

Twin Oaks Valley

EQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION
Serving Twin Oaks Valley and the surrounding communities

Late Summer 2014

The Evolution of Walnut Grove Park... In a Nutshell

Currently, WGP is located on 29 acres in Twin Oaks Valley. It is home to the only public horse park in San Diego County, the historic Williams Barn, Heritage Park, the San Marcos Historical Society, 9 soccer fields, a staging area for miles of multi-use trails that connect our neighborhoods, and this intriguing sign from bygone days.

In the early 1890's, the Rancho Los Vallecitos de San Marcos was subdivided. Russell Cox, a Cattle man and Quaker from Pennsylvania, acquired several large parcels of land to use for his herd of Guernsey cattle and farming. The Uhlands (who came to the area in 1885 and homesteaded the property we know now as the Golden Door) bought 39 acres in the late 1930's from Russell's widow, Edith Cox, and planted additional English walnut trees to add to their farm. Ten acres of this land was eventually purchased by the City of San Marcos in 1968 with the intention of using it as a new recreational area.

In 1959, the unincorporated community of San Marcos' main park was called "San Marcos Park", and was located where Bradley Park is now. Throughout the 1960's, this city park was the home of a spirited group of equestrians - the Los Vallecitos Riders Corral 108, where they maintained a riding arena, held equestrian events and supported trails development in the area (including the infamous trail from Palomar Mountain to Vista and the Pacific Ocean).

In 1969, a new master plan for the San Marcos Park included numerous playing fields and gave the Los Vallecitos Riders the option to relocate their arena to the 10 acre city property purchased in Twin Oaks Valley. The club was active in the community and raised funds to install a new arena and bought playground equipment for the new park. In May of 1974, a naming ceremony and horse arena dedication was held, and Walnut Grove Park was made official. LVR hosted equestrian events at the San Marcos Arena for the next 45 years. "The Walnut Festival" was held at the new park every fall, and crowds gathered to pick walnuts, see equestrian demonstrations, hear country music, and enjoy food, games and festivities.

In 1980, the City received a grant to improve the park with grass fields, playground equipment and picnic areas. An Easter Egg Hunt became an annual tradition at the park. During the late 1980's, the San Marcos Chili cook-off and a Renaissance Faire were popular community events. In the 1990's, the Williams Barn was relocated to WGP and the first trails day, known as the Back Country Ramble, staged out of the park. The City hosted "Day of the Family", introducing the community to family friendly activities in the area. Population in the area grew and large planned residential developments included parks and trails systems which preserved the equestrian and rural agricultural character of the area. Around this time, 18 acres between the riding arenas and Sycamore were purchased for future park expansion.

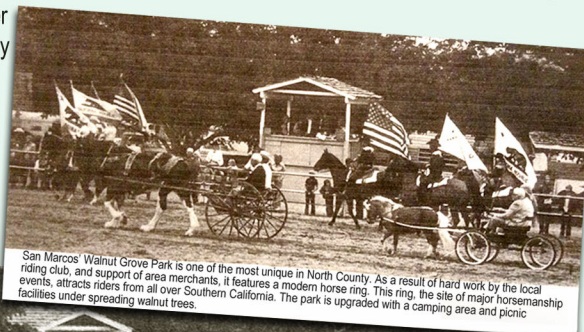
During the early 2000's, historical homes and buildings were moved to the park. Heritage Park and the San Marcos Historical Society found their permanent home in 2005. In 2006, the City purchased 7 acres south of Olive and 17 acres north of Sycamore Drive and developed a new master plan for the park. The plan included acres of paved parking and several new soccer fields. National soccer organization AYSO added \$50,000 to help build the fields. The new plan downsized the horse park acreage and proposed relocating the arenas. The new WGP development sparked concern in the horse community that soccer would be squeezing out horse activities. The new generation of Los Vallecitos Riders and sister club Vallecitos Spurs Gymkhana Club together with equestrian supporters rallied around the horse park with events and fund raisers. The Twin Oaks Valley Equestrian Association

was founded in 2005. These organizations came together to advocate for the growing horse community and the shrinking horse park. The first annual Poker Ride and Stride to help the WG horse park was held in October of 2007. The community event grew each year and partnered with the Historical Society in 2010 to become the Horse Heritage Festival. This event, reminiscent of the Walnut Festival of the past, is held every October and has raised nearly \$60,000 to improve the horse park.

Historic photos and information courtesy of the San Marcos Historical Society. Visit Heritage Park!



Located behind the kiosk is this section of the original San Marcos Arena Sponsor sign. Does anyone know what happened to the remaining original sign sections? (See original signs in historical arena photo lower right).



San Marcos' Walnut Grove Park is one of the most unique in North County. As a result of hard work by the local riding club, and support of area merchants, it features a modern horse ring. This ring, the site of major horsemanship facilities under spreading walnut trees. The park is upgraded with a camping area and picnic



There were over 2100 people, and about 750 horses, at the San Marcos' Arena on May 12 when it was opened with a colorful parade and dedicated with heartfelt sincerity to all horsepeople of the area.

The Walnut Grove horse park is always open to the public and continues to be used for horseshows, gymkhanas, clinics, Escondido Mounted Posse practice drills, and as a large animal evacuation center when fires threaten nearby communities. San Marcos Fire Communications Team and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) use the park for an emergency communication outpost. The park is a gathering place for all types of activities including weddings, square dances and a family campout. Our summers have been kicked off over the past few years by the Rock, Blues & BBQ Festival. Regular soccer games and practices keep the park busy on weekends. In the last two years, several soccer tournaments fill the park beyond capacity.

What is next?

A new master plan for the park is once again in the works. One challenge is in having a historically equestrian park coexist with a large soccer venue. Twin Oaks Valley is an equestrian destination and the Horse Park at Walnut Grove has been its hub. The horse community at large is at a turning point when it comes to the preservation of horse land. The City of San Marcos is taking the lead and visiting equestrian parks in neighboring cities in Southern California to see how these venues are developed and maintained. Could the 17 acres to the North become the home of a new sustainable equestrian event venue? It is my hope that the horse heritage of our community is honored and encouraged and that the equestrian legacy of the San Marcos Arena continues for future generations.

Patty Morton
President, Twin Oaks Valley Equestrian Association
Chair, The Horse Heritage Festival
www.helpthehorsepark.com

Got Photos?

We love to see how Walnut Grove Park has changed! We are looking for photos and historic information related to equestrian activities at Walnut Grove Park.

Please share by emailing us at: info@keepitequestrian.com
or mail to: TOVEA - PMB 430 - 197 Woodland Pkwy #104 - San Marcos, CA 92069-3020

Community Strengthened Through Common Ground

By LA Doval

The equestrian community came together on Sunday, May 18th to share their differences and similarities during the Common Ground Clinic at Walnut Grove Horse Park in San Marcos. There were three classes in which riders could participate: Gymkhana, Saddle Seat and Hunter/Jumper.

Lori Hall-McNary of Rockin' L&D Ranch kicked off the day with a Gymkhana class. She shared a bit of history about its origins. It turns out, Gymkhana began with the Nez Pierce Native Americans, and was eventually adopted by cowboys and the U.S. Cavalry to train for work and battle. Lori led the participants through games such as barrel racing, speed ball, pole bending and figure eight stake. An experienced Gymkhana rider and horse demonstrated each game, and the class participants followed suit at much slower pace than actual Gymkhana competition. Due to the high rate of speed we are accustomed to seeing in Gymkhana, Lori teaches students techniques to keep their horses well balanced, so they compete swiftly and safely.

The second class was led by Lance Bennett of Rancho Vista Show Horses. He shared the origins of Saddle Seat riding, which lie in the southern United States, during the Plantation Era. The class began with a demonstration of the natural, high stepping movement of two Friesians and a Morgan that Lance brought to the clinic. First, they were ridden by accomplished Saddle Seat riders, and later, riders who had no Saddle Seat experience had a chance to give it a try. They all looked fabulous and rode in a style that they had never had the opportunity to try before.

The third class focused on jumping and was led by Hanna Mauritzson of Swede Equine in San Marcos. Hanna presented two sessions. The first session was set with lower jumps, and the second session with jumps up to 3 feet. Riders participated in one or both sessions. Each began with a warm up period, and then moved on to a course consisting of a three jump bounce, ground poles and a line. Later, Hanna led students through a gymnastic of 4 jumps, including one oxer. The class culminated when the two courses were combined for one big finish.

The Common Ground Clinic is an annual event hosted by the Twin Oaks Valley Equestrian Association (TOVEA). It is a fun and safe environment for riders to explore equestrian disciplines they may not otherwise have an opportunity to try. At the end of the day, it was clear that whether we ride Western style, Saddle Seat or Hunter/Jumper, we strive for common goals - mastering our skills, while maintaining a healthy and balanced horse.



COMMON GROUND CLINIC
2014 Trainers
Lori Hall-McNary - Rockin' L&D Ranch
Lance Bennett - Rancho Vista Show Horses
Hanna Mauritzson - Swede Equine



Heritage Park presents the San Marcos Arts Council's
Chickens on Parade Live Auction!

Save the Date!

Sunday, October 19th
Walnut Grove Park, San Marcos
Horse Heritage Festival



Family Fun Activities
from 10 to 3

Pony Rides - Petting Zoo
BBQ - Frontier Games
Pumpkin Patch - Crafts
Demonstrations & More!

Annual Poker Ride & Stride - benefiting Walnut Grove Horse Park
Trainers for TERI to benefit the TERI Therapeutic Riding Program
Walkers & Riders Check-in @ 8:30 am

For more information & registration forms go to: www.HelpTheHorsePark.com

2014 Board

Eric Antman - Lori Hall McNary
Patty Morton - Sherry Ortega
Janet Parillo - Carol Shuttleworth
Viki Strand

TOVEA Board meetings are open to all - 1st Monday of the month 6:30pm at the
Welcome Center in Walnut Grove Park - 1950 Sycamore Drive, San Marcos
For more information please email : patty@pathfinderfarm.com

TOVEA - PMB 430 - 197 Woodland Pkwy #104 - San Marcos, CA 92069-3020

