

# Meet Your Neighbors

## Jenna and Seth Maze

[Editor's note: *For those of you who are not familiar with it, "Meet Your Neighbors" is a series of irregularly produced profiles of residents of Diamond A which I write to help us all get to know each other better. Lately, it has been suggested that it would be good to highlight some of our newer, and younger, residents. And so I have.*]

Jenna and Seth Maze are not only among the younger and newer Diamond A residents, they are also unusual because they are educating their four wonderful 4 to 12 year old children mostly by home schooling. Home schooling is an educational process which may be



unfamiliar to some who read this. They are also doing a pretty heavy makeover of their 3-acre property on White Oak Court, taking out overgrown trees and putting in some amazing organic vegetables and raising chickens. In making a home for their family, they are living their own dream. The kids are, from left, Norah (6), Sawyer (11), Isla (10) and Rowan (4).

Jenna was born in Crescent City, and the family moved around Northern Californian and Oregon a bit before she returned to Crescent City to finish high school and seek a degree in cosmetology. Seth spent most of his early years in San Francisco and grew up in Sonoma. He enjoyed his education at CSU-Chico and graduated with a degree in construction management. They met through Seth's mother who introduced them when she was in the stands at a Chico sporting event; they married (16 years ago) when they were relatively young. Jenna started and grew a cosmetology business which she sold to concentrate on their kids and Seth, after working for others in the construction field, decided that he, too, wanted to be his own boss.

After getting married in Sonoma, they started out in Sonoma County and fell in love with the town early on. Except for a short time during Covid when they were living in Montana, they've lived in the Sonoma area and, after they found the right site, Diamond A in particular.

Their initial experience with public and private schools was unsatisfactory. They found the education process inefficient and ineffective. They also had relatives elsewhere who had enjoyed terrific experiences with home schooling, both as students themselves and later as parents, and, after looking into it, they decided to give it a try. They also thought that they had been missing out on the best parts of being parents. Their four kids [ed. note: obviously very bright and well-mannered] have a school day which probably averages 4-5 hours a day, but without the non-educational "stuff" that fills a public school day. Jenna is confident that the kids are progressing well above what would be grade level in their education. [This reminds me of Garrison Keillor's line that in Lake Wobegon, all of the kids are above average...but these kids really are.] In the early years, she's comfortable that she stays ahead of the kids, but she knows that the skills of others will increasingly become necessary. Currently, for the older kids she subs out robotics and math to a professor in Santa Rosa, and Seth helps with computer stuff; she looks forward to drawing on other resources as necessary. Currently they are studying the Middle Ages in an interdisciplinary way, which on a given day may include writing, reading, music, science and art. During other parts of the day they all have chores, whether in the garden or with the animals, learning responsibility and

biology and animal husbandry along the line. The Mazes and other Sonoma home schoolers gather regularly as a community to exchange ideas and resources for things like the performing arts and second languages.

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As usual, I asked Jenna and Seth some questions—in many cases, their answers overlap:

**Favorite Vacation**

**Spot:** Maui

**Favorite Sports**

**Teams:** Giants and 49ers

**What Worries You:**

*Jenna:* TikTok and social media

*Seth:* The lack of regulation of AI

**Favorite Sonoma**

**Event:** Fourth of July

**Favorite restaurant?**

Cafe La Haye and Glen Ellen Star

**Role Model:**

*Jenna:* My Dad

*Seth:* My Dad and My First Boss

**What Irritates You:**

*Jenna:* People texting and driving

**Both:** When businesses funnel you away from human operators

**Seth:** Jenna thinks too many things irritate me, but I'm improving

**Favorite Dessert:**

**Jenna:** Lemon Tart or anything with blackberries

**Seth:** Chocolate lava cake or blackberry cobbler, both a la mode

**Pivot Points:**

Covid, which prompted complete reexamination of what they wanted.

**Top of Bucket List:**

Taking the kids to the places they are learning about

**Favorite Sonoma charities?**

**Jenna:** Sonoma Chicks; Tania Soderman has been rescuing animals for years and does beautiful photography to support the activity.

**Seth:** FISH and the Boys and Girls Club.

*[Although the structure of local home schooling in Sonoma provides plenty of social opportunities for the Maze kids, if any Diamond A readers have visiting children looking for playdates, check in with Jenna.]*