



THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

DIABLO COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



HERE COMES THE SUN...

DPOA volunteers are raising the flags to honor Memorial Day and celebrate 4th of July, we are refreshing plants at our entrances, planning an end of summer community social and history walk, maintaining our lending library, cleaning up the post office and welcoming lots of new residents. If you would like a patriotic flag for your house, please let us know! The flags are a custom labor of love and produced in limited quantities as a fundraiser for the DPOA. If you have recently moved into Diablo, please e-mail membership@diablopoa.org. We would like to help you connect with the community! Residents can also find updates and photos at diablopoa.org and @diablo_community on Instagram.



Happy Summer!

Leslie Keane and your
DPOA Volunteers



SUMMER 2023

COMMUNITIES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: EL CENTRO



The Enduring Charms of El Centro's Storied Cottages

By Christine Chartier and Alan Bonny with David Mackesey

El Centro, an historic district within an historic district, holds captivating tales and hidden treasures. Atop El Centro and Avenida Nueva, the original Red Horse Tavern stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of our idyllic past. Once a carriage barn in 1885, it was relocated to its present spot by Robert Noble Burgess (founder of Diablo) in 1917 and transformed into the tavern, studio apartments for single employees of the country club and hotel rooms for travelers. It also was the commissary for the country club employees and their families who were housed in cottages on El Centro as none of the cottages originally had kitchens. As we step into modern-day life in El Centro, let us delve into the remarkable stories and vibrant community that have shaped this neighborhood into a cherished haven.

To truly understand the allure of El Centro, we must peer into the lives of the remarkable individuals who once resided in its original cottages. These charming abodes, designed by famed architect Arthur Benton, exude a Cape Cod architectural style that adds a touch of nostalgia to the neighborhood.

Nestled at cottage #1 on 120 El Centro, a legendary figure resided, who forever changed the landscape of golf in America. John "Pop" Smith, a pioneer in the sport, found solace within the walls of this humble abode. With a rich golfing background and experience as the greenskeeper of the world-renowned Carnoustie links, Smith brought his expertise and passion across the waters to Diablo. It was here that he left an indelible mark on the sport, shaping the future of golf in America. As the BBC once concluded, "the Smiths became the Carnoustie pioneers who took golf to America"! Cottage #1 stands as a testament to his legacy, a sanctuary where dreams were realized and the spirit of golf thrived.



Cottage #4 at 140 El Centro was home to Paul Conroy, an esteemed golf professional hailing from Ireland. Known as the first golf professional at Diablo, Conroy's expertise and passion for the sport left an indelible mark on the community.

Cottage #5 at 125 El Centro became the cherished haven of Lawrence and Margaret Tesla, an Italian couple who embraced the land as gardeners and truck drivers. Their cottage, surrounded by blooming flowers and the aroma of home-cooked meals, emanated a warm and inviting atmosphere.

In cottage #6 at 131 El Centro, Wallace and Mea English, a couple from Missouri, built their lives. Their cottage, adorned with stories of laughter and love, became a sanctuary in this close-knit neighborhood. Over the years, the cottage welcomed new residents who contributed their own tales to its rich history.



Tucked away at 119 El Centro, a unique cottage holds its own captivating tale. Known as the Gingham Cottage, this charming structure was originally constructed in 1925 as the ladies' locker room for the Country Club, situated by the 18th green. Adorned with gingham fabric décor, it exuded a distinct charm that caught the eye of all who entered. As time passed and the clubhouse underwent renovations in 1948, the Gingham Cottage found itself no longer needed for its original purpose and was rolled into its present-day location. This feat of engineering and preservation adds to the cottage's allure. Since then, it has stood as a symbol of transformation and adaptability, adding an enchanting touch to the picturesque surroundings of El Centro.

COMMUNITIES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: EL CENTRO (CONTINUED)

In the ever-evolving landscape of El Centro, 139 El Centro stands as a testament to transformation and the passage of time. It was in 1954 that the first house was built on this hallowed ground, becoming a cherished home for Francis Clarkson. Notably, Clarkson had graced the halls of the 1939 World Exhibition on Treasure Island as a model, bringing elegance and beauty to the grand stage. As the years rolled by, the house underwent a remarkable metamorphosis in 1985, emerging as the stunning stone Carmel-esque cottage that now stands proudly, blending harmoniously with the captivating ambiance of El Centro.



Throughout El Centro, these cottages housed not only golf professionals and gardeners but also individuals who left an indelible mark on the community. Their stories intertwined with the neighborhood's vibrant tapestry, creating a bohemian atmosphere that attracted like-minded souls.

As we stroll along the streets of El Centro, the ghosts of Arthur Whiting and Pat Patten seem to whisper from their former abodes. Both esteemed golf professionals, Whiting hailed from a family deeply rooted in golfing traditions, while Patten learned from the best, including the legendary Pop and son, Macdonald, Smith. Their close friendship and shared passion for the sport nurtured a unique bond that has become part of El Centro's lore.

It wasn't until the 1940s that the ownership of El Centro's enchanting cottages began to shift, as key club personnel moved on and new families embraced the opportunity to call this historic neighborhood home. As time went on, a few additional homes were constructed, completing the street and bringing the total to nine charming residences. While the neighborhood evolved, it is noteworthy that most of these cottages have had very few owners, with families cherishing their timeless appeal and preserving the essence of El Centro. Two of the original cottages have undergone extensive renovations, blending modern comforts with the rich heritage that defines this cherished community.

Today, El Centro continues to thrive with a unique blend of history and contemporary charm. The cottages that once housed golf professionals, farmers, and gardeners now welcome new families who contribute to the rich tapestry of our community. Walking down the street, one can't help but feel the echoes of championship days and the whispers of those who once called El Centro home. With each passing year, this neighborhood remains a cherished gem, weaving together past and present in the heart of our vibrant community.



Editor's note: Do you want to share a story of your community within our community? While El Centro has a unique history in Diablo, your article doesn't need to only focus on history. Share stories of how your community has gotten to know each other, how you help each other out, what you love about your neighborhood, how you stay connected. Please contact jvnovak@msn.com if you'd like to share your story.

SOCIAL NEWS



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

Layla Busquets, daughter of **Emily and Rick Busquets** and a graduate of Monte Vista High School, has been recruited to swim at Pepperdine University where she plans to study Sports Medicine.

Isabella Capelli, daughter of **Vanessa and Steve Capelli** and a 2022 San Ramon Valley High School grad, just completed her first year studying economics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. In addition, Isabella is actively competing on the women's rowing team.

Olivia Connell, the daughter of **Lisa and John Connell** and a graduate of Carondelet High School, will be packing her bags for Southern Methodist University.

Ava De Gracia, daughter of **Christine and Peter De Gracia** and a graduate of Monte Vista, will be attending the University of California at Berkeley. Go Bears!

Logan Gaffey, son of **Lisa and Colin Gaffey** and a graduate of California High School will be attending Baylor University as a Finance major.

Maxwell Green, son of **Jennifer and Kevin Green** and a graduate of Monte Vista High School, will be attending the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University.

Gavin Jones, son of **Shannon and Mark Jones** and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School, will be joining the Badgers this Fall at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Bree Ligon, daughter of **Julie and Robert Ligon** and a graduate of Monte Vista High School, is off to Boston to attend Emerson College.

Mia Lorenz, daughter of **Anne and Greg Lorenz** and a graduate of Monte Vista High School, will be heading off to Dallas to attend Southern Methodist University where she plans to study Health and Society.

Will McNamara, son of **Paola and Brian McNamara** and a graduate of De La Salle, will be joining the Longhorns at the University of Texas in Austin.

Tatum McNichols, daughter of **Katie and Justin McNichols** and a Monte Vista graduate, will attend Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles as a Creative Writing major.

Isabella Ornellas, daughter of **Suzanne and Alfredo Ornellas** and a graduate of Monte Vista High School is off to Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill.

Cade Rhodes, son of **Kristi and Casey Rhodes** and a graduate of San Ramon Valley High School, will be heading off to Tuscon to attend the University of Arizona.

Jake Sheinberg, son of **Tricia and Michael Sheinberg** and a graduate of Athenian High School, is headed to Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts to Boston College to study Business at the Carroll School of Management.

Dylan Smith son of **Alexandra and Mark Smith** and a graduate of the Athenian High School, is looking forward to attending the University of Miami's Herbert Business School.

COLLEGE GRADUATION

Deuce Palmer, son of **Trudy and Rick Palmer**, graduated from Southern Methodist University in May. He immediately began a Masters in Computer Science at USC, where he will continue his football career with the Trojans.

BIRTHS

Sheila and Jeff Langon are elated to report the birth of their seventh grandchild, (in seven years!) born on April 24 to son **Luke**, daughter-in-law **Kate**, and big brother **Brooks**, seven pound, 13 ounce **Beckham Colter Langon**.

SOCIAL NEWS (CONTINUED)

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Lynn Peck, a resident since 1961, passed away at her beloved Alameda Diablo home "Fern Banks" on her 94th birthday, April 3rd. You may have seen her sitting on her comfortable front porch enjoying the view as you drove or walked by. She and her late husband Bill enjoyed golf and joined the Diablo Country Club in 1960. She is survived by her daughter Leslie Ditz of Boise, Idaho, son John and wife Julie Peck of Alamo, four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Paul McIntire passed away on April 23rd, and is survived by his wife, Lila and his son. Lila and Paul were married for 62 years and she lovingly remembers him as her best friend with whom she traveled the world.

LT DEPUTY DAN MOVES INTO RETIREMENT

By Dana Pingatore

Our dedicated Contra Costa Sheriff's Deputy, Lt Dan Buergi, is hanging up his badge after serving 20 years in law enforcement. He is making a move to the Pacific Northwest with his family this summer. Dan said it's been a real honor and privilege serving our community for the last 11+ years. His most memorable moment was working the incredible Centennial Celebration at Diablo Country Club in 2014. The food, activities, history and fireworks made it a really special event to work.

When asked for parting words of wisdom, Deputy Dan says these are the top things residents should know about security in Diablo:

- ◆ Plan ahead for large construction deliveries and moving trucks. BIG TRUCKS DO NOT FIT on our narrow roads. The trucking companies always underestimate how to get in/out. Insist that a representative come to preview the delivery site in advance of sending the truck.
- ◆ PLAN FOR POWER OUTAGES. Create a backup plan for powering critical medical devices.
- ◆ ADD CC SHERIFF'S DISPATCH 925-646-2441 to your mobile phone.
- ◆ SHARE YOUR SECURITY GATE CODE with the CC Sheriff's Department 925-646-2441 so that during an emergency fire-fighters, officers and ambulances can get in quickly.

Did you know that security service began in Diablo in 1969? Our [Diablo Community Services District](#) (DCSD) was established with the purpose to provide security and is paid for with tax dollars. The contract with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's department began in 1984. County Sheriff's are also used by Blackhawk, Roundhill, Danville, Lafayette and Orinda.

Deputy Dan says he plans to take some time to settle into his new community and figure out his next act. He's a real foodie and wine enthusiast. So, the DPOA sent him off with a great bottle of wine, a gift card and a giant framed thank you signed by our community.



DIABLO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT (DCSD) UPDATE

The DCSD provides security and road maintenance services to our community and is funded by your property taxes.



FEMA FUNDING APPLICATION IN PROCESS FOR WINTER STORM DAMAGE

The DCSD is actively collaborating with FEMA and the State to secure reimbursement for the expenses the District incurred while safeguarding our roads and bridges during the winter storms of 2022-23. Although this process takes time, the District remains optimistic about receiving federal and/or state relief.

Following the December and January storms, Governor Newsom and FEMA declared Contra Costa County a disaster area. This declaration enabled public agencies in the County to seek emergency funding from the State and FEMA. Fortunately, the DCSD was accepted as a grant applicant by both FEMA and the State.

TRIM BACK VEGETATION ENCROACHING ON OUR NARROW ROADS

This exceptionally wet winter has brought about a stunning spring, with remarkable growth in our plants, trees, hedges, and ground cover. As the new growth flourishes, we all need to remain vigilant for any encroachments onto the roadways and promptly prune and weed as necessary. It is the responsibility of each property owner to clear vegetation that encroaches onto the road, ensuring a height clearance of 13.5 feet and a width clearance of 3 feet from the road to accommodate the upcoming summer growth.

If you have dead grasses and/or debris at the edge of your property's road, please remove them to create a 3-foot clearance from the road by May 31, 2023. For those with a fire hydrant on their property, it is essential to ensure its clear visibility from the road, free from any vegetation encroachment on all sides.

After May 31st, the District reserves the right to engage a third party for the removal of encroaching vegetation, with the property owner being billed for the associated costs.

DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIRED TO DRIVE GOLF CARTS ON OUR ROADS

As we approach the summer season, it is important to reinforce our commitment to safety within our community. In the interest of maintaining a secure environment, we would like to remind everyone that golf carts can only be operated by licensed drivers. Therefore, it is strictly prohibited for children to drive golf carts on our roads.

To ensure compliance with this safety regulation, the Deputy, upon joining our team, will actively monitor and halt any golf carts being driven by unlicensed individuals. We kindly request your cooperation in adhering to this policy to ensure the well-being of all residents and visitors. By working together and following these guidelines, we can maintain a safe and enjoyable community for all.

INTRODUCING CHRIS STOFFELS: DIABLO'S NEW DEPUTY SHERIFF

We are thrilled to announce that Chris Stoffels will be joining our community as the new Deputy Sheriff of Diablo, beginning on July 3. With an impressive background and a wealth of experience, Deputy Stoffels is poised to contribute significantly to our neighborhood's safety and security.

Born and raised in Chicago, Deputy Stoffels is a graduate of the University of Illinois in Chicago. Prior to joining law enforcement, he dedicated ten years of his career as a high school history teacher in his hometown. Additionally, Deputy Stoffels has a talent for craftsmanship, having spent five years creating custom furniture.

In 2003, Deputy Stoffels made the move to California and has since become an integral part of our law enforcement community. With a son and daughter currently attending middle school, he cherishes spending quality time with them, engaging in activities such as working out, bicycling, camping, and embarking on memorable trips together.

DIABLO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT UPDATE (CONTINUED)

INTRODUCING CHRIS STOFFELS: DIABLO'S NEW DEPUTY SHERIFF (CONTINUED)

Deputy Stoffels brings a wealth of experience from his tenure with the Sheriff's office since 2006. Over the years, he has worked in various capacities within the detention division at all three jails, the courts, and the Health Services Security Unit at the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. His dedication to serving and protecting has been evident during the past eight years spent in Lafayette, where he served as a detective in investigations for two of those years. Since January 2023, Deputy Stoffels has been stationed at Valley Station, further strengthening his knowledge and expertise in law enforcement. As he prepares to embark on this new role in Diablo, we are confident in his abilities and commitment to keeping our community safe.

Please join us in welcoming Deputy Chris Stoffels to Diablo. We look forward to the positive impact he will undoubtedly make in ensuring the well-being of our residents and maintaining the security of our neighborhood.



COMMUNITY PHOTOS



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.

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; 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 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 - Community projects

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, DIABLO, CA 94528**



CONTACT US

Website: www.diablopoa.org

Email: 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 Ovidia
Amber Huete	Darcy Pierce
Maddy Johnson	Dana Pingatore
Leslie Keane	Lori Scallan
Greg & Anne Lorenz	Kathy Torru
Julie Nejedly	Julie Wallunas

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

Diablo Community Services District Board

www.diablocsd.org

Kathy Urbelis, President
kurbelis@diablocsd.org
Matthew Cox, Vice President & Roads Commissioner
mcox@diablocsd.org
Christine Chartier, Community Liaison Commissioner
cchartier@diablocsd.org
Greg Lorenz, Finance Commissioner
glorenz@diablocsd.org
Jerry Slavonia, Security Commissioner
jslavonia@diablocsd.org
Kathy Torru, General Manager
generalmanager@diablocsd.org
Christie Crawl, Legal Counsel
Jarvis Fay, LLP

Meeting Schedule: 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. Visit diablocsd.org for meeting agendas, location, minutes, financials, history and info on the Diablo Municipal Advisory Council.

www.diablopoa.org