

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

DIABLO COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
PUBLISHED BY THE DIABLO PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2025



Last Days of Summer...

Community volunteers met this past week to plan some tricks & treats for the rest of the year. Our events and holiday décor at the entrances and post office are intended to build goodwill and connection in our community. It's all made possible by your annual contributions to the Diablo Property Owners' Association.

We could use some additional helpers... specifically help decorating the post office for the holidays, coordinating a Dog Walk event, coordinating new resident welcomes, and this newsletter. If you would like to get involved, email us at membership@diablopoo.org.

Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed content for this issue. If you have suggestion for our next newsletter, please reach out!

Leslie Keane, *President*, Diablo Property Owners' Assoc.

Upcoming Events

PATRIOTIC FLAG INSTALLATIONS

LABOR DAY

9/11

VETERANS DAY

DIABLO HISTORY TOUR
SUNDAY, SEPT 14 10-1:30PM

HALLOWEEN SOCIAL
FRIDAY, OCT 31 6-9PM

HOLIDAY SOCIAL
TUESDAY, DEC 2 6-8PM



Summer Fun in Diablo





Got Yellow Jackets?

BY JULIE NEJEDLY

Have you seen Yellowjackets in your yard this summer? They are beneficial insects that eat garden pests and pollinate crops through daily foraging. You may see the foragers in and around your lawn or garden. If left undisturbed, Yellowjackets normally should not be a problem and will eventually go away. However, these wasps will defend their nest if they sense a threat to the colony. Nests are found in the ground, normally in dry areas. When a nest is disturbed, Yellowjackets can inflict multiple stings that are painful and may be life threatening for adults, children, and pets. If you see Yellowjackets, you or your neighbors may have a nest nearby.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District provides yellow jacket service to property owners in Contra Costa County. A District employee will respond within 5 business days, schedule a time to come and inspect your yard, and treat the nest. Take pictures of the Yellowjackets and/or any suspected nest areas, so you can text them when they call you back and guide them. In the meantime, DO NOT disturb the nest or swat the insects with your hands. Talk to your neighbors to find out if others are seeing Yellowjackets too so the nest location(s) can be pinpointed. It takes a village!



**Contra Costa
Mosquito & Vector
Control District**

(925) 685-9301

ContraCostaMosquito.com

Diablo Community Services District Board

Matt Cox, *President &
Roads Commissioner*
mcox@diablocsd.org

Greg Lorenz, *Vice President
& Finance Commissioner*
glorenz@diablocsd.org

Jerry Slavonia, *Security Commissioner*
jslavonia@diablocsd.org

Phil Luecht, *Director at Large*
pleucht@diablocsd.org

Kathy Torru, *General Manager*
generalmanager@diablocsd.org

Zachary Scalzo, *Legal Counsel*
Best, Best & Krieger, LLP

NOTICE OF VACANCY ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Please take notice that a vacancy exists on the Board of Directors of the DCSD. Residents of Diablo interested in appointment to fill that vacancy should send notice of interest to serve as Director to generalmanager@diablocsd.org.

DEADLINE: 9/1/25

Applicants must be at least 18 yrs+, a registered voter, a resident of Diablo, and meet the qualifications of a Director of a public agency as provided by California Law. Include the following info:

- Full name as it appears on the county voter registration
- Diablo property address & PO Box #
- Telephone number & Email address
- # of years as Diablo resident & property owner or renter
- Previous/current involvement in the Diablo community

Selection will be made at the September 8, 2025 DCSD Board Meeting.

Back To School



Diablo Community Services District News

The Diablo Community Services District (DCSD) is a California Special District governed by a 5-member Board of Directors elected by Diablo residents. The DCSD is responsible for providing security services to residents, maintaining and improving roads, culverts, and bridges within Diablo, and preserving Kay's Trail. Visit diablocsd.org for detailed information.



Wildfire Season is Here... Are You Ready?

The vegetation fire on Upper Alameda Diablo in June was a stark reminder of our community's vulnerability to wildfire and the importance of being prepared. Below are key steps every resident can take to stay ready and informed.



CREATE A DEFENSIBLE SPACE AROUND YOUR HOME

- Remove plants that contain resins, oils, or waxes, and eliminate wood mulch within 5 feet of your home.
- Trim tree branches away from rooftops and remove lower branches within 6 feet of the ground.
- Clear weeds, dead debris, and other combustible material to create a minimum 15-foot buffer from structures on your property.

KEEP DIABLO'S ROADS CLEAR FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES

- Cut back overhanging tree branches to provide a minimum of 13.5 feet of vertical clearance over the road.
- Remove vegetation, dry grasses, and duff within 3 feet of the street edge to keep evacuation routes accessible.

SIGN UP FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

- **Nixle:** Used by local law enforcement. Sign up at nixle.com or text your ZIP code to 888777.
- **Community Warning System (CWS):** Contra Costa County's all-hazard public alert system. Register your cell phone at cwsalerts.com and save 925-655-0195 as a contact.
- **PulsePoint:** A mobile app from the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District that shares real-time 911 call data. Download the PulsePoint app and enable vegetation fire alerts.

PREPARE FOR EVACUATION

- Identify 2-3 evacuation routes in case your primary path is blocked. [Click here for the Diablo evacuation plan](#)
- Create a "Go Bag" of essentials. [Click here for a packing guide](#)
- If an evacuation is likely, consider opening your front gate for emergency vehicle access.
- Leave early when initial alerts are received—don't wait for a mandatory evacuation order.
- Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours, as first responders may not be able to reach everyone right away. [Visit Be Ready SRV for more tips](#)

DCSD FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

At the June 10 meeting, the DCSD Board of Directors adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget. A copy of the budget can be viewed and downloaded [here](#), and on the DCSD's website under the Documents Tab. For questions, contact General Manager Kathy Torru at generalmanager@diablocsd.org.

DCSD BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The DCSD meets on the second Monday of every month at 6:00 pm at Diablo Country Club. Visit diablocsd.org for meeting agendas, location, minutes, financials, history and information on the Diablo Municipal Advisory Council.

Meet Diablo's New Sheriff Deputy

BY DEPUTY SHERIFF CANDACE KUKLA



My name is Deputy Sheriff Candace Kukla, and I'm honored to serve as Diablo's new deputy. I've been in the community for just over a month and have already enjoyed meeting many of you around town. Please feel free to wave as I drive by in the Diablo patrol vehicle—or reach out by phone or email if you have any questions, concerns, or would just like to introduce yourself. You can reach me at (925) 655-7155 or ckukl001@so.cccounty.us.

A bit about me: I've been a sworn Deputy with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office since May 2018. After completing my training, I was assigned to the Martinez Detention Facility, where I focused on data analysis related to recidivism. In 2023, I was honored to be named the Martinez Detention Division's Deputy of the Year for my investigative work, attention to detail, and analytical skills. In 2024, I transitioned to the Patrol Division, where I've served in Bay Point, North Richmond, El Sobrante, Rodeo, San Pablo, and Crockett.

Over the past month in Diablo, I've enjoyed connecting with residents and learning about the community's values and priorities. Looking ahead, my goals are to foster trust through community engagement, maintain a visible presence to deter crime, respond quickly to emergencies, and use education and technology to support public safety. Diablo is a truly special place, and I'm thrilled to be part of it.

SAFETY TIPS TO HELP PROTECT YOUR HOME

The Sheriff's Department is actively investigating the recent burglaries and has increased patrols throughout Diablo. The incidents appear to follow a pattern familiar to law enforcement: suspects break a rear window/glass door, proceed directly to the primary bedroom and bathroom, and gather valuables such as jewelry, designer handbags, and firearms. In and out in under 30 minutes. Here are some helpful steps to keep your home secure:

- **Install security cameras and an alarm system**—and activate them whenever you leave the house, even for short outings.
- **Use padlocks** on backyard gates to limit easy access.
- **Request a vacation house check**—a Sheriff's deputy will walk your property while you're away and check the exterior of your residence to ensure your doors and windows have not been tampered with. To schedule this service, call the non-emergency line at (925) 646-2441.
- **Secure valuables** in a bolted-down safe—a loose safe can be removed during a burglary.
- **Stay alert and connected** with your neighbors—if you observe suspicious activity, call the non-emergency line at (925) 646-2442, or dial 911 in an emergency.

E-BIKES, E-SCOOTERS, AND GOLF CARTS: KNOW THE RULES

Every summer, we see a rise in e-bike and e-scooter use in Diablo—and this year is no different. These newer models are faster and more powerful, making it essential for parents to understand the laws that govern their use. Golf carts are also increasingly popular. Please make sure your child is using the correct vehicle for their age and license status.

- **E-Bikes:** No minimum age (except Class 3); all minors must wear helmets.
- **E-Scooters:** Operators must have a driver's license or permit; helmets are required for those under 18.
- **Golf Carts:** Drivers must have a driver's license to operate on Diablo's roads.
- **All Vehicles:** Must obey posted speed limits and stop signs.

These laws are in place to protect our children from serious injury. Please help us keep your child—and others—safe by ensuring they ride responsibly and within the law.



Diablo's Railroad Roots

BY DAVID MACKESY, DIABLO HISTORIAN

On the rain-washed slopes of Mount Diablo, in the spring of 1877, a prime portion of California's future was changing hands. Back then, Diablo was called *The Railroad Ranch*. Sixteen hundred rolling acres, stitched across the western base of the mountain, had been in the private domain of four men who ruled the rails across the American West: Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and Collis P. Huntington—the Associates, also known as *The Big Four*. They had stitched iron rails into the body of the continent, run gold and people westward to San Francisco, and leveraged their wealth into land and industry across the burgeoning state.

Yet this land deal was different. Standing at the transaction's center, General David D. Colton, Colton was a Californian of reputation and ambition: a miner, railroad officer, and military man, with a knack for rising to meet opportunity. He was the newest partner of *The Associates*, and over the past two years, the business manager for the property.

The ranch had appeal—not just for its beauty, but because it represented the tangible fruits of California's railroad boom. But the sale was to be no ordinary cash transaction. Colton came with something else: 168 shares in the Rocky Mountain Coal and Iron Company. To the Associates, this was not just paper—these shares controlled a portion of the coal reserves in the high country of Wyoming, a vital resource for powering the locomotives that their fortunes depended upon. Those 168 shares were appraised at \$50,000, a princely sum in the days when gold lay thick in Sacramento's banks.

For Crocker, Hopkins, Stanford, and Huntington, this was less a relinquishment of land than an exchange of one form of power for another—the coal that would fuel their trains, and with them, their empire. For Colton, the ranch represented more than acreage: it signified admission to the elite fraternity of California's industrialists, the Associates having invited him not just into their land dealings, but also their confidences.



The paperwork was formalized: Colton handed over the shares; the Associates signed the deed to the Railroad Ranch on June 19, 1877. The last light caught the top of the mountain, and a new line was drawn in the California dirt.

The significance did not end at signatures. Under Colton's ownership, the ranch would change hands again after his passing, next being named the Cook Ranch, then Oakwood Park Stock Farm as it expanded, shifting from one epoch of California agriculture to another. The 1877 deal was emblematic of its era. Land, coal, and capital were exchanged with a handshake and a signed agreement, but also with a mutual understanding: power in California came not merely from what you owned, but from who you partnered with. The Big Four and Colton, through this transaction, illustrated the new dynamic of the Gilded Age—one where visionaries bartered fortunes and shaped the future not just with shovels or plows, but with stock certificates.

On those undulating acres, the dreams of the railroad—its tracks, its men, its unprecedented reach—were literally and figuratively rooted in California soil. The soil that today we call home.

RSVP AT WWW.DIABLOPOA.ORG

From Neville's Nine to Watson's 18

A Diablo Golf Course History Tour
1915-1925

September 14, 2025





High School Graduates

Aidan Abar, son of Farzaneh and Dr. Hoss Abar, and a graduate of the Athenian School, will be attending Southern Methodist University in Houston, Texas.

Breydon Congo, son of Heather and Chris Congo, and a graduate of De La Salle High School, will be a freshman at the University of Southern California where he will also be a member of the Men's Water Polo Team.

Jennifer Edwards, daughter of Erin and Stephen Edwards, and a graduate of Monte Vista High School will be entering Chapman University in Orange, California.

MacKenzie and Madison Green, twin daughters of Jennifer and Kevin Green, and graduates of Monte Vista High School, will be going off to study at the University of Nevada at Reno.

Grace Harney, youngest daughter of Christina and Chris Harvey, and a graduate of Carondelet High School, is heading off to Oxford to attend the University of Mississippi.

Avalynn Hoyle, daughter of Julie and Brad Hoyle, and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School, looks forward to studying Chemistry at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Audrey Kennedy, youngest of Kathy and Adam Kennedy, and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School is planning to study at the University of Utah.

Jake Lee, son of Erin and Jason Lee, and graduate of De La Salle, is looking forward to joining the Bruins at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Charlie Musco, son of Dr. Dolores Musco and Dr. Mark Musco, and a graduate of De La Salle, will be leaving soon for Denver University.

A.J. Nicholson, son of Gina and Andy Nicholson, and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School, will be attending Boise State University in Idaho.

Dillon Pingatore, daughter of Dana and Matt Pingatore, and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School is ready to join the Buffs at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Maddie Roden, daughter of Rikki and Josh Roden, and a graduate of Carondelet High School, is heading off to study at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Gigi Scarpelli, Janet and Mike Scarpelli's youngest daughter and a graduate of Aiglon College in Switzerland, will study in the Honors College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan where she will pursue a degree in Psychology.

Finn Sepic, son of Courtney and Jerry Sepic, and a graduate of De La Salle will attend Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Marlo Shah, daughter of Jodi and Jay Shah, and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School, is looking forward to Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Elise Tancreto, daughter of Karen and David Tancreto, and an honors graduate of Carondelet High School, will be attending Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business.

Catherine Vitzhum, daughter of Gina and Todd Vitzhum, and a graduate of Carondelet High School will be attending Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.



Thank you Erin Lee for starting a new tradition!



College Graduates

Garrett Coleman, son of Luci and Terri Coleman, has graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law in Charlottesville and is headed to New York to join the global law firm of Gibson Dunn.

Aidan McNamara, son of Paola and Brian McNamara, has graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a major in Economics and a minor in Accounting. He will be working for J.P. Morgan in Los Angeles.

Nikki Musco, daughter of Tracy and Tre Musco, has received a Juris Doctor degree from the Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver. She will begin work at Holland & Hart LLP in Boulder, Colorado.

Ashley Nelson, daughter of Deanna and Dan Nelson, has graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a degree in English and a minor in Business.

Katie and Mark Nittler are proud that Eli Nittler has graduated with honors from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. A gap year to travel is planned before pursuing a Master's degree in Design.

Robert Perino, son of Carrie and Ron Perino, has graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in Economics and Data Science. He will be working in Los Angeles.

Sara Theis, daughter of Amber and David Huete, has graduated from the lower level Master's degree program at Azusa Pacific University as a Registered Nurse. She will be continuing to complete the upper level Master's program as a Nurse Practitioner.

Finn Watson, son of Valerie and David Watson has graduated from the University of St. Andrew's in Scotland with a Master of Science degree in Economics. Finn is living in London and working for a financial services company.



Births

Amber and David Huete are thrilled to share news of their first grand baby, Maverick Glen Zavala, eight pounds and fourteen ounces, born on August 6 to oldest daughter Cherise and son-in-law Christian.

Kelly and Tom McQueen will welcome their second grand baby this week, born to oldest daughter Madison and son-in-law Brayden Zwetsloot.

Marci and Tom Parker are thrilled to have twin grand-babies, a boy Beckett Arthur Chaskes, six pounds and nine ounces, and a girl Elle Parker Chaskes, five pounds and four ounces, born on April 29 to youngest daughter Kat and son-in-law Brian Chaskes.

Weddings



Patti and Rick Jeffery announce with joy the marriage of their daughter **Nicole Jeffery and Kyle Lally** on April 26 at the Carmel Mission Basilica with a beautiful reception following at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club.

Welcome New Residents



WE HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU!



Diablo does not have a typical HOA. Instead, all residents pitch in a nominal \$200+ each year to cover shared community costs: plants, water and maintenance at the entrances; raising the patriotic flags; holiday décor at the post office, the library and the entrances; maintaining our amazing community library; funding community activities and social events, as well as printing to deliver this newsletter to you. These things make Diablo the special place you have chosen to make your home. **Please let us know you are here!** Email membership@diablopoo.org.



ABOUT THE DPOA

THE DIABLO PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

www.diablopoo.org

P.O. Box 215, Diablo, CA 94528

membership@diablopoo.org

Instagram: [@Diablo_Community](https://www.instagram.com/Diablo_Community)

The mission of the Diablo Property Owners' Association is to enhance the community through beautification, social events, communication and historic preservation education. The DPOA is run by community volunteers and funded by annual contributions by residents.

Formed in 1929, it is one of the oldest such organizations in California. Although our owners' association possesses no legal power, it acts as a sounding board and works with other organizations to facilitate community affairs and events. You can find more information at www.diablopoo.org and on Instagram [@Diablo_Community](https://www.instagram.com/Diablo_Community).

Our Talented Volunteers

Elizabeth Birka-White

Jan Novak

Tony & Dee Geisler

Shirley Osmer

Dana Gold

Melissa Ovadia

Amber Huete

Alyssa Phillips

Maddy Johnson

Darcy Pierce

Leslie Keane

Dana Pingatore

Greg & Anne Lorenz

Kathy Torru

Julie Nejedly

Julie Wallunas

Katie Nittler





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THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE IS A PUBLICATION OF THE
DIABLO PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION.