

[Editor's Note: This is the beginning of the fourth season of Meet Your Neighbors profiles. More to come; I hope you like them. Barry]

Meet Your Neighbors

Leslie and Bob Kraynak



There is an old saying that if you want something done, ask the busiest person to do it. That's the person who will get it done well and on time. While that saying is true of Leslie and Bob Kraynak, as you will see below, there are another couple of old sayings that apply equally well to them.

Many of you know that Bob has been very, very persistent and effective with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in getting attention to Grove Street, which is very important to Diamond A residents but not so important to Sonoma County officials who consider it a "country road" despite the volume of traffic. His persistence and clarity have benefitted all of Diamond A. And Leslie's most recent community activity has been getting pickle ball accepted as part of the Diamond A Rec Center tennis court activities. Both of them are involved in the current

effort, spearheaded by Dave Duncan, to get a Fire Safe Council up and running in the Grove Street corridor.

Most amazingly, Bob seems to function perfectly well without a cell phone!

There is substance to two other old sayings-- “If at first you don’t succeed” and “Try, Try Again.” In the case of Leslie and Bob Kraynak, while their first marriages ended in divorce, this one is at nearly 20 years and counting.

But let’s first get some background information.

Leslie’s family moved around a bit but ultimately settled in Lafayette in the East Bay. She graduated with a Phi Beta Kappa key majoring in English at UCLA and then went on to get a Master’s degree in Educational Management, as she would be a teacher for part of her career. However, her favorite job was as an executive recruiter in the entertainment industry in LA, though she really loved her post-retirement business as well—Quelques Fleurs after taking flower arrangement classes.

Bob was born and raised in New York City, graduating from Columbia and getting his MBA from the University of Rochester. His parents wanted him to be a doctor—those were the days—but he left the premed program before his senior year. While he started out at AT&T, he chose to go to a then-exciting startup—Xerox. He spend many years in the yeasty environment of Xerox’s Palo Alto Research Laboratory leading the effort to test market the first personal desktop computer. Apple got rich on PARC’s ideas. Bob did the consulting gig for a few years after he retired in 2000, but by 2008 he threw himself into being a community activist, making things happen in Redondo Beach where he then lived.

Bob and Leslie met while taking a tennis clinic. Leslie had been a single mom for 25 years, and once Bob separated from his then-wife, coffee was followed by dinner and dinner was followed by a lifetime together. It’s a very romantic story. Between them they have five children, ranging from 44 to 55, and five grandchildren.

Bob has been through a five-year series of seven surgeries including rebuilding a hip badly deteriorated from engaging in too many sports activities; he’ll be using a walker and/or cane for up to six more months, after which he should be getting around pretty well but certainly not returning any punts in the NFL. Leslie has been a very attentive nurse through it all; she knows the drill from having gone through rotator cuff repair herself.

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So, as usual, I asked them a few questions:

Why Diamond A? They moved up from Redondo Beach in 2014 to be near grandchildren living in the City. They chose Diamond A because they thought it best captured the feeling and values of the wine country.

Favorite Restaurant? Harvest Moon and, when overcome by a hankering for Chinese food, Ming Yen in Novato. However, they both enjoy team cooking—Bob does the mains and Leslie does the sides, so they eat at home a lot.

Vacation Spot? Anywhere in France, especially Giverny, the Loire Valley and Provence.

What Worries You? The incivility and inequality of our country today.

Bliss Moments? The infinity pool at Post Ranch Inn at Big Sur on their honeymoon and Friday evening and their Friday evening tradition of Bombay Sapphire martinis together (1040 of them and counting). Leslie lists peanuts and Costco mixed nuts as additional guilty pleasures.

Pro sports? Bob likes the NY Giants (football) he has followed since his youth; Leslie prefers participating in tennis, pickle ball, biking, hiking and walking with Evie Duncan and Cheryl Hannon.

Books on the Bedside Table? Leslie: Becoming (Michelle Obama), Last Mercy (for the book club). Bob: Battle of Britain and anything John Grisham writes.

What Makes You Angry? Bob doesn't get angry; Leslie does that for both of them.

What Are You Proudest Of? Having raised healthy, happy and successful children.