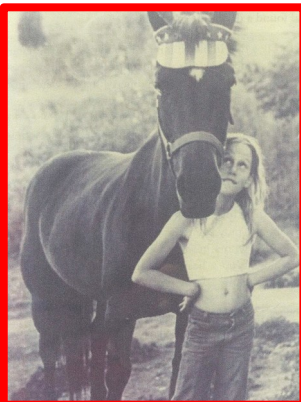


Diablo Honors.....

Donna Sasse

By Jan Novak

50 years ago, Donna Sasse got lost while driving home to Moraga after visiting her brother in Danville. She ended up in Diablo. She had never been in Diablo before and really liked what she saw, so she kept driving, eventually up Caballo Ranchero. She spotted a beautiful house with a cute red horse barn for sale. The realtor just happened to be there and showed her the home. She and her husband, Dick Grove, made an offer that day. They sold their home in Moraga the next day. As she says "it was meant to be". With her two young children, Aimee and Zak, in tow, Donna moved to Diablo.



Aimee and Cindy

Donna Ferranti was born in Oakland, grew up in Albany, attended San Francisco State and earned a degree in Dental Assisting. She married Dick Grove and moved to Lawrence, Kansas (where Aimee was born). That was followed by Union, NJ; New York City; Benton Harbor, MI; Park Ridge, IL (where Zak was born); Moraga; and finally Diablo. She was done moving!

Her children and dogs lived the ideal life of Diablo in the 70's and 80's. There were far fewer houses on Caballo Ranchero, no gates, no fences. Aimee fell in love with horses and took \$5 riding lessons with Lowrey Jones at Diablo's Farfetched Farms, joining the other horse-obsessed young girls in Diablo who were known as "the fillies". She soon had her own horse, Cindy (show name Sweet Surprise), take up residence in the barn. She rode Cindy on Mt.

Diablo, to the post office and to her riding lessons. Zak explored Diablo on his Honda 50 dirt bike and then found his passion in skateboarding, building a skateboard ramp in the barn. In the 90's, he was named Director of Skateboarding for the town of Danville and built a small skateboard park for Danville's children.



Zak

Donna, meanwhile, was **busy**. She worked for Leshar Communications for 17 years, beginning as a columnist for the weekly Valley Pioneer writing the "Hoof Prints", "Pioneer Pantry" and "Sasse Talk" columns. She then helped lead its conversion to the daily San Ramon Valley Times and became the Director of Sales, winning the Leshar Sales Manager of the Year Award for two consecutive years. She worked as Marketing Director of Blackhawk Plaza for one year, then as Marketing Director of the Danville Livery for 16 years and then started Sasse Communications, a marketing company which specialized in shopping centers including Orinda Theater Square, Alamo Plaza and Iguana Ameramax. She is now a "life coach" operating out of the barn, which has been converted into a studio.



Aimee and Nate

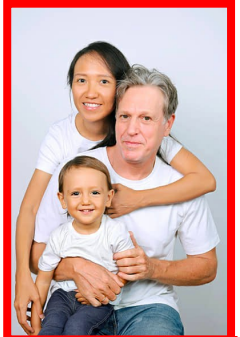
Along the way, she met Jerry Sasse. They married in 1982 and Jerry passed away in 2006. The following year, her grandson Tavish Wells was born. Tavish, Aimee and son-in-law Nate Wells moved in with Donna for five years and she threw herself into full-time grand mothering. In her 50's, she fell in love with golf, playing first with the 18-holers and now with the 9-ers. She started teaching Tavish to golf when he was 2 years old and they continue to play together. A love of golf seems to run in the family.



Tavish

Aimee, Nate and Tavish now live in Lafayette. Aimee graduated from UC Santa Barbara with honors and founded Smitten PR. Nate is the Creative/Art Director for Applied Underwriters. Aimee remains horse obsessed and is now the proud mom of Luc. Tavish just began his college education at San Diego State. Donna adores him and is very proud of him...and she should be! Still in his teens, he has organized efforts to combat fentanyl use, to promote environmental sustainability, to study and report on the dangers of teen social media use—all while playing both football and golf at Campolindo High School and earning a 4.0 GPA.

Zak has led a fascinating life. He was a sponsored skateboarder in the 80's and skated with all-time great Tony Hawk. He has done movie stunt work, including for Heath Ledger in the film Lords of Dogtown. Always the explorer, he visited Vietnam. Much like Donna, who fell in love with Diablo, Zak fell in love with Vietnam and developed a plan to live there full-time. He is now an English teacher—who won a Teacher of the Year Award, married to another English teacher, Trang, and they are parents to 3-year-old Sammy.



Zak, Trang & Sammy

Donna has always been focused on family, learning, a healthy lifestyle and spirituality. As part of her health routine, she spent a LOT of time in the Diablo Country Club fitness center. One day, she met a man who was on the elliptical next to hers. They became part of a friend group that socialized during and after their early morning workouts. And then they became more than friends. That man is Jim Theodores. He was born and raised on the East Coast and built a very successful career in the Bay Area, culminating with his position as CEO of Kaiser Cement and Kaiser Sand and Gravel Corporation. Jim and his late wife, Renae, have a long and deep history in Diablo. He's a long-time, very active golfer and member of Diablo Country Club since 1985. He has lived in Diablo for much of the last 35 years, first on Casa Nuestra and later in the Chalets, with a stint in between those homes in Lafayette.



Dave, Cameron, Ryder & Arianna

He is now in his third Diablo home, as he and Donna married in the barn on their property on September 17th, 2023. Jim has one daughter, Cameron, who served as Membership Director of Diablo Country Club. Cameron is married to Dave Solomon, who is the Head Golf Professional at the club. As noted earlier, a love of golf definitely runs in the family! Cameron and Dave live in Alamo with their two children, 16-year-old Arianna and 6-year-old Ryder. Ryder visits Donna and Jim every week.

Donna is a vibrant woman. She is so active, her interests are wide-ranging and deep, and she so loves her family. And she loves Diablo. We are happy that she got lost here. We are also happy that she and Jim found each other here. Thanks, Donna, for making Diablo your home. And Happy Anniversary to you and Jim!

