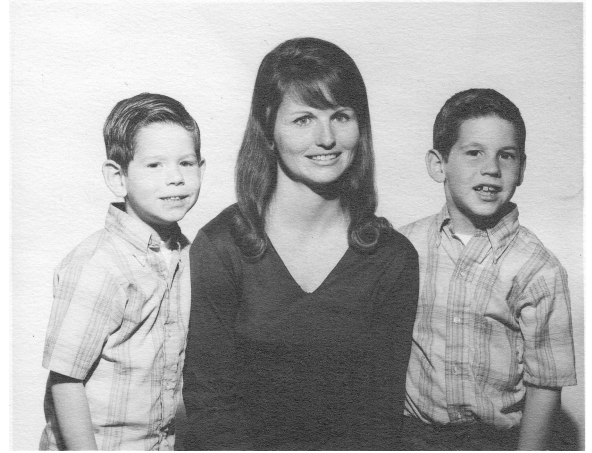


Spotlight on Sue Weatherwax Maxwell

Sue Weatherwax Maxwell has led a very interesting and active life—riding motorcycles, scuba diving, playing tennis, water skiing and riding horses—not to mention being a great wife, mother and grandmother. In 1986 when Sue's health forced her to give up many of her favorite activities, it did not affect her enjoyment of being with family and combining that with her love of horses and horse-related activities. For the past 30 years horses have been a big part of Sue's life. From the time she and her husband, Tom, bought their first Appaloosa—to now experiencing the excitement of watching Tom and her son, Lance, compete in quarter horse events and activities, Sue's life has been richly rewarding and never dull.



Sue with sons Rob & Lance - 1969

Here in her own words is Sue's story of her life after Azusa High. I'm sure that you'll enjoy reading it as much as I did.



Sue & Tom Maxwell - 1971

Life before Horses

I married Tom Maxwell (AHS '59) in July 1971 and we bought a house in Huntington Beach soon after. Tom was racing motorcycles at the time we married and we spent most weekends in the desert, riding. I had a Suzuki 125cc and was fearless until it came to going downhill!! We were able to travel a bit when he was sponsored by Yamaha (a free trip is always a good thing). An injury sidelined the motorcycles and so we took up tennis and eventually bought a ski boat. Soon all of our vacations were spent camping and water skiing at Lake Havasu, Lake Mead and my favorite, the Colorado River. We have lots of wonderful memories of this time. The whole family still loves to go camping.

Life after Horses

In 1979 Tom took a job with Bechtel and we moved to Arizona. This move introduced us to horses and changed our lives. We became active with Appaloosa horses, eventually having too many. I rode with a women's Appaloosa drill team, mostly in parades. Tom did some competitive endurance riding and my younger son, Lance, showed horses. We were able to travel to several western states and to Illinois for one major horse show.



Sue on her Appaloosa mare - 1979



Tom & Sue at a horse show - 1984

In 1984 we moved to Templeton, California so my sons, Rob and Lance, could attend college there. Templeton has almost doubled in size since we've lived here; its current population is 3,000. We are in the central coast area, inland from Morro Bay and Hearst Castle, and near Paso Robles in wonderful wine country. Mmmm.

We brought our Appaloosa horses with us to Templeton and soon found that we were living in Quarter Horse country. We sold all of the Appaloosas (except my mare who died a couple years ago at 27) and bought Quarter Horses. Lance started showing our new horses, Tom competed in Team Penning and I just rode for pleasure around Templeton.

Work and Cutting Horses



Trainer Gary Gonsalves on Rosa - 2001

When we moved to Arizona I decided to try my hand at real estate. I did quite well, but did not like the 24/7 it required. After we came back to California I went back to the bookkeeping I had done for years.

Two of my clients were cutting horse trainers and we soon became friends. At their urging, we bought our first cutting horse, Rosa, a gorgeous black Quarter Horse mare. We kept her in training for a couple of years and enjoyed being "owners", watching her compete.

Cutting originated on ranches where a cow was separated (cut) from the herd to be doctored. Cowboys found ways to turn it into rivalry and cutting horse competition was born. These horses are amazing athletes and sooo fun to watch. Competition is 2 ½ minutes and the horse must perform without the rider using his hands as guidance to keep the cow away from his buddies in the herd.

Play

After Tom retired in 1997 we bought a cutting horse for him and he became the oldest beginner in a sport of young men. Our lives have not been the same since. Our horse trailer has a small living quarters (like an RV) and we now travel to cuttings all over the western USA. One of our favorite trips was spending ten days at the Polo Ranch in Big Horn, Wyoming. Since Tom does not compete every day during the events, we get to leave the horse in his stall and play tourist for the day. We go anywhere there is cattle to cut—equestrian centers, feed lots, fairgrounds and ranches. We've not taken a vacation without horses since this all started! For us, three days at a feed lot in Bakersfield is like Disneyland and a week at a ranch in Carbondale, Colorado is better than a trip to Maui.

During the past twelve years we have managed to get away for a few long weekends without horses, including annual trips to Gold Mine Country and to a feast in Columbia (near Sonora). We attend the feast on the Thursday before Christmas each year and see some of the same people year after year, many of whom have become close friends. At the feast everyone dresses in period costumes and it's our chance to relive the Old West that we love.



Tom & Sue in Columbia - 1999



Sue & Annie - May 2009

In 1986 I was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting Multiple Sclerosis. I'd have an occasional flare-up and then return to normal. Over the years my MS has changed and now I'm considered chronic-progressive. All this means is that I walk funny and have really bad balance. Heat and fatigue bother me, but hey, that's what air conditioning and afternoon naps are for.

I'm still working as a bookkeeper. I job-share with my daughter-in-law and love my two six-hour days at work. I'm just not ready to retire. I love gardening and reading—oh, and those afternoon naps too. I no longer ride horses; the ground is a long way down! Both sons are married and live about ten minutes from us. We have one granddaughter and assorted "grand-dogs". Life is good!