department from founder Bruce Hoadley to Dee Young, and information on Sonoma County community outreach on vacation rentals (in this regard, the ARC has been in touch with County officials to provide them with copies of the Diamond A CC&Rs). The meeting ended with special thanks to Susie Merrill and Marcie Waldron for all of their great work on Hill Warming parties and an invitation from the new Hill Warming team (Judith Walsh and Robin Layton) to look for a spring Hill Warming save the date soon.

Spring Hill Warming Party at Jon and Linda Gates' Home A Rousing Success! **by Robin Layton**

When I was in college in South Carolina many years ago, the University president's wife, a charming Southern belle, would always enter our college parties happily declaring, "Isn't this a wonderful party? Aren't we having a wonderful time?" We always wondered how she knew as she had just stepped in the door!

That said, it was unanimously concluded that the Hill Warming party at Jon and Linda Gates lovely home perched on top of the mountain *was* a wonderful party and that we had a wonderful time. The Gates' home is almost at the end of the Grove Extension and has amazing views of Sonoma, the East & North Bay, and San Francisco.

The Hill Warming Committee provided tasty hors d'oeuvres and Dennis Przbycien outdid himself as sommelier and bartender. Kudos go to Tia Pierce, Olga Przbycien, David Cain, Tom Jones, Dave Layton and John Walsh for all of their assistance in set up and clean up. Leo Merle provided directional signs for the journey up the hill, and Lynette Lyon provided shuttle rides for interested partygoers from the Diamond A Rec Center. DANA Treasurer Dee Young checked in the revelers and collected dues (n.b., it's not too late to pay your 2015 \$40 annual dues). Hill Warming co-chairs Judith Walsh and Robin Layton have already begun planning for this fall's Hill Warming Party – watch your email for a save the date!

Meet Your Neighbor Marcie Waldron
by Barry Reder



From time to time, the DANA Newsletter will contain profiles of Diamond A neighbors. There are lots of interesting stories to tell. These are just two.

Ok, campers. Pop quiz time:

Is an alcaldesa (a) a statue found in the Louvre, (b) a shaggy Nepalese hunting dog or (c) an extraordinary Diamond A neighbor whose joy comes from helping people? If you guessed (c), you guessed right. The current alcaldesa—the honorary mayor of Sonoma—is Marcie Waldron, 63, a resident of Deer Park Drive which most of us pass on the way up the hill. Being alcaldesa is an honor that comes without any rights or responsibilities—an honor that includes a seat in a convertible in the 4th of July parade. She was selected because of her many contributions to the community during the past 15 years. During that time Marcie has been a member or chairman of many non-profit boards, including Sonoma Community Center, Vintage House, Willmar, Kiwanis and Sierra Donor Services.

Marcie lives in a lovely shingled home with her husband Dave and two cats. When they married 15 years ago after each had been divorced, they didn't have to check on any references—Dave

was a longtime friend of Marcie's brother. She had graduated from San Diego State with a degree in recreation administration and got her MA there in art therapy. That education gave her a chance to be in beautiful winter and summer resort environments for quite a few years before settling down.

Marcie is using her alcaldesa position to draw attention to her passion—organ donation. She would like everyone to get a pink donor dot by signing up with donateLIFEcalifornia.org. Her goal is 1000 new pink dot donors in Sonoma during her reign.

We caught up with Marcie and asked her a bunch of questions, which are set forth below with her answers:

What do you like about Sonoma: *How nice the people are and the beautiful scenery. (Ed. Note: I think she means the phenomenal view from her house.)*

Favorite Sonoma Events: *Community Center's 4th of July, La Luz Noche and Red and White Ball.*

Beatles or Stones: *Beatles.*

Winter or Summer: *Summer*

Role Models You've admired: *Julia Morgan—she made a difference in the world.*

Guilty Pleasures: *Cheese and wine.*

Pet Peeve: *Packaging that is hard to open.*

Biggest Disappointment: *Not able to drive any more.*

Giants or Warriors: *Giants.*

Safeway, Sonoma Market or Whole Foods: *Sonoma Market*

Favorite Service Vendor: *Waldron Landscaping (Ed. Note: No surprise there).*

Happiest Decade: *After college, getting to live in such beautiful places.*

Happiest Time: *After her life saving kidney transplant.*

Most Meaningful Mentor: *Her father, who helped her learn sincerity and kindness*

Meet Your Neighbor Whitney Evans
by Barry Reder



Whitney Evans' email signature tells it all—Whitney Evans, Volunteer. Because he has volunteered so often and so effectively, Whit was the 2012 alcalde—honorary mayor of Sonoma.

Whit, 78, and Jeanette, his wife and friend of 56 years, live on Grove Street in a lovely tree-shaded home with a killer view which can be enjoyed both from the small putting green and the pool that adorn the deck.

Whit grew up in Cleveland, went to prep school and college in the East, and, at age 50, decided it was time to repot. So Whit and Jeanette, who had visited the Sonoma area as a guest of his brother who was a grape grower, relocated to the bustling Santa Clara Valley, where he established a business helping people live healthy lives, generally on doctors' orders. When it came time to gear down after four years in the not-very-friendly Santa Clara Valley, they followed their dream to Sonoma where, for a time, Whit provided fund raising services to non-profits and then finally hung it up to become...a volunteer. He particularly remembers the warm welcome to Diamond A from our unofficial mayors, Wayne and Celia Schake. He has helped many local non-profits in many ways; among those are the Boys & Girls Club, the Ed Fund and Rotary. In his spare time, when

not on the golf course, Whit has started to write a book about the pioneering venture capitalists in the early years of this country.

We sat in the shade one summer morning recently and I asked Whit a bunch of questions, which are set forth below with his answers:

What do you like about Sonoma: *The people, definitely the people...and, of course, the views.*

Favorite Sonoma Events: *Fourth of July Parade, theater at the Community Center, Transcendence and the Red and White Ball.*

What would make Sonoma even better: *An improved relationship between the Anglo and Hispanic communities.*

Winter or Summer: *Autumn (Ed. Note: Whit marches to the beat of his own drummer)*

Role Models: *His mom (who Whit remembers driving around in her Red Cross uniform during WW II) for community service and his dad for perseverance and loyalty to family*

Favorite teacher: *Jack Pigeon, high school swimming coach who taught Whit about leadership and perseverance, and Whit's dad.*

Pet Peeve: *People who take from society and don't give back.*

Biggest Disappointment: *When some venture capital investments failed.*

Giants or Warriors: *The Cleveland Cavaliers, his hometown team. (Ed. Note: again, Whit is his own man)*

Safeway, Sonoma Market or Whole Foods: *Sonoma Market*

Favorite Service Vendor: *There are so many, but Diana Booker Spry is especially patient and helpful on computer matters.*

Happiest Decade: *This one. (Ed. Note: Very recently Whit shot his age at the golf course—that's a big deal in certain circles.)*

Red or White: *It used to be red, now it's white.*

Toughest Decision: *Uprooting the family to move to California.*

Proudest Accomplishment: *Being happily married for 56 years & raising three sons who are wonderful dads themselves.*