Happy New Year!

2021 was an amazing year for the Walnut Creek Historical Society! It was a challenging and productive year but also a year of firsts. We held our first classic car show where over one thousand community members attended including our Mayor, Kevin Wilk. The line for house tours was out the door the entire day. There was live music, raffle prizes and over 70 Ford automobiles representing the last 100 years. This event was even featured on the six and eleven o’clock news. Another first was Oktoberfest where we served authentic German cuisine. There was also live German music, beer and fun activities such as the Chicken Dance and Stein Holding Contest, where our own Anina Dalsin won hands down without a waiver in her outstretched arm! Lastly, over 500 people came to see Santa on December 4th and spent the day listening to children’s wishes for Christmas.

In July the Board hosted a combined Member Appreciation and Annual Dinner in the beautiful backyard of the Shadelands Ranch Museum. The event was attended by over 75 members and guests. We were honored to have two past Mayors, Loella Haskew and Cindy Silva and our present Mayor, Kevin Wilk in attendance. The Holiday Tea Committee members, Judy Caponigro, Karen Majors, Priscilla Tudor and Barbara Baum were presented with the 2020 Mary Penniman Award for their work on the Tea for Two boxes. It was wonderful to host these important events at a time of year where we could enjoy being on our beautiful grounds.

Sadly, with the new vaccination restrictions and the uptick in Covid 19 cases, the Holiday Tea Committee made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 Holiday Teas. Mark your calendars next year for the celebration of our 40th Anniversary of the Holiday Teas. The Tea Committee is already hard at work planning special activities to mark this special milestone.

Jackie, Moira, Christine and Andrew did an amazing job of readying the house for the Holiday Craft Faire! Our first weekend, the line was out the door and around the house with customers waiting to see all the amazing crafts. This year’s Holiday Craft Faire had the highest grossing sales since 2018! Congratulations to our fabulous team!

Finally, the board would like to say a special thank you to Teresa Wenzel for taking on the role of Board President for the last 3 years. She did an amazing job navigating through a pandemic and keeping the board and staff motivated.

Andrea Baldacci & Pam O’Donnell
Walnut Creek Historical Society
Shadelands Ranch Museum
2022 Events

Classic Car Show 6/5/2022
Time: 10 AM - 3 PM
Tickets available on Eventbrite.com beginning March 1

Annual Dinner and Member Appreciation 7/25/2022
Time: 6 PM
More information to come.

Summer Market 7/31/2022
Time: 10 AM - 3 PM
Tickets available on Eventbrite.com beginning March 1

Oktoberfest 10/1/2022
Time: TBA
Tickets available on Eventbrite.com beginning August 1

Holiday Faire 11/26/22—12/11/22
Handcrafted items for sale
Hours: 10 AM & 4 PM Daily

Holiday Tea 11/26/22—12/11/22
3-course tea luncheon
Tea Times: 11 AM & 1:30 PM
Champagne Teas: 12/3/22, 12/9/22, & 12/10/22
Cost: TBA
Tickets available October 1 at 9 AM (925) 935-7871

Downtown Walking Tours
3/12, 4/9, 5/14, 6/11, 7/9, 8/13, 9/10, 10/8
Easy 90-minute walking tour on city sidewalks
Reservations available at wchistory.org

Shadelands Ranch Museum
Open for tours every Wednesday & Sunday 1 PM—4 PM

For more information on events, membership or volunteer opportunities go to wchistory.org or call (925) 935-7871
2660 Ygnacio Valley Rd. Walnut Creek
October 2014 Raggedy Ann & Andy Display at the WC Library

Staff Spotlight

The Walnut Creek Historical Society has over 200 members but we don’t always get to meet all our members. This in turn means that members don’t get to know the staff that help keep the museum going. The next few newsletters will put a spotlight on our staff!

Christine Baltzley
Event Staff Lead

Christine began working at the museum in 2007 as a cashier for the Holiday Faire along with her brother Andrew Land (spotlight coming soon). In 2016 she transitioned into helping work our weddings/events. It became apparent very early on that she is a great asset to the museum. In 2017 she was promoted to Event Staff Lead, working year round with our Living History program and helping organize vendors for the Holiday Faire. In 2018 she stepped up again and organized our first Bridal Faire bringing in over 40 wedding/event vendors and over 100 brides to our venue. We look forward to bringing this event back in 2023!! She has become an integral part of our event staff, often stepping in to meet with potential clients looking to book our venue for their event, recruiting new vendors for our Holiday Faire or Summer Market, and networking with outside groups looking to host new events on our site. Christine grew up in Antioch and lives in Oakley with her husband and daughter, Rylnn, who is also very much a part of the WCHS family. Please make sure you introduce yourself at our next member event!!
Ever the consummate hostess, Bessie Penniman is greeting guests at “If A Tree Falls: Art of the Boundary Oak” at the Bedford Gallery in the Lesher Center for the Arts. An oil portrait of Bessie and her bulldog by Oakland artist Jane Fisher hangs on the “welcome” panel of the exhibition.

Bessie Penniman and Her American Bulldog by Jane Fisher. 2021, oil on oak, 20” x 29.”

The exhibition memorializes Walnut Creek’s signature Valley Oak, which tragically fell during a massive windstorm in October, 2019. As a tribute to the tree’s long life and rich history, which spanned 325 years, the 64 artists in the exhibition created artworks from its wood, offering this monumental being a second life. Each artwork—made exclusively for the show—provides visitors a rare opportunity to see how artists interpret the same base material in different ways. The beauty of this exhibition is that the Boundary Oak tree – and Bessie Penniman - will continue to exist through the thoughtful reimagining of the Bay Area artistic community.


Artist Jane Fisher, in choosing what to present for the show, decided to honor the history of Walnut Creek with her work. For inspiration and background, she went to the photographs in the Walnut Creek Historical Society collection. The image of Bessie with her dog spoke to the historic aspect, showing a member of one of the city’s first families, and to Jane’s creative sense, as she enjoys painting dogs.

The piece of wood that Jane selected had cracks in it, which added a touch of melancholy and aging to its mood. Jane tried to patch the cracks, but she didn’t let it cure long enough and the cracks recurred. She then decided to leave them and let them become part of the work. She patched small imperfections in the wood with wood putty, sanded it, primed it with acrylic gesso and then commenced painting.

Jane said that the entire project was really fun. She very much enjoyed her tour of the Walnut Creek Historical Society’s photograph collection and thought she could do an entire show inspired by the images it contains.

“If A Tree Falls” runs through February 13, 2022. Make some time to drop by and visit Bessie and see the rest of the creative output of this imaginative approach to preserving a piece of Walnut Creek’s history.

And remember that the photographs in the WCHS collection are available to all. Just like your family, the Pennimans documented weddings, vacations, picnics, and the like in photographs. Go to wchistory.org and select PHOTOS. From the PHOTOS page, select HOME for search tips, and then start having fun searching the photographs. Try searching “Bessie Penniman” or “Mary Penniman” to get started!

Suzanne Hudson
On October 17th the Walnut Creek Historical Society hosted their first Oktoberfest event. The beautiful grounds of the Shadelands Ranch Museum were transformed into a magical German biergarten with Bavarian houses serving German desserts and pretzels. Our members and guests arrived in their lederhosen and dirndls to partake of authentic German cuisine from Ludwig’s German Table, beer and wine. There was live German entertainment by Alpine Sound featuring wonderful music, stein holding and costume contests and the Chicken Dance! It was a beautiful day and a great community event which raised funds for our educational and history programs.

Thank you to all who attended! The pictures below show what a great event this was.

We already have Oktoberfest on the calendar for October 1st of 2022, so don’t miss out and get your tickets when they go on sale!
A new service available to our members! Photo digitization!

Vicki Weis is a former museum collections manager with 20 + years of experience managing photo archives and transferring historical photograph collections to digital media for preservation and public access. She is also one of our most outstanding volunteers! If your family is in need of someone to tackle their collection of photo albums, you cannot do better than Vicki. Visit her website at vickiphotoscanning.com or email her at Vicki@vickiphotoscanning.com.

FROM THE HISTORY ROOM.......TEA AT SHADELANDS

It is thought that the English custom of afternoon tea began in the 19th century when Anna, the Duchess of Bedford, was hungry long before dinner was served between 8 and 9 pm. She solved this problem with a pot of tea and some snacks around 3:30 in the afternoon. Soon she invited her friends to join her, and taking tea mid afternoon became the thing to do.

In the United States drinking tea with or without light refreshments takes place almost anytime, and at Shadelands we continue this tradition at special times of the year like spring and the winter holidays.

Our history reveals that during the many years of Shadeland’s teas not everything happened the same way or at the same time. It started with Edmond Moyer who managed Shadelds Ranch almost 30 years. In 1924 he purchased 100 tulip bulbs and planted them near the ranch house. When they bloomed Moyer’s wife, Daisy, wanted to share this beautiful array of tulips with the public. She began holding “Tulip Teas” where visitors were given a cup of tea to sip as they viewed the blooming tulips. Participation was free, but donations were accepted. The Moyers passed the donations on to the their church and to the Rotary Club.

Years later, with the Moyers no longer in Walnut Creek and Shadelds the home of the WCHS, the Tulip Teas were revived and Shadelds volunteers made cookies to accompany the tea. The number of tulips blooming on the grounds increased every year. Some tulip bulbs were donated and some purchased. Fifteen years after the first bulb was planted there were 20,000 tulips in 6 colors, one of the largest tulip beds in California.

Tulip Teas were always held in spring when flowers are in bloom, but in later years sometimes both a spring tulip tea and a holiday tea in December were held. Finally, as the number of tulip viewers decreased, it was decided to hold holiday teas only, in conjunction with the Holiday Faire, an event where vendors sell everything from Christmas ornaments to jam, each item unique and homemade.

Join us this year for our special secret blend of tea and delicious scones, tea sandwiches, and desserts. Help us celebrate our long history of tea at Shadelds as this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Holiday Teas, an important milestone. More information about dates and making reservations will follow in the next newsletter.

By Lee Culver
**DOWNTOWN HISTORY TOURS**

Downtown Walnut Creek History tours are back in 2022!

Join us on a Downtown History Tour and you will visit historic sites that are part of our heritage in Walnut Creek.

The next tours are March 12, April 9 & May 14

These easy 90 minute walking tours on city sidewalks are offered on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Check-in begins at 9:00 a.m. at the fountain at Liberty Bell Plaza on the corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Blvd. The tour begins at 9:30 a.m. and is free.

A booklet with historic photos of the sites visited may be purchased at the tour for $5.00.

Registration in advance is required! Please go to our wchistory.org and find the link to register on the Walking Tour page.

For more details about the tours, call 925-935-7871 or go to our website at: wchistory.org

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**Volunteers Needed:**

If you love history and would like to help preserve and pass on the fascinating story of the Penniman family, Shadelands and Walnut Creek, become a volunteer.

Volunteer schedules are flexible; there is no minimum required number of hours. Volunteers opportunities include leading house tours, downtown history tours, archives and working events. Men and women are welcome. Volunteering with Shadelands is both fun and rewarding; training is provided. Volunteers are invited to our annual member appreciation event and to the holiday tea.

Check out our website at wchistory.org

To volunteer contact the office at 925-935-7871

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**2022 Board of Directors**

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Andrea Baldacci
Pam O'Donnell

**Vice President**
Barton Tolley

**Treasurer**
Lee Culver

**Recording Secretary**
Maggie Hughes

**Archivist**
Lee Culver

**Legal Advisor**
Anina (Ann) Dalsin

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Mark Brown
Lee Culver
Ted Dobbs
Jeff Peterson
James Roachelle
Priscilla Tudor
Teresa Wenzel

**Investment Committee**
Mark Brown
Pam O'Donnell
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**Office Support Staff**

**Office/Event Manager**
Jackie Byrd

**Archives**
Moira Anwar

**Event Coordinator**
Christine Baltzley
HOLIDAYS AT SHADELANDS

Preparations for the holidays begin in November when holiday music is piped through the house to get the staff in the mood, while they put away artifacts and furniture. Hanging over 40 strings of garland and putting up four Christmas trees takes at least 3 weeks but it is worth it. Although we were not able to host the Holiday Teas this year, the house was filled with the holiday spirit with all the amazing goodies made by the over 40 vendors at our Holiday Craft Faire. On opening day, November 27, there was line around the house to get in and start shopping.

On Saturday, December 4 the gazebo and grounds were decorated for our first Santa is Coming to the Ranch event. The free tickets were gone within days and there were over 500 people that signed up to visit with Santa. The small worker’s cabin on the grounds was transformed into a cabin for Santa and Mrs. Claus. The gazebo was decorated so all the visitors could get photos with Santa. Hot chocolate and Shadelands Special Blend Tea was available to help keep everyone warm. Historical Society and NCL volunteers helped to make sure the day went smoothly.

While the children all loved seeing Santa the biggest hit of the day was the giant pile of leaves. All the kids, and Santa, enjoyed jumping through the pile and throwing the leaves in the air.

Our 2022 Holiday season will be even more amazing when we bring back the Holiday Teas.

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR THE WALNUT CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please consider naming the Walnut Creek Historical Society in your will, trust, or as the beneficiary of an insurance policy. The Walnut Creek Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. When you include a gift to the Walnut Creek Historical Society in your estate plan, you ensure your support will help the Society to continue its work to benefit our community in the future.
WCHS Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____________________________________________________________________
MAILING ADDRESS: ______________________________________________________________________
PHONE NUMBER: ______________________________ EMAIL: ___________________________________

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:
Individual $25  Family $45  Student $15  Lifetime (over 55) $300

PAYMENT OPTIONS: Check # __________
Visa/MC/AMEX card # ________________________________ Exp. Date: _________ 3 Digit code _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:
Date: ___________ Payment amount: ___________ Check#/CC approval Code: ___________