

# THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

DIABLO COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



## HOPING 2024 IS YOUR BEST YEAR YET!

Community volunteers did some incredible work to enhance our community in 2023. Here's a list of the highlights:

- ◆ Delivered welcome gifts and information to 17 new residents who moved into our community.
- ◆ Hosted 5 community social events: Diablo Honors Lunch, Donuts with Deputy Dan, Dog Walk & Ice Cream Social, History Walking Tour, and Halloween Social.
- ◆ Installed whimsical holiday décor and planting at our entrances, post office and lending library.
- ◆ Raised the Flags of Diablo on Memorial Day, 4th of July, Sept 11<sup>th</sup> and Veterans Day.
- ◆ Distributed a directory of property owners to all residents.
- ◆ Kept our community informed about what's happening via email, signs, posts on Instagram, and 3 printed issues of this newsletter.

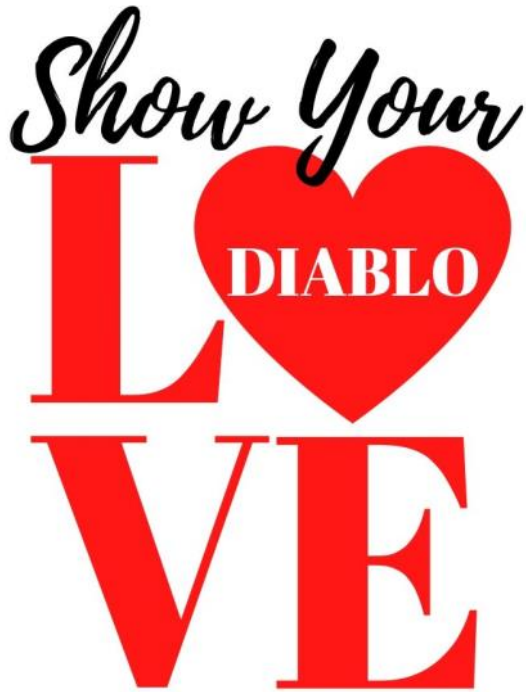
This is the kind of work that makes Diablo a very special place. If you enjoyed any of the efforts listed above, please make your annual contribution to the DPOA at [www.diablopoa.org](http://www.diablopoa.org)

# ANOTHER AMAZING HALLOWEEN SOCIAL!

Hundreds of residents and guests enjoyed our legendary Halloween Social on October 31st at the Haunted Home Stretch on Alameda Diablo. DPOA hosted delicious tacos, chips, rice and beans and a wide array of beverages from 6-8 pm. The scene was set with an amazing balloon arch at the entrance, twinkly balloons, tall tables, and we even arranged for portable bathrooms just in case! Thank you to the Jones family for allowing us to gather in your driveway yet again, and to our volunteers: Melissa Ovadia led our event planning; Mark & Shannon Jones, Leslie Keane, Dana Pingatore set up the party and cleaned up after; San Jose Ice provided the party ice; and Andy Nicholson and Colin Gaffey closed and reopened the street.



# KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY BEAUTIFUL, FUN AND CONNECTED



NOTICE from  
Diablo Property Owners' Assoc.  
& Diablo Community Services District

**ATTENTION:  
DIABLO RESIDENTS**

Google has increased SPAM settings. Recent emails sent to you from the DPOA & DCSD may have been rejected!

To ensure you receive important Diablo community updates, add these to your email address book:  
'membership@diablopoa.org'  
'diablocsd@diablocsd.org'  
'generalmanager@diablocsd.org'

## Friendly reminders:

- \* Please make your annual contribution to support the work of the DPOA at [www.diablopoa.org](http://www.diablopoa.org)
- \* Ensure that you can receive important community updates by adding the DPOA and DCSD email addresses to your email address book and ensuring that the DPOA has your best email address

## SAVE THE DATE!

HAPPY  
*Valentine's Day*  
DIABLO!

WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 14  
4 pm - 5:30  
DIABLO POST OFFICE

MEET OUR NEW  
DEPUTY STOFFELS!

ENJOY COCOA STATION &  
CUPCAKES WITH GIFT BAGS

*Sponsored by the  
Diablo Property Owner's Association*

## WANT TO SHOW YOUR DIABLO LOVE?

In the depths of the pandemic, the DPOA brainstormed ways to bring some cheer to our community. One of our ideas was to place Love Diablo flags at the post office and entrances, and a few DPOA Board members bought one as well. We are now receiving inquiries asking how other residents can buy a flag. They are NOT cheap, as they are custom made and double-sided. We believe we can buy them in quantity for ~\$150 each. If you're interested, contact us at [membership@diablopoa.org](mailto:membership@diablopoa.org).



# DIABLO HISTORY WALK: THE ROARING 20'S

*by Tony & Dee Geisler, co-chairs, Diablo Historic Preservation Committee*

This past October 28<sup>th</sup>, the Historic Preservation Committee (DHPC) of the Diablo Property Owners' Association held its annual historic walk, led by Diablo Country Club Past President and current Historian, David Mackesey. The theme of the walk was "**Diablo's Roaring 20's, Then and Now.**" This theme was very fitting as most of the structures were built in the teens and 20's, Diablo's first years as a golf course community. This was arguably the best Historic Walk ever, evidenced by a record setting 90 registered attendees. The increased interest was engendered by David's enthusiasm, articulation, passion and incredible knowledge of Diablo's long and storied history. The 16-page guide handed out to each attendee, created by DPOA President, Leslie Harris Keane, is a work of art as well extremely informative. The guide covered in detail each of the 16 homes and other historic structures visited in the Walk.



The Walk began at the home of Leslie and Justin Keane, which was built around the Milk Barn, constructed in 1881, which served to feed the workers and racehorses at the Oakwood Park Stock Farm in the 1880's. In 1953 the Milk Barn became the U.S. Post Office prior to its present location in once what was the Diablo CC Pro Shop. Some present Diablo residents remember riding their horses to the Milk Barn to pick up their mail. From there we walked over to the Chalet where Marilyn Newton graciously invited the attendees to walk down to the back of the Chalet, built in 1917, where a covered walkway was constructed to permit overnight guests to walk directly, protected from the weather, to the second floor of the Club Inn for meals and entertainment, now Oakwood, the home of Chris and Christina Harney at 1925 Alameda Diablo. From there we viewed the Clubhouse, also built in 1881, now undergoing significant reconstruction, and then down the hill to view Oakwood, Diablo's preeminent historic structure.



## DIABLO HISTORY WALK (CONTINUED)



Across from Oakwood we viewed Hacienda de Las Palmas, the home of David and Lynda Mackesey, the site of the dance pavilion for the Club and the terminus of the railroad which brought members from their city homes to the idyllic retreat in Diablo. From there we turned West to view the historic homes along Alameda Diablo ending at Villa Valparaiso, the Mehran family home near the front entrance of Diablo. We want to extend a special thank you to Brian and Maryann Cella, David and Ann Moeller, Mike Cobler, Bob and Barbara Beratta, and Gary and Rochelle Rich who invited the guests to come on to their properties to get a closer look at their homes.

The festivities ended at the lovely home of the Mehran Family, Villa Valparaiso, where a delicious lunch was served to all on the front lawn of the Spanish Style home originally built by William Letts Oliver in 1916. Oliver was a Mining Engineer of European descent, who was born and grew up in Valparaiso, Chile where he became involved in copper mining and later an inventor of detonators for mining explosives after relocating to the Bay Area. The home boasts a magnificent horse barn and a beautiful rose garden created by the late Maryam Mehran. We thank Maggie and Alex Mehran, Jr. who opened up their yard and gardens to permit the DPOA to host their superb luncheon. The weather, David's narrative, the food and the enthusiasm of the crowd all added up to a truly memorable day. We look forward to another History Walk in 2024.



# THANK YOU DIABLO!

## We raised \$18,500 for the



Denise Aghazarian  
Tony & Lena Amor  
Peter & Susan Bernhard  
David & Elizabeth Birka-White  
Pat Black  
Dick & Gail Breitwieser  
Gary & Cathy Camarda  
Sharon Cavazos  
Bob & Andrea Challinor  
Joe & Kaitlin Christophe  
Terri & Luci Coleman  
Chris & Lisa Cook  
Brian & Kristen D'Arcy  
Kevin & Terri Davis  
Victor & Carol deMelo  
Ray & Laura DePole  
Diablo Foundation  
Jeffery Eorio  
Bob & Nancy Frahm  
Colin & Lisa Gaffey  
Dee & Tony Geisler  
Raj Ann & Pavan Gill  
Tim & Cathy Gonzalez  
Keith & Hallie Grossman  
Wade & Judy Haddad

Marilee & Steve Headen  
Carlos & Lucy Hidalgo  
Garth & Rita Hobden  
Mike & Barbara Hoversen  
Brad & Julie Hoyle  
Mark & Shannon Jones  
Justin & Leslie Keane  
Gun Johnston  
Kathy Kennedy  
John & Mary Krouse  
Greg & Anne Lorenz  
Phil & Shawn Luecht  
Butch & Timothy Lumby  
Brian & Paola McNamara  
Alex & Maggie Mehran  
Julie & Don Nejedly  
Dan & Deana Nelson  
Jan & Rich Novak  
Rosanne & Mike Ogles  
Chris Oldenburg  
Shirley Osmer  
Tom & Marcy Parker  
Charlie & Toni Pass  
Susan Paulson  
Mark & Darcy Pierce

Matt & Dana Pingatore  
Nicola Place  
Jessica Raefield  
Paul & Cynthia Rago  
Arlene Reed  
Mike & Victoria Riherd  
Kyle & Jennifer Ryan  
Carol Santa Maria  
Jay & Jodi Shah  
Rick & Lisa Shepherd  
Mike & Tricia Sheinberg  
Jerry & Margi Slavonia  
Larry & Sue Smith  
Kelley & Russell Stough  
Mario & Lia De Tomasi  
John & Kathy Torru  
Kathleen Urbelis  
Jeff & Lisa Wasko  
David & Valerie Watson  
Neal & Bernie White  
Mark & Ellen Whitfield  
John & M'Lu Wilhelmy  
Peter & Catherine Yewell  
and 12 Anonymous donors

## SOCIAL NEWS

Elizabeth and David Birka-White are thrilled to share the news of their second grandchild and first grandson, Neal Shepherd Birka-White, born on Christmas Day weighing eight pounds and five ounces to son Adam Birka-White, wife Rashmi, and big sister Kiran. The family lives in the North Berkeley hills.

## DIABLO SPARKLES FOR THE HOLIDAYS



## DEPUTY DISPATCHES

by Deputy Christon Stoffels



In this issue of the Devil's Advocate, we debut a new column written by me concerning law enforcement within the community of Diablo. In future issues, I hope to explore topics that have a direct impact on the residents of Diablo.

A concern that has been raised is that of residential burglaries in and around Diablo. Well, we made it through another holiday season relatively unscathed, only one burglary in Diablo. However, there were several outside the community in the surrounding area. Having said that, there are certain things you as a resident can do to safeguard your home.

While there is no definitive method for stopping a determined criminal from breaking into and entering into your residence, there are steps that can be taken to make it more difficult.

The common misconception is that thieves are targeting large items like televisions, stereos, and computers; in actuality the items stolen are quite different. Having taken numerous residential burglary reports throughout my career, I believe I have an understanding of the methodology utilized in residential burglaries.

The target of these would be thieves is jewelry, cash, guns, and items that can be easily carried away. On occasion we have seen the theft of ladies' high-end handbags and even footwear.

The criminals are looking for items that can be quickly and easily fenced for cash.

When a criminal targets a residence, often it is randomly decided by a spur of the moment choice. The modus operandi or method is very similar in most residential burglaries and is as follows. The would-be thieves start by ringing the front doorbell to determine if there is anyone present. They would then typically go to the rear of the residence and smash one of the slider doors to gain entry. Once inside they head straight to the primary bedroom and begin rummaging through closets and dresser drawers.

We know from video that the average time spent within the residence is between ten and fifteen minutes. This time estimate is based on the response time of the alarm company after receiving an activation and alerting associated law enforcement and its response to the scene.

The majority of these burglaries take place during the day when the occupants are at work and the residence is unoccupied, unlike auto burglaries which typically take place during the overnight hours.

So, what can we do to make our homes less of a target? Here are six suggestions to harden the target that is your home.

First, install some type of video doorbell system with the capability of speaking to the person or persons on your front porch and recording doorbell activations. This may deter them before they break into your home.

Second, consider installing an alarm and/or video surveillance system to aid detectives in the investigation of the crime.



## DEPUTY DISPATCHES (CONTINUED)

Third, making points of entry to rear of the property more difficult including the locking of side gates when out of town on vacation.

Fourth, lock up valuable jewelry including high end wristwatches and guns in a safe that is secured to the floor or large enough to not be easily carried away. Leaving it on the nightstand will surely result in its theft. The same with large jewelry boxes, these are fine for “costume” jewelry but not your diamond tennis bracelet.

Fifth, get a dog. Preferably a large one that does not take kindly to intruders. The last thing a crook wants to do is to tangle with a not so friendly German Shepard.

Sixth, lock your doors. While this should go without saying, we as humans tend to fall into habits that make our lives easier. But it makes the criminals’ job easier too. Don’t leave the garage overhead door open when unattended and lock the door between the garage and the residence, preferably with a keyed deadbolt.

Unfortunately, there is a large volume of vehicular traffic in the community during the day including construction workers, pool and house cleaning services, and gardeners to name a few. If something looks out of the ordinary contact the Sheriff’s Office by calling 911.

Remember, if you see something, say something.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or have an idea for a future issue, please e-mail me at [cstof@so.cccounty.us](mailto:cstof@so.cccounty.us).

## THANK YOU, DEPUTY STOFFELS!



HAPPY NATIONAL LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
APPRECIATION DAY

DEPUTY  
STOFFELS



THANK YOU

From the residents of Diablo

# DIABLO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT NEWS

*The Diablo Community Services District (DCSD) is a California Special District governed by residents elected to a 5-member Board of Directors. The DCSD's purpose is to provide security services to residents, maintain and improve roads, culverts under roads, and bridges within Diablo, and uphold Kay's Trail.*

## Preparing for Winter Storms

As winter's rain and wind arrive, please regularly check your property for weakened trees or tree limbs that may pose a falling risk. Additionally, inspect drainage catch basins for leaves and debris, as they can cause obstructions and potential flooding if left unchecked. Residents with creeks should clear them of debris to ensure unobstructed flow during heavy rains, preventing backup, creek bank failure, and flooding.

In the event of a tree failure, creek breach, or a creek bank or hillside failure threatening your home or family, or obstructing a DCSD-maintained street, call 911 and self-evacuate if necessary. Local fire, police, and storm patrol workers are under tremendous pressure during major storms, so it's crucial to be self-reliant in weather emergencies.

## Encroachment Ordinance Code

Diablo property owners are responsible for preventing and removing encroachments that impact DCSD-maintained streets. Encroachments include dead, weakened, or overgrown vegetation and trees; unstable creek banks, hillsides, or retaining walls; obstructed or blocked creek beds; and drainage outlets causing water pooling on the street.

If an encroachment poses an imminent threat to resident safety, prevents emergency vehicle access, or compromises the structural integrity of the street, the DCSD will promptly contact a third-party contractor to remove it. The costs for encroachment removal will be charged to the property owner.

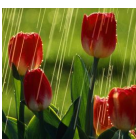
To understand your responsibilities regarding encroachments, refer to the updated [Encroachment Ordinance](#) adopted at the December 11, 2023 Board meeting. For questions about the Ordinance, contact the DCSD General Manager at [generalmanager@diablocsd.org](mailto:generalmanager@diablocsd.org).

Thank you for playing your part in keeping Diablo safe.

## License Plate Reader Cameras

The DCSD installed License Plate Reader (LPR) Cameras at Diablo's three entrances and on Mt Diablo Scenic Blvd last fall. In collaboration with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department, the DCSD Board made this decision in response to an uptick in crime in surrounding communities. These LPR cameras serve as a vital tool for Diablo's Deputy Sheriff in crime resolution and act as a deterrent to potential criminal activity.

The LPR cameras capture still images of vehicle license plates, make, and model, and color of vehicles passing through the intersection. They will not capture images of vehicle occupants. The LPR images are stored in the Flock Safety Cloud platform and are only accessible to law enforcement, with automatic erasure after 30 days.




### FEMA Update

Governor Newsom and FEMA declared Contra Costa County a disaster area after the December 2022 and January 2023 storms, allowing public agencies to apply for emergency funding. The DCSD incurred over \$330,000 in winter storm damage costs for road and bridge repairs, and creek trash rack monitoring and debris removal. The DCSD applied for FEMA disaster relief in spring and was awarded \$324,000 in December 2023.

## THE LENDING LIBRARY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Can you spare a couple of hours a month to help us keep our library organized? The library continues to be well used and loved by our community. **We really need some great, relatively current fiction books.** Books are borrowed and new books donated every day and we also need a few more volunteers to keep it organized. Just asking for an hour of your time every other week or so. If you can lend a hand, contact [jnovak@msn.com](mailto:jnovak@msn.com). And, in order to keep our library an inviting and organized space, please follow these simple guidelines.




Dear Neighbors,

Please be kind to your Diablo Lending Library and each other by:

- Limiting your donations to less than 10 reasonably current, interesting books in good shape.
- **NOT** donating textbooks, study guides, dictionaries, atlases/maps, encyclopedias, magazines, old travel or gardening guides, old paperbacks. Your neighbors don't want to read them. Take them to Savers in Dublin.
- Returning the books you borrow. It's a lending library, not a keeping library 😊
- Placing books on the shelf in the appropriate category. If there's no room there, stack them under the bench.
- Volunteering for a couple of hours a month to help keep the library organized and reasonably clean.  
Email [membership@diablopaa.org](mailto:membership@diablopaa.org)

Thank you from your neighborhood volunteer librarians and the gracious owners of this property!



## DID YOU KNOW...

January 21st was [National Squirrel Appreciation Day!](#) We appreciate you, Woody, our always festively attired squirrel. And special thanks to your “stylists”, Shawn and Phil Luecht.

Coming soon: February 4th—National Thank Your Mailman Day  
February 14th—Cocoa & cupcakes with Deputy Stoffels  
March 19th—International Read to Me Day



## WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS!

If you have recently moved into our community, we have a gift for you! Please let us know you are here by emailing [membership@diablopoa.org](mailto:membership@diablopoa.org).

We do 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 Diablo flags; whimsical 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.

Our mission is to enhance the community through beautification, social events, communication and historic preservation. 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. Though 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.diablopoa.org](http://www.diablopoa.org) and on Instagram@Diablo\_Community.

### Interested in contributing to the community? We always need volunteers!

- Newsletter - Seasonal décor
- Welcome Committee - Social events
- Flags of Diablo - Lending library

The Devil's Advocate is our quarterly update to share the activities and events happening in our community and a method of keeping the communication lines open between neighbors.

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

P. O. BOX 215



## CONTACT US

Website: [www.diablopoa.org](http://www.diablopoa.org)

Email: [membership@diablopoa.org](mailto:membership@diablopoa.org)

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

### Diablo Community Volunteers

Denise Aghazarian	Jan Novak
Elizabeth Birka-White	Shirley Osmer
Tony & Dee Geisler	Melissa Ovadia
Dana Gold	Alyssa Phillips
Amber Huete	Darcy Pierce
Maddy Johnson	Dana Pingatore
Leslie Keane	Lori Scallan
Greg & Anne Lorenz	Kathy Torru
Julie Nejedly	Julie Wallunas
Katie Nittler	

Meeting Schedule: 1st Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. Email [membership@dpoa.org](mailto:membership@dpoa.org) for meeting location.

### Diablo Community Services District Board [www.diablocsd.org](http://www.diablocsd.org)

Kathy Urbelis, President  
[kurbelis@diablocsd.org](mailto:kurbelis@diablocsd.org)  
Matthew Cox, Vice President & Roads Commissioner  
[mcox@diablocsd.org](mailto:mcox@diablocsd.org)  
Christine Chartier, Community Liaison Commissioner  
[cchartier@diablocsd.org](mailto:cchartier@diablocsd.org)  
Greg Lorenz, Finance Commissioner  
[glorenz@diablocsd.org](mailto:glorenz@diablocsd.org)  
Jerry Slavonia, Security Commissioner  
[jslavonia@diablocsd.org](mailto:jslavonia@diablocsd.org)  
Kathy Torru, General Manager  
[generalmanager@diablocsd.org](mailto:generalmanager@diablocsd.org)  
Martin de los Angeles, Legal Counsel  
Best, Best & Krieger, LLP

Meeting Schedule: 2nd Monday of every month at 6:00 pm . Visit [diablocsd.org](http://diablocsd.org) for meeting agendas, location, minutes, financials, history and info on the Diablo Municipal Advisory Council .

WINTER 2024