

DANA Newsletter

Diamond A Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 75
Sonoma, CA 95476

Fall 2016

President's Message

It has more than a year since the Association has published a newsletter, and the Board thinks the time is right to issue another. While we now have other forms of communication available (such as email and our great Diamond A website), a newsletter can serve as a consolidation of topics of interest to our membership. We will try to keep it informative and responsive to membership perspectives. So please let us know of any suggestions you want to make.

Current Topics

One of the items we want to include is a summary of the issues that the board may be working on, or which might be otherwise of import to the membership. At this writing at least several topics should be of interest--
Emergency Preparedness, Home Rentals, Hill Warming Parties/ Community Picnic, and Road Conditions,

See articles on these topics and others in this edition.

John Walsh
President, Diamond A Neighborhood Association

Treasurer's Message

In 2016, we expanded the reach of DANA to welcome members from Diamond A Ranches and independent properties, in addition to Estates residents. Our thanks to all who have paid their 2016 membership dues. Your support allows the association to better serve the greater Diamond A community. As a DANA member, your very reasonable annual dues will go toward a number of activities, including:

- Two Hill Warming parties for current and new residents, and our new annual DARA/DANA Community Picnic for all
- Online access to the DANA telephone directory & DANA's List of vendors (and a hard copy for residents without email addresses)
- Maintaining the web site: www.diamondasonoma.com
- Maintaining the Neighborhood Watch & Emergency Preparedness Programs
- Diamond A DANA Google Group email system
- Maintenance of a large medical kit in Rec Clubhouse for disasters
- Maintaining the Critical Issues resident email list
- Architecture Review Committee administration: to encourage new projects to be in conformance with County & Diamond A standards
- Keeping the county apprised of the conditions of our roads & grounds

If you have not done so, please send your dues (\$50) to:

Diamond A Neighborhood Association

PO Box 75
Sonoma, CA 95476

If you are unsure about the status of your membership, please shoot me an email at 4deeyoung@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks,
Dee Young
Treasurer, Diamond A Neighborhood Association

Diamond A Trail Blazer Committee **by Dee Young**

The Diamond A community was created as a horse friendly development. As a result, a number of easements exist for our properties to allow passage of equestrians throughout the community. The trails thus created also serve as hiking trails, fire breaks, alternative access for emergency personnel, and added value to our properties.

But keeping those easements clear is proving to be a challenge.

We thank those residents who have kept their easements clear, and those who have made generous donations, providing some funds needed to help clear our easements. The work always exceeds the funds available, so we continue to need your help

If you would like to contribute, we would greatly appreciate any amount. Please make checks payable to Dee Young, C/O Diamond A Trail Blazers, 19320 Kenleigh Drive, Sonoma, CA 95476.

The always popular Barn Party will be held at the Lyon's Barn on September 24, 2016: SAVE THE DATE! This is an event that should not be missed. Proceeds from this event go to yearly easement maintenance, such as the removal of rocks, trees and general debris that Mother Nature decides to put into the path after the winter season.

DANA Annual Meeting 2016

The DANA Board held its annual meeting at the Diamond A Recreation Center on Sunday, February 28th from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm. In what has become an annual tradition (it is the 3rd year!), the Board meeting was preceded by a brunch for all DANA members—serving quiche, fruit, pastries and Mimosas and Bloody Marys.

Highlights from the meeting:

Board member changes:

Tia Pierce, Christine Meacham and Craig Garcia were elected to the Board, joining John Walsh, Tom Jones, Dee Young, Dave Duncan, John Walker, and Bob Kraynak. Outgoing Board members Bruce Hoadley, Robin Layton, and Liz Treacy were thanked for their service.

(Later in the Spring, John Walker resigned from the board, and was replaced by Ruth Fassinger, by vote of the board, as is directed in the by-laws)

Amendments to the by-laws:

There were 3 proposed amendments to the by-laws:

- Clarification of which Diamond A properties/owners/residents are eligible for membership
- Members' partners made eligible for board seats.
- Dues increased to \$50

All were unanimously approved.

Updates on topics:

Updates were given on Emergency Preparedness, Trails, the fire house, ARC, roads, and Vacation Rentals.

Minutes of annual meetings and copies of newsletters are available on the website:

<http://www.diamondasonoma.com/poa-newsletters.html>

Hill Warming Parties and the inaugural DARA/DANA Community Picnic

For many years DANA has organized Hill Warming Parties. These have been 2-hour, late afternoon events in Spring and Fall, funded by DANA, staffed by DANA volunteers, and held at the homes of DANA members. They provide a casual mechanism to welcome new residents and to allow existing residents to renew connections, in a warm environment with quality food, wine, and beer.

They also give residents a chance to visit the homes of some of their neighbors, allowing members to experience the wide variety of architectural and landscaping styles we are lucky to have here in Diamond A."

The Fall Hill Warming is scheduled for October 2. Please hold the date.

Recently some DANA members have noted that these events have been conducted as adults-only affairs, thus limiting an opportunity for members with children to introduce their children to other residents and children

In response to this complaint, we pointed out some issues, among which are:

- DANA has no central facility to house the events, and is dependent on members opening their homes to the event. Several have declined to host if children were present, for liability and other reasons. This limits the selection of the possible venues, which is an essential step for the organizers
- DANA has no liability insurance to cover any untoward events, the likelihood of which can increase with children involved
- The tone of the events (many adults in conversation, with drinks involved) is not the most desirable/interesting environment for children, so may not serve the purpose intended
- Most of the venues have had no mechanism to conduct/supervise activities appropriate for children, who could range in age from infants to teens. Keeping the interest of children during what is basically a 2-hour cocktail party would be difficult

However, the DANA board unanimously agreed that helping families with children get more engaged in the community is an important goal for DANA.

As a result, DANA initiated a dialog with the Diamond A Recreation Association (DARA) to see if we could partner on an event to address this issue. Many of DANA members are also DARA members, so this seemed appropriate.

Fortunately, DARA was receptive. It has several advantages DANA does not possess. It has a wonderful facility to provide activities for both adults and children, liability insurance for such events, willing volunteers, and experience in conducting such potentially large events of longer duration than 2 hours.

The result was the co-sponsored DARA/DANA Community Picnic held on July 23. It was open to all Diamond A residents, independent of membership in either organization. It provided the opportunity to engage residents and children over a longer period than the Hill Warming Parties, with activities for all.

Based on feedback, we believe this should be an annual event, and should serve as a suitable vehicle to assist residents who wish to get children involved in the Diamond A community

Emergency Preparedness:

The Emergency Preparedness Committee has been hard at work, aiming to better our ability to deal with emergencies in Diamond A.

An important near in event it has organized is a Fire Safety Fair. It is to be held at the Rec Center on September 18 from 2-4PM.

Representatives from Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue, and Cal Fire will be giving presentations relative to this important topic.

Refreshments will be provided by the Sonoma Valley Firefighters Association

Please plan to attend

Roads:

As we all know, road conditions in the County have deteriorated badly. Sonoma County, even more than others, suffers from lower gas tax revenue, given the extensive road infrastructure relative to population. County supervisors have been unable to pass specialized taxes for roads (for reasons too lengthy to state here). They have authorized additional funds from the general fund earmarked for road maintenance.

None of these actions will solve the problem for the county and for Diamond A, however.

Bob Kraynak stays in touch with County officials to push on issues to be addressed in Diamond A, within the bounds of the County problem, with some degree of success.

We will continue to press on issues.

It is important, however, for residents to continue communication with their County and State representatives on this issue to get the maximum funding possible

Home rentals:

As you know, a major topic over the past 18 months or so has been the issue of Vacation Rentals. After a significant effort, the County has passed a new Vacation Rentals Ordinance and clarified rules for Hosted Rentals. In order to consolidate information on all forms of rentals (including Vacation and Hosted Rentals), we have replaced the website section on Vacation Rentals with one covering all forms:

<http://www.diamondasonoma.com/vacation-rentals.html>

Please visit this link for current information