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The History of Spring Lakes Park (Synopsis)

Welcome to Spring Lakes Park. This is a synopsis of our history....of how and when it all began.....

In order to begin the history of Spring Lakes Park, let's start with the arrival of John Graham in 1929. He had been a farmer in the State of Idaho for many years, but Idaho was never like Scotts Valley. Here he made his home, farmed and raised hogs for market, profitably.

Scotts Valley had good farmland with a climate that would coax the most reluctant seedling to bountiful maturity in the shortest time and just enough rainfall to please the lucky farmer who put down his roots here. There were natural springs and peat bogs; pastures for cattle and horses, blueberries, oak trees and wildflowers were in abundance.

It was where the springs spread out over the flatland, and cattails, thistles and marshy weeds thrived in the peat bogs, that John Graham's son, Bill, and his wife, Shirley, envisioned a deluxe mobile home park with lakes, and streams and beautiful plants. And it was here that the groundbreaking ceremony for Spring Lakes Park was held on June 9, 1965, by landscape architect John Takemoto and owner, Bill Graham, each sinking a simultaneous shovel into the soil beside the lake.

You can step back in time when you walk into the large, main lounge of the clubhouse and peruse the photograph taken by Bill Graham's mother, Lola Graham, in 1937. The photograph was tucked away for

many years and re-discovered by Dawson Aris, our Park Manager, together with Ralph Pike, one of our long-time resident partners who has also served for many years as a dedicated volunteer advocate. They had it framed and then added a plaque noting that it is a photo of the future home of Spring Lakes Park.

In October 1965, the first coach was moved into the lakeside space number 86. In quick succession more spaces became occupied so that by the end of the year, 1965, there were twenty-four (24) handsome mobile homes sitting in the remodeled peat bog called Spring Lakes Park.

At some point in 1965, the coach in space 88 became available and was purchased by owners Bill and Shirley Graham.

Bill Graham was the owner-manager. However, it was Shirley Graham who welcomed each new arrival with warmth and enthusiasm that made the park home. It was Shirley who furnished the Club House with impeccable taste, who placed outdoor tables and chairs and umbrellas around the pool, who organized the get-together dinners and breakfasts, the ladies' luncheons and the games for everyone. It was Shirley who loved the park and made it beautiful.

In January 1966, twenty-one more coaches were moved into the park and by December 31, fifty six more. In fourteen months since the lots were made available for rental, 101 families had taken up residence in the park.

There were as few rules as needed for so many families from different backgrounds living close together. The chief regulation was "enjoy yourselves and be happy". Bill and Shirley Graham were here to make decisions regarding planting, parking, painting, fishing (for the 4,000 rainbow trout that were stocked in the lakes at the time) feeding the ducks, entertainment and everything else. Activities were organized with a time slot in the week for each, with everyone invited to participate. Shuffle Board, Spanish class, arts and crafts, sewing and knitting, painting, discussion sessions, hymn sing, slides or movies, whist, and always bridge were enjoyed weekly. Of course there were billiard tables and the library was always open and the swimming pool and Jacuzzi were in continual use.

Once a month the park's genial owner-managers arranged a dinner on a Saturday night, a breakfast on the third Sunday morning, a luncheon for the ladies with a fashion show and lunch for the men of the park. Then there were the bicyclers and walkers out for exercise and numerous parties.

In mid December a large Christmas tree was brought in and placed in the window corner of the lounge. Residents had the fun of decorating the tree.

Bill and Shirley hosted Christmas dinner and program. A New Year's Eve celebration was held with the park residents turning out to do the work, enjoy the fun, and finally clean up for a fresh new 1969.

Golden State Mobile Home Owner's League was the one political organization. Harold Snow founded the Spring Lakes Park Chapter in 1968 and served as its first president. Meetings were scheduled quarterly with action explained to protect mobile home owners. Bill Leaver volunteered to be Director of Region 10 in 1969. This included Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, enough to keep Bill busy traveling and boosting G.S.M.H.O.L. The second president in Spring Lakes was Dwight Bennett in 1969-70. He promoted membership by instructive meetings and saw it grow to 80% during his term.

By August 1969, the park was full. Although no new rented spaces were available, the inquiries from outsiders for re-sales grew extensively as the planting grew and the park became more beautiful. For various reasons, occasionally families would need to leave, selling their homes here, which included owners-managers, Bill and Shirley Graham. They moved back into their large house on Mt. Hermon Road a short distance from the Spring Lakes entry.

For Christmas, 1969, the owners hosted a turkey dinner for all residents at the Elks Lodge in Santa Cruz.

New Year's Eve was celebrated in the clubhouse with the committee providing games and food and music for dancing. As the party ended, the revelers drifted home tired and happy and confident of a

prosperous 1970, unaware of the changes that were about to come their way.

Spring brought a lot of action. Streets were being surveyed and inspected and red-blue ribbons, flying from trees and stakes along the streams and trails.

Not only this disruption of the physical beauty of the park upset the residents, but also rumors of plans to sell it by our founders to an investment company were in the air and the rumors turned out to be true. In July of 1970, residents were called to the clubhouse to meet the new owners, Karnan Associates, Incorporated.

Soon a plan for enlarging the mobile home area was announced. Karnin Associates purchased additional land and added 63 spaces. Bulldozers followed the surveyors to dig out a new lake and make streets and lots where Azaleas once bloomed.

This was a distressing time for the Spring Lakes community. The small animals and deer were cleared out of their homes as the expansion progressed. The streets were torn up for underground utilities, not once but several times; the dust from the bulldozers filtered into every nook and cranny of every coach and, worst of all, our activities had no coordinator. As a community, it was decided that something was needed to keep all activities working together in harmony and within the rules and regulations now set for us by the new owners. So in 1971, the Activities Committee was born. From the beginning, this was a smoothly operated organization and in June a fun and successful Market Day was promoted to enhance the treasury.

In July 1972, Karnan had the park up for sale at a reported \$1.8 million. They purportedly had a definite offer from a conglomerate based in Los Angeles. They were, however, willing to sell to the residents of Spring Lakes Park if they could come up with enough money soon enough to buy them out and assume the mortgages.

Bob Morgan, President of the old County Bank, lived in Spring Lakes Park and suggested to Joe Olivieri, who was a former owner of the

Ideal Bar & Grill at the Santa Cruz Wharf and who was also a resident of Spring Lakes Park, that he felt it was a great opportunity. Joe Olivieri looked at the books and noted that they were doing a good business - so why sell? He surmised that, because they were developers, they probably needed the money for another development.

It was a big undertaking and some residents had misgivings but they persevered. A first mortgage was secured from World Savings and a second from the Graham family. Bob Morgan was a leader in getting an organization together to convince residents to buy shares as Partners in Spring Lakes Park. They worked door-to-door to sell shares and they managed to come up with \$700,000. Sixty percent (60%) of the residents did buy into the park at the start and eventually, as residents recognized how well things were running, all 100% did. Shares were sold at \$500 each. Residents bought what they could at the time, some one share, some two and so on. A few bought as many as 20, 30 and 40 shares.

The original *Articles of Partnership* were drawn and dated September 1, 1972, with eleven (11) signature pages noting, the name, address, space number, amount of contribution and the percentage of partnership interest. The Spring Lakes Park General Partnership was formalized and finalized.

Between the time of the original *Articles of Partnership* wherein the residents/partners held varying amounts of shares, based on the amount of money they each chose to invest (\$500.00 per share), concerns began to arise as to domination and control of the park by partners who held the greater amounts of shares, so a General Partnership Meeting was held and, through proceedings as authorized in the *Articles of Partnership*, a vote was taken to equalize the shares among all partners so that no one partner could dominate or control the park. This modification was written into the *Articles of Partnership* and released as *Articles of Partnership With All Amendments Through 11/17/90*. There were some additional modifications in the following years and once again, through the authorized channels, the *Articles of Partnership* were amended and released as *Articles of Partnership With All Amendments Through 11/18/2000*. This version is currently still in full force and effect.

The material for this historical background is derived from a variety of sources including data from scrapbooks located in the Clubhouse library, newspaper articles, and the memories of several long time residents/partners who so generously gave of their time for the purpose of preserving the history of our lovely community.

Given the resources available it is not possible to guarantee the exact events, names, places and dates. However, through sincere efforts, the intent was, and is, to provide as much accuracy as possible.

Once again, we welcome you and hope that you will enjoy your life here, as many of us have been doing for many years....

It's a peaceful place where you can walk or ride a bike around our lovely lakes; sit on one of the many park benches in sun or shade to watch the ducks, swans and other little water loving creatures.

There are a large variety of activities from which to choose and a lovely Clubhouse where most of our social activities and special events take place. Our library is an excellent resource for books and jigsaw puzzles to borrow or you can enjoy a cup of coffee and read the newspapers while sitting in comfortable chairs.

The Gazette is a weekly newsletter that is delivered to everyone's mailbox each Friday, detailing upcoming events and other happenings in our park.

If you are interested in active participation in some of our activities and events, volunteers are always welcome. It's a great way to get to know your neighbors. A friendly wave is commonplace as you drive, bike or walk around the park.

Combine all of that and you have the winning blend that makes up our community of Spring Lakes Park.