

ARTI-FACTS

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Idyllwild Area Historical Society

**Preserving the History of Idyllwild and the surrounding
communities in the San Jacinto Mountains**

October 2007

HEMET DAM - AN HISTORICAL WONDER

By Ben Killingsworth

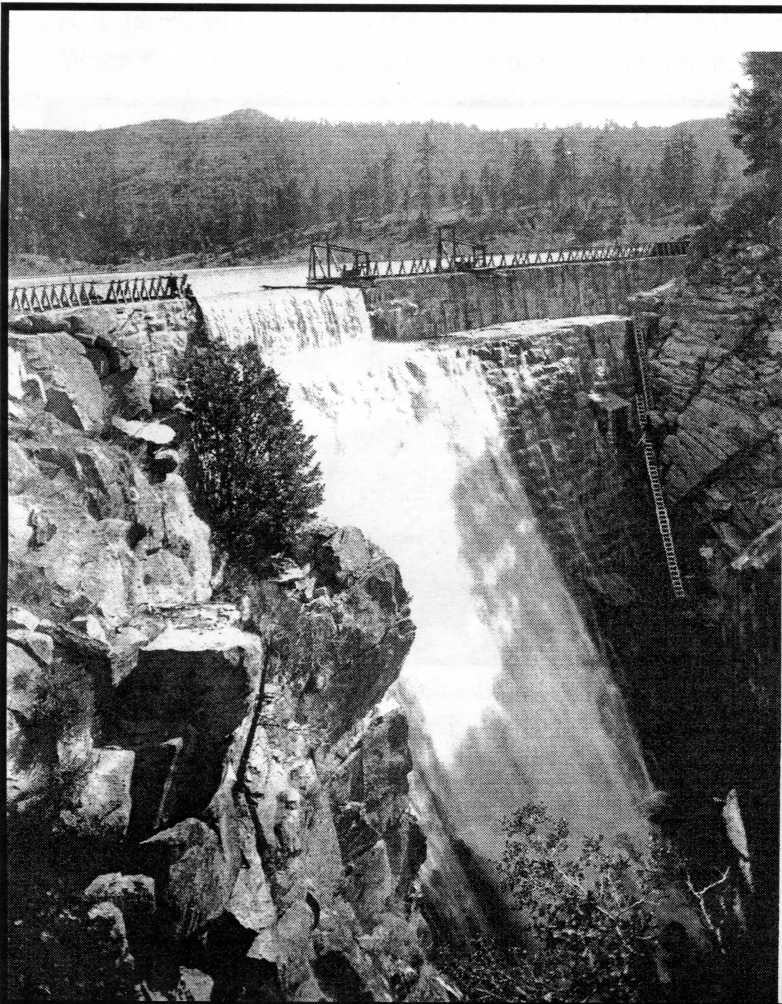
What does the Hemet dam have in common with the Eiffel Tower and the Hotel Del Coronado? Not much, actually, except that they were all built before 1900; the Eiffel Tower in 1887, the Hotel Del Coronado in 1888, and the Hemet Dam in 1895.

To say the least, these were remarkable achievements, especially in light of the fact that the modern machinery used to build similar present day structures did not exist; things like electrically powered tools, gasoline-driven engines and the like. Welding, which would no doubt play a large role in the modern-day construction of a dam, or a 1000-foot-high metal tower, had been patented only a few years earlier and was still far from being available for construction purposes. Indeed, Thomas Edison didn't patent his famous incandescent light bulb until 1879, and even then it was many years before most Americans were able to take advantage of it due to the lack of available electrical power for home use.

It all started when Edward L. Mayberry, who was both an engineer and an avid hunter, was hiking through the forest one day when he cast his eyes on a spot along the South Fork Creek, which seemed to him the perfect place to build a dam. Building a dam was right down his alley, but he lacked the money needed for such a project, so he turned to his wealthy friend, William Whittier, for help. While Mayberry was primarily interested in providing much needed water for agriculture in and around San Jacinto and Hemet, Whittier, the better businessman of the two, saw it as an opportunity to make money through land development. And so, on January 27, 1887, the two men established both the Lake Hemet Water Company and Hemet Land Company.

Although construction on the Hemet Dam began on January 6, 1891, before they could begin they had one minor problem to deal with. The only road leading to the site from Hemet, where they would have to secure their building supplies, was not wide enough to accommodate the six-mule-team-drawn wagons they would use to transport their equipment and hundreds of 400-pound barrels of cement.

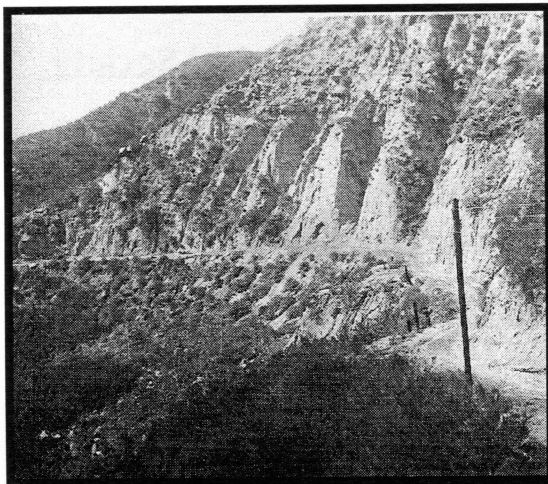
Mayberry designed the new road himself, then employed the Proctor and Marriage (Continued on page 2) **See HEMET DAM**



Photograph of the Hemet Dam taken by well known photographer Avery Field taken during the 1920's. More photos of Idyllwild by Avery Field are on display at the IAHS Museum.

HEMET DAM (Continued from 1)

Company of San Jacinto to build it. It was a very difficult road, with grades as steep as 18 percent, meaning the roadway rose 18 feet vertically for every 100 feet of horizontal travel. Try that in your 8-cylinder SUV!



The Mayberry Road, or Keen Camp Road, was completed in 1891. It was abandoned in 1929. Photo from The San Jacintos by John Robinson and Bruce Risher

Mayberry's design featured many switchbacks where the road leveled out for a short distance in order to give the mules a place to rest for a few minutes.

Even with all that, the dam was not built primarily with cement. Instead it consists mostly of thousands of huge granite boulders, each weighing between 5 and 15 tons, torn from the surrounding hills and moved into place using 800-foot long cables attached to opposite sides of the canyon where the dam took form. Luckily, the steam engine had been invented and placed into use more than 100 years earlier, which allowed the dam builders to use it to move the giant cables supporting the huge rocks.

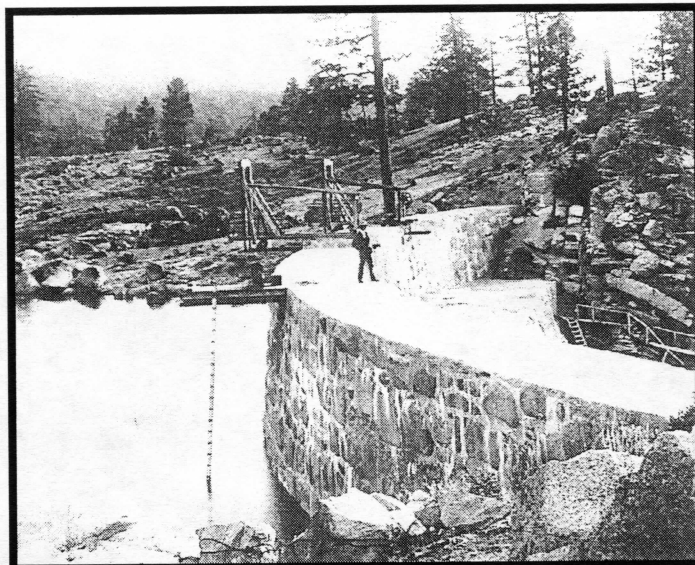
The cement they needed was Portland Cement, used in dams because it hardens under water. However, there were no Portland Cement plants in the western United States at that time, which meant having to buy it from a plant in Antwerp, Belgium. And, since the Panama Canal wasn't completed until 1914, it was shipped all the way across the Atlantic, around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America, and up along the western coast to Los Angeles Harbor, or possibly San Diego Harbor, by steam

ships, or maybe even by sailing ships.

All told, the voyage covered an estimated 8000 miles, taking more than 2 months to complete. From there the cement was placed on railroad cars and taken to San Jacinto where it was then loaded onto the mule-drawn wagons.

When the dam was completed in October of 1895 it stood 122.5 feet tall and was the largest dam of its kind in the world. In 1923 the water company added 12.5 feet to the dam, perhaps hoping to retain the title, but in 1911 the 356-foot-tall Theodore Roosevelt Dam was built near Phoenix, Arizona, to form the Theodore Roosevelt Reservoir with water flowing from the Salt River.

The primary purpose of the Hemet Lake Dam was to provide water to the San Jacinto Valley, which it still does today, although most of the water used in that area now comes from wells in the San Jacinto Basin. None of it, by the way, comes from the Diamond Valley Lake. In any case, Hemet Lake, which of course was created by the dam, remains one of the most popular places in Southern California for fishing, camping, boating and a rare chance to appreciate the beauty of the surrounding wilderness flowing from the South Fork of the San Jacinto River..



*The top of Hemet Dam shortly after completion in 1895
Photo by Laura Swift*

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SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS OF SUMMERTIME JOY

By Ben Killingsworth

This story is about a little girl who began spending her summers in Idyllwild in 1933 and never stopped.

Oh, she's not a little girl anymore – she's all grown up now and has lived here full time since 2002, but she's still a little girl at heart, even if she has been married to Dave Dunham for 55 years and has four grown children and 12 grandchildren.



Photo by Ben Killingsworth

It all started when her father, Joy G. Jameson, bought a small cabin on an acre of land next to Strawberry Creek, just down the street from the Peak and Pines girls' camp, a spot now occupied by the Rainbow Inn. He paid \$3000 for it, about 1% of its present day value, but, of course, 1933 was in the middle of the Great Depression, which no doubt had an effect on property values, even in Idyllwild. Ann Dunham was only 3 years old at the time, the youngest of six children.

Ann's father was a very successful citrus grower in Corona, California, as was her grandfather, William H. Jameson. And her great-grandfather, George L. Joy, was one

of the founders of the city of Corona. Incidentally, Idyllwild's Jameson Drive was named after Ann's great-uncle, Thorndyke C. Jameson, who was a Riverside County Supervisor.

The cabin was built in 1922 with a small breakfast room added in 1925, and has not been changed since. There is also a guest house, which was a one-car garage at the time, but since the family always brought at least one maid along each summer, it was later turned into a maid's quarters. Then in 1942 a bedroom was added next to the maid's quarters, which made room for the whole family to sleep indoors if they wanted to.

When the family first looked at the home in anticipation of buying it, the breakfast and kitchen walls were covered with Saturday Evening Post magazine covers, and the beds were covered with beautiful old quilts. Seeing that, Ann's mother fell love with the place, but, contrary to the sellers' promises, they were all removed right before the Jamesons took possession. Fortunately, they left the wood cook stove and the ice box.

Not long before 1933 the local lumbering industry had come to an end, meaning the large trees were no longer being cut down and shipped off to a lumber mill. As a result, as Ann remembers it, most of the remaining trees were only about 10 to 30 feet high. That obviously

made the forest look and feel much different than it does today, but there was one benefit; you had a clear view of Lily Rock, Suicide Rock and Tahquitz Peak from just about everywhere in the area. However, Ann said, there were still many large trees along Strawberry Creek, and there was a solid line of cabins along the creek near their home. In those days, she said, most everyone had a home located either on the creek, or in a spot with a view, and there was somewhat of a sense of competition between the two groups.

"Our home is on the creek," one owner would say, with the response being, "Oh, well we have a view." Being on the creek did have one advantage, though. It often served as second ice box, for such things as keeping your watermelons cold.

But the homes, for the most part, were not well constructed and almost all lacked any form of insulation. That was one reason very few homeowners lived here full time, and those who did had a very difficult time earning a living. Even so, Ann said, the local business people were the mainstay of the community.

There were no telephones on the Hill when the Jamesons bought their cabin in 1933, and it wasn't until 1940 that a very basic system was installed. The spot now occupied by the Mile High Inn served as the telephone center and, Ann remembers, when someone from down below called her father, the phone company would send a horseback rider to their cabin to notify him, then he would ride back to the center to take the call.

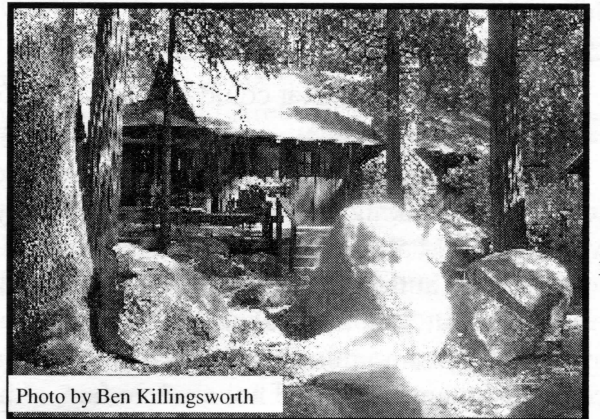
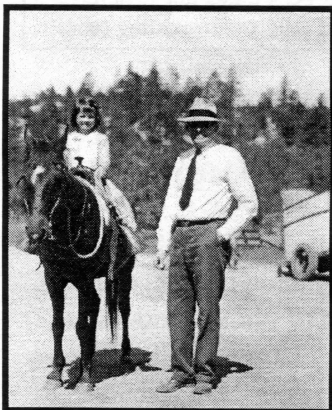


Photo by Ben Killingsworth



JOHN AND REBECCA PHOTOGRAPHERS EXTRAORDINAIRE

By Ben Killingsworth

Sometimes we all get lucky, or least hope we will. Our (IAHS) lucky day happened on March 13, 2007, when Shirl Reid went shopping at the Village Market and happened to mention to the checkout clerk that she is the Assistant Curator of the Historical Society Museum. The clerk, Rebecca Frazier, nearly jumped over



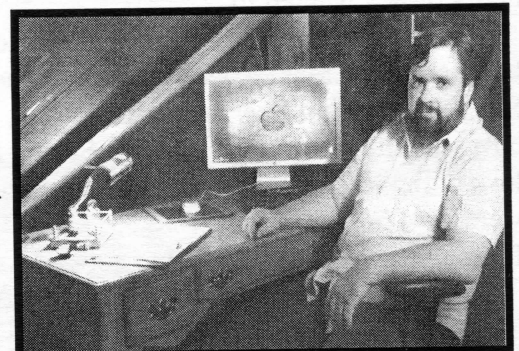
John and Rebecca enjoy each other and a well deserved cup of coffee. Photo by Ben Killingsworth

the counter in her excitement because she and her husband, John Drake, the Village Market manager who Shirl had just spoken to a few moments earlier, have been interested in photography since they were about fifteen years old, and for the past ten years have worked together restoring old photos. Here, Rebecca and John thought, is our chance to get involved and make a contribution to the community. And, to make the story sound even more serendipitous, the Historical Society had recently received, as a gift, about 150 negatives of photos of Idyllwild taken by well-known photographer Avery Field during the 1920's. The negatives, it turned out, had not been seen by anyone for over 60 years, and were given to the Historical Society by the Fields Family for its exclusive use. But there was a problem; no one at the Historical Society had a clue as to how to turn these very old

negatives into pictures that could be displayed to the public. Now John and Rebecca were really excited. This was right down their alley, and they immediately set to work.

Whether they realized it or not before they began, the highly technical and painstaking job of turning these rapidly deteriorating negatives into world class photos would require over 350 hours of volunteer work, usually at the end of a full day's work at their day jobs. Over a period of about 4 months, John said, he never got more than 6 hours of sleep. But, make no mistake; they are both extremely proud of their accomplishment. They feel honored, in fact, to have been a part of such an important undertaking.

The process they used required taking multiple 8x10 scans of each negative, one light, one medium, one dark, then, using Photo Shop, combining the three to create the best possible picture. To make it even more tedious, about one-third of the photos had to be triple scanned, as John put it. But before even that could take place the negatives had to be carefully cleaned, removing a layer of degraded silver nitrate which turns black, and over time, begins to flake off leaving what John called a ghosted picture imbedded in the celluloid plastic. To see some examples of the finished product pay a visit to the Museum. They are truly amazing!



As with all good photographs, this one of John taken by Rebecca takes full advantage of the lighting and tells an interesting story.

Since moving about five years ago into a 1910ish Idyllwild cabin once owned by John's father, the couple has established two companies; *Digital Imagery*, which concentrates on photography and post production, and *Idyigital (idyigital.com)*, a service which provides photo restoration, digital archiving of photos, videos and audios, (web) printing and Macintosh support. Rebecca specializes in photography, plating, and four-color stripping, and has over 21 years of experience in the printing business.

One interesting aspect of the services they provide is the ability to make digital copies of family photos and store them on a disc for safe keeping, an inviting prospect in case the originals are destroyed by fire, etc. During the process the originals are left untouched.

Both John and Rebecca are constantly taking pictures as evidenced by the fact that John now has a library of over 5,000 photos of Idyllwild, including over 400 of Tahquitz Rock, alone, all saved on discs.

The Historical Society is indeed fortunate to have John and Rebecca serve as our volunteer media consultants; another stroke of good luck, if you will.

**IDYLLWILD AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

President: Marcia Donnell

Vice President: Carolyn Levitski

Secretary: Adele Voell

Treasurer: Bob Smith

Directors:

Corrinne Brown

Nancy Fletcher

Scott Fisher **new

Joe Hart **re-elected

Sue Miller

Nanci Killingsworth

Shirl Reid **re-elected

Kay Wanner

Media Consultants:

John Drake and Rebecca Frazier

Docent Director:

Mary Austin

Newsletter:

Ben Killingsworth and Adele Smith

Special Advisors:

Harry Bubb

Kay Cenicerros

Craig Coopersmith

Walter Parks

Kent Steele

Lynn Voorheis

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

And thanks again to our most recent Museum docent volunteers:

Pat Norrell

Carolyn Record

Sharla Carpenter

Joy Allgeir

Dan Carpenter

Nancy Borchers

If you would like to join this select group, please call Mary Austin @ 659-2250 — Please, we need you!!

**THERE'S STILL TIME
TO WIN THE BIG PRIZE**

If you haven't had a chance to buy your drawing tickets for the beautiful stainless steel sculpture designed and crafted by local artist and sculptor, Dori Capitani, there's still time before the official drawing, scheduled to take place at Town Hall during the annual Harvest Festival on Saturday, November 24 at 2:00 PM. You may purchase your drawing tickets in advance at the Historical Society Museum, or before 2:00 PM on the day of the drawing at Town Hall. Drawing tickets are \$1.00 each, or six for \$5.00. All proceeds will benefit the Idyllwild Area Historical Society only.

In addition to riding their horses, Ann and her brothers and sisters spent most of their time outdoors, hiking and playing along the creek. They also loved to fish, using poles fashioned from tree limbs and safety pins for hooks. And although there was a public swimming pool in town at the time, Ann's parents would not allow their kids to swim in it because of the danger of catching polio.

Most summers Ann went to day camp at Peak and Pine, and one year, while her parents were traveling in Europe, she stayed there the entire summer.

To show how times have changed, when Ann and her playmates were in their pre-teens they were allowed to hike by themselves up to Tahquitz Peak and camp overnight in Round Valley, which they did 3 or 4 times every summer. Even when she was about 7 years old she and her brothers would run all by themselves over to the Post Office to pick up the mail. They ran because if they were first to return with the maid's mail she gave them a nickel — sometimes even a dime.

There were no PO boxes. People just went up to the counter and asked for their mail. It was that simple, just as most everything else was simple by today's standards; simple, but wonderful.

Note: Other photos included in this article were taken from Ann Dunham's baby book

Summertime Joy *(Continued from page 3)*

Horseback riding was very big in those days, partly out of necessity and partly for pleasure. Full timers needed them to get around, especially in the winter, and part timers brought them along when they came up. Ann's family always brought two or three horses which they kept in a corral in front of their home at the edge of what is now South Circle Drive. Some kept their horses at the stable which was located where Community Lumber is today. In fact, horseback riding was one of the main reasons people came up to Idyllwild in those days, Ann said, and many of them took advantage of the pack train excursions that originated at the stables, complete with wranglers to tend to the horses and mules to carry supplies and equipment



ANNUAL MEETING WELL ATTENDED

By Ben Killingsworth

The annual meeting was well attended this year, maybe because it was in held in August, or perhaps because it was held at the Rainbow Inn. Either way, judging from the group picture at left [1] showing attendees giving their undivided attention to the speaker of the moment, it was a very worthwhile and informative meeting.

It started with a presentation by IAHS President Marcia

Donnell, pictured at left [2], who gave an overview of IAHS goals and activities.

Next we heard a presentation by IAHS Treasurer Bob Smith, shown [3] explaining where we stand regarding the construction of our much-needed artifact storage building. All we need is another \$61,000 and we'll be in business, he said.

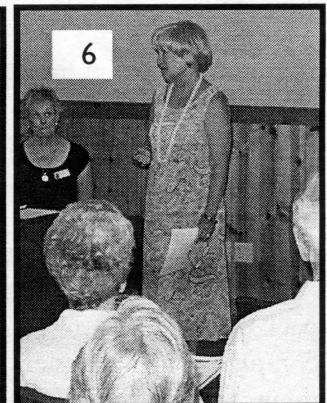
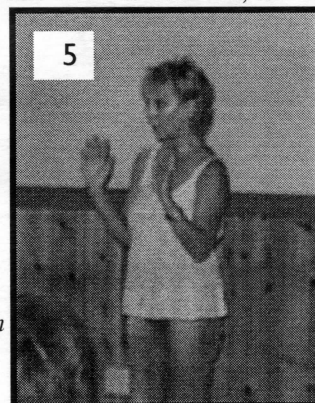
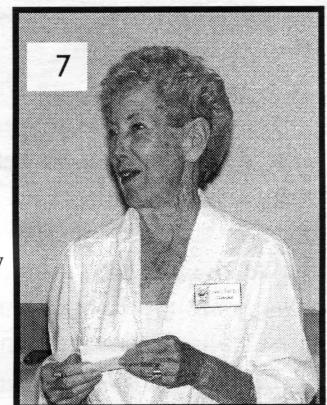
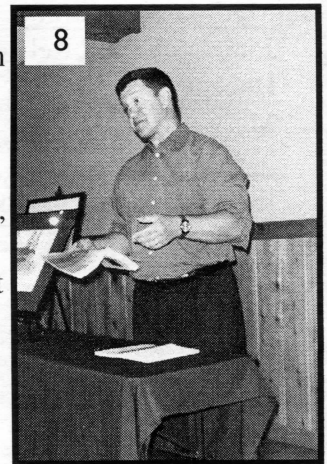
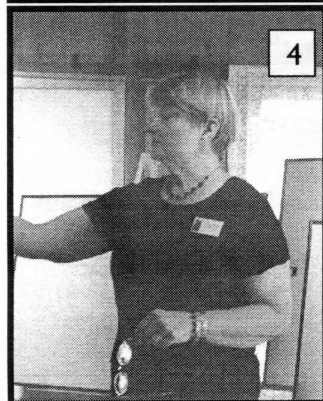
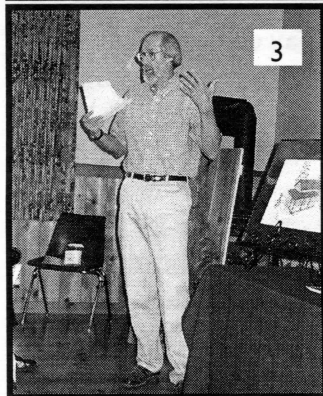
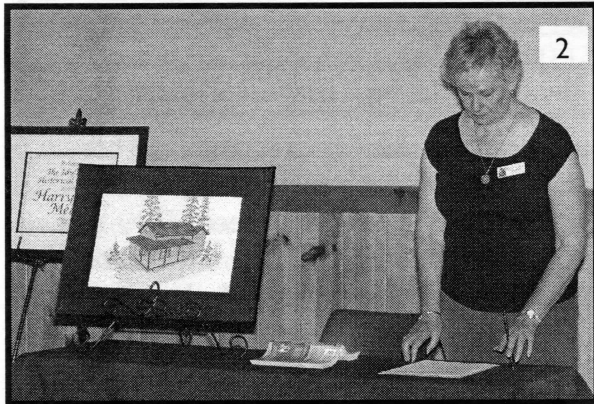
Then we heard from Shirl Reid, shown below left [4] as she proudly told us all about the still unseen, at that point, Avery Field Exhibit she worked so hard on for so long.

Nanci Killingsworth is shown [5] discussing the upcoming Home Tour. Pictured at lower right Mary Austin is shown [6] asking for more docent vol-

unteers to step forward and share the burden. Next in line, Nancy Fletcher is shown [7] giving an update on the Museum Store.

Finally, we were privileged to listen to a fascinating talk by featured guest speaker, Harry Medved, shown [8] and [9] discussing and showing slides of some of the history of local film making. Medved may be the world's leading expert on the subject of bad movies. Along with his brother Michael Medved (the well-known film critic and talk radio host), Harry wrote the definitive books on bad movies, including *The Golden Turkey Awards*, *The Hollywood Hall of Shame* and *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time* which helped create a craze for "so-bad-they're-good" movies, such as "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes."

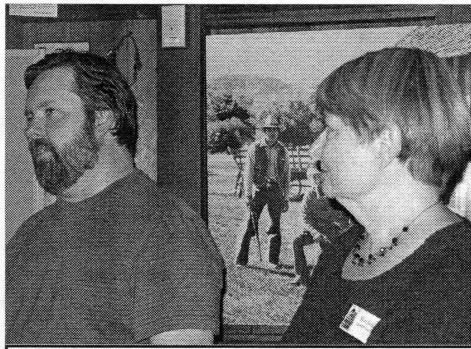
*Photos 2,4, & 7 by Carolyn Levinski
Photos 1,3,5,6,8 & 9 by Ben Killingsworth*



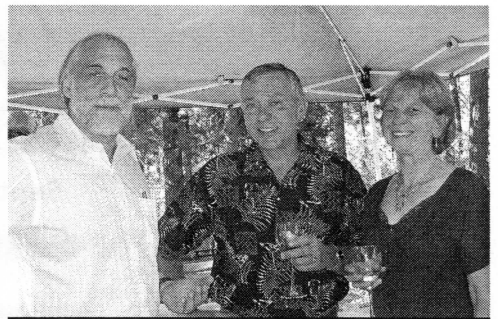
PEOPLE AND EVENTS



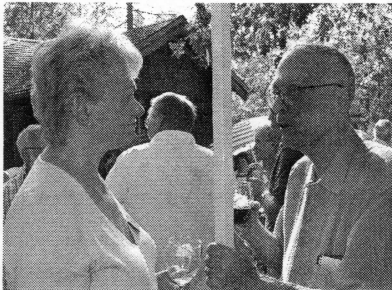
Avery Field's daughter-in-law, Florence Field, enjoys opening of the Avery Field Exhibit



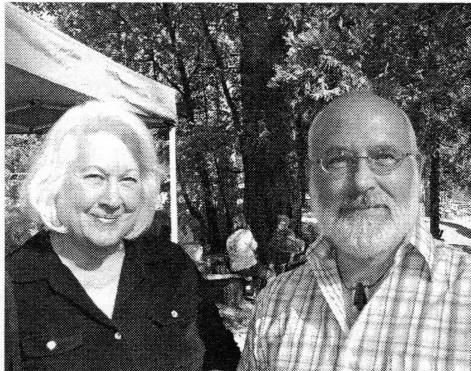
Shirl Reid proudly introduces John Drake, who, along with wife Rebecca Frazier, made the Avery Field Exhibit a reality



Nick Adamenko has Harold and Lynn Voorheis laughing about something



Marcia Donnell compares notes with, Bill Wooton, longtime IAHS member and former owner of the Museum building



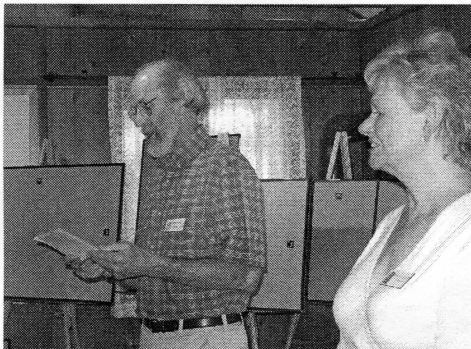
Adele Smith and Terry Casella relax on the Museum grounds after the Annual Meeting and the Avery Field show



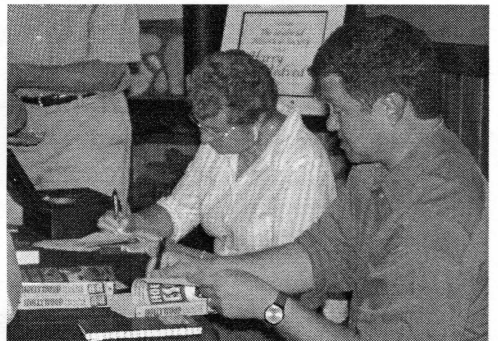
Richard Levitski stops at the Lost and Found desk to ask if anyone turned in a folded piece of white paper



Nancy Fletcher, Shirl Reid and Francoise Frigola having a ball. Just one glass of wine and look out!



Marcia Donnell looks on as Bob Smith reads a letter from the Field family at the preview reception for the Avery Field Ex-



Harry Medved autographs copies of his book, "Hollywood Escapes," as Sharla Carpenter looks on.

All photos on this page are by Carolyn Levitski

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____ Address _____

Please select one of the following categories:

Individual \$15 Family \$25 Contributing \$35 Business/Organization \$35

Sponsor \$100 Benefactor \$250 Patron \$500 Corporate \$750

Founder's Circle \$1,000 (one-time or cumulative) (Lifetime, with name on museum plaque)

If this membership is a gift, please list donor's name and address:

Name _____ Address _____

Please make your check payable to IAHS and mail with this application to
PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 — All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Be sure to visit our wonderful museum, located at 54470 North Circle Drive
Our doors are open:

May 31- September 3: Thursday through Sunday

September 4 - May 25: Saturday and Sunday

All 3-day Holiday weekends and July 4th

Hours: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Telephone: (951) 659-2717

Website: www.Idyllwildareahistoricalociety.org

Admission is free

Donations are welcome

**** Welcome to our new members ****

Founders Circle (Life Member)

Nick Adamenko, Idyllwild

Patron

Dr. Tari Lennon, Idyllwild

Sponsor

Red Kettle:

Shane Stewart

Ashley Stewart

Martha Jenson

Emily Pearson

Michael Pearson

Sponsor (Continued)

Scott Fisher, The Bread Basket,
Idyllwild

Rebecca Frazier and John Drake,
Idyllwild

Dani & Will Dupont, North Palm
Springs

Contributing

Jack L. Cromer, Idyllwild

Gary Squier, Idyllwild

Family

Sharla and Daniel Carpenter,
Idyllwild

Cheri McNabb, Valyermo

Janis Phillips and Karin Borjiesen,
San Marcos

Charles Russell, Camarillo

Brian Travis Family, San Diego

Individual

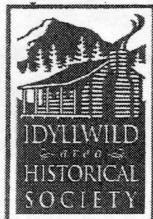
Patricia J. Norrell, Idyllwild

Geraldine Sperling, Idyllwild

William Waring, Palm Desert

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