

ARTI-FACTS

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Idyllwild Area Historical Society

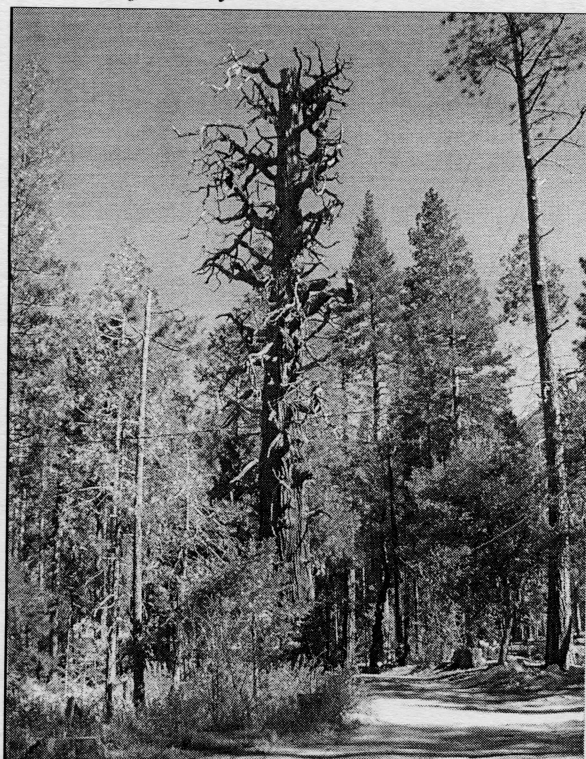
Preserving the History of Idyllwild and the surrounding
communities in the San Jacinto Mountains

July 2007

THE LOVEKIN TREE – A MYSTERY WITH A HAPPY ENDING

By Ben Killingsworth

Most people who live on or frequently visit the Hill love trees. Some might even call us tree huggers. And it's never more true than when one of our own trees is threatened; one growing in our own yard, beside a road we often travel on, or, most definitely, one that bears some historical



significance. And so it was that when the news came that Southern California Edison planned to take down a very old, but very dead cedar tree, that the bark began to fly.

What made it so seemingly important was a wooden sign planted next to the tree's trunk that, in big yellow letters, read, "A. C. Lovekin, 1944."

At the time no one seemed quite sure who A. C. Lovekin was, and why the sign had been placed there. And so, the search began.

As it turned out, Arthur Charles Lovekin was an important figure with connections to Riverside County government, who was involved in
(Continued on Page 4) See **LOVEKIN TREE**

THE 2007 HOME TOUR OUR BIG EVENT OF THE YEAR

**** SEPTEMBER 15, 2007 ****

Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend our seventh annual home tour. This year's event features five never-before-included homes, ranging from the awesome to the rustic; homes carefully selected by our Home Tour Committee, Corrine Brown and Nanci Killingsworth.

One very important change from previous home tours, though; we have moved the date back to September 15, hoping to make it less likely we will have to contend with rain or snow.

Also, ticket costs have been lowered this year to \$20.00 per person.

Our booklet, which serves as your admission to the homes on the tour, was put together this year by two of our newer volunteers, John Drake and Rebecca Frazier, owners of Digital Imagery.

As in the past, admission booklets will be sold on the day of the tour from our booth on Village Center Drive across the street from JoAn's Restaurant - where the tree monument used to be, starting at 9:00 AM.

For advance ticket purchases please mail your check to: IAHS, PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549. You will receive in the mail a preliminary ticket, which you must exchange for the booklet at the sales booth on the day of the event. The purpose of the preliminary ticket is to reserve an admission booklet in your name. If you have questions, please call 951 990-3909.

BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, HOLLYWOOD STARS ABOUNDED

By Ben Killingsworth

The phrase, "George Washington slept here," is a familiar one, probably a true statement in a few cases, but no more than a rumor in others. And so it is here in Idyllwild; not about George, but mostly about people like Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Tyrone Power, and the like. Hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't point out an old cabin tucked back in the woods along Strawberry Creek somewhere, saying, "This is sort of confidential, but Clark Gable slept there once."

But there was a day when the sight of famous movie actors on the streets of Idyllwild was a common occurrence. In fact, during the 1920's over twenty films were shot up here. Some of the big names involved were producer Cecil B. DeMille, and actors Douglas Fairbanks, Charles Laughton, Mary Pickford, Katherine Hepburn, and Paulette Goddard.

Even into the 40's and 50's, easily recognized



actors were often seen on the streets of Idyllwild. In 1950 some unexpected excitement was added to the then sleepy village when film crews used dynamite to blow up trees as part of making the war movie, "Go For Broke," starring Van Johnson. The film depicted the true story of the

442nd Regimental Combat Team, a unit composed of Americans born of Japanese parents.

During World War II, while fighting in the European theater, the 442nd established a record as the most heavily decorated unit for its size and length of service in the history of the United States Army. Their casualty rate was also among the highest of the war.

Probably the best known film ever shot in Idyllwild was "Kid Galahad" starring Elvis Presley. The 1962 picture was a remake of a 1937 film starring
(Continued on page 5) See **HOLLYWOOD STARS**

ANNUAL IAHS MEETING

AUGUST 12, 2007—1:30 PM

This year's annual meeting will be held at the Rainbow Inn at Strawberry Creek, located at 54420 South Circle Drive in Idyllwild. It's just a short distance west of Village Center Drive. The meeting will start at 1:30 PM.

We are especially proud to have as our speaker, Harry Medved, co-author of "Hollywood Escapes," described by the Los Angeles Times as "an awesomely comprehensive movie lovers guide to famous (and hitherto mostly unknown) outdoor filming locations in Southern California."

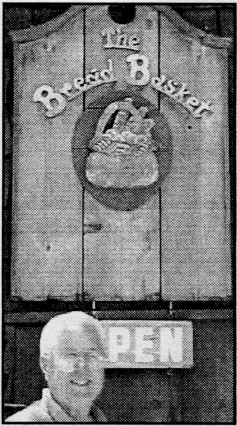
According to his website, Medved has directed public relations for the Screen Actors Guild, Warner Bros. Online, and Yahoo! Movies. He currently serves as head of publicity for Fandango, the nation's largest movie ticketing site.

Medved previously co-authored four definitive books on bad movies, including The Golden Turkey Awards and The Fifty Worst Films of All Time.

The book is co-authored by Bruce Akiyama, who has worked in motion pictures advertising and has written episodes for Curious George, Maya & Miguel, and Arthur, the latter for which he received a Daytime Emmy and a Peabody Award. The book is on sale at our museum, by the way.

The annual meeting promises to be an entertaining afternoon, so don't miss out.

IAHS NOMINATING COMMITTEE SELECTS FOUR TO FILL FOUR SEATS ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS



SCOTT FISHER, owner of the Bread Basket Restaurant, is new to the board and has been nominated for a two-year term. He was born in Los Angeles and received bachelor's and master's degrees from Pacific Lutheran University, majoring in music and minoring in history. Scott taught music for six years, then bilingual elementary school in Watts for 16 years. He has worked in research and grant management at Cal State, LA, later worked at Harbor UCLA Medical Center, Cal State Dominguez Hills, and most recently as coordinator of federal studies at the Cancer Center, UC Irvine. Scott has quickly become a full participant in Idyllwild's life, and is a welcome addition to our village.

JOE HART has served on the board of directors for five years and is owner/winemaker of Hart Winery in Temecula. He's been visiting Idyllwild since 1940, having grown up in Hemet, where his father was a flight instructor for the Army Air Corps at Ryan Field. Joe continues to be an active volunteer for the society; he's brought a wealth of experience in volunteer organizations to assist in developing IAHS policies for a smooth operation. He has been nominated for re-election to a two-year term.

SUE MILLER, one of our hard-working office volunteers, catalogues our accumulated historical treasures, as well as new ones coming in almost daily. Sue retired from AT&T in 2001, moved to Idyllwild, and volunteered for the Fire Safe Council as a "woody," where she met Shirl Reid (IAHS assistant curator) and was recruited to volunteer with data input. She loves history and has been a member of the society for three years. Sue has been nominated for re-election to a two-year term.

SHIRL REID, assistant IAHS curator since 2003, is a charter member of the society and has served on our board since 2004. For twenty-six years, Shirl was owner/manager of residential and commercial property and wrote and managed state and federal grants for local organizations. Shirl has helped to supervise renovations for our museum and archive/office building. She takes the lead in developing our grant proposals and overseeing both museum exhibits and the society's computer records of collections and membership. She has been nominated for re-election to a two-year term.

The foregoing slate of nominees was selected by a nominating committee consisting of Nancy Fletcher, chair, and members Adele Smith and Joan McCullough. IAHS members in attendance at the annual meeting on August 14 will have the opportunity to cast their votes in support of these nominees. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor in accordance with our by-laws.

LOVEKIN TREE (Continued from page 1)

a number of things, most notably an effort to establish a state park that included San Jacinto Peak. Some members of his committee even wanted a road to the top to make the area more

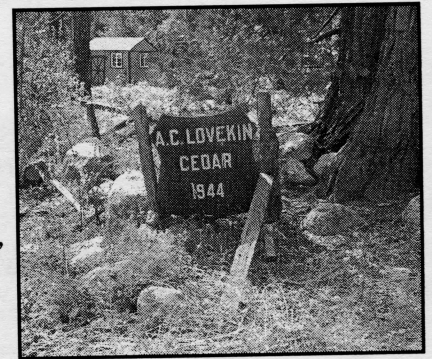


accessible to the public. Although the road was never built, after about an eight year battle between the U.S. Forestry and the State Park Commission, along with a complicated land swap and purchase arrangement involving the Southern Pacific Railroad, San Jacinto Peak was included as part of a 12, 695 acre State Park, which was officially dedicated in 1937, and for that, A. C. Lovekin deserves much credit.

However, all of this took place in the late 1920's and early 1930's, so the sign beside the old, dead, but still majestic, cedar tree referring to 1944 is still somewhat of a mystery. Some say the top of the tree was sawed off and a platform attached to use as a lookout for Japanese planes

during WWII. Indeed, a section near the top of the tree does appear to have been cut off, but the purpose may have been something as simple as providing a neat place for a boys' tree house.

According to his great grandson, Steve Lovekin of Riverside, A.C. Lovekin was born in Canada in 1862 and died in 1948, so it's not likely that he would have climbed the tree for any reason in 1944, since he would have been 82 years. Neither is it likely that the marker commemorates his death. However, quite



by accident, it was discovered through some old property records that A.C. Lovekin purchased some property on Tahquitz Road, not far from where the tree stands, in 1924. Whether he ever lived there still isn't clear. Also, the tree and marker are only about 1/4 mile from one corner of the San Jacinto State Park. Either of the two latter pieces of information might explain a sign with his name on it being in that general area, but why it was placed next to that particular tree, and why it says 1944 will have to remain a mystery for now.

But even though Lovekin is an important figure historically, and whoever put up the sign must have had a good reason for doing so, what about the tree?

Now, ask yourself. If you were a tree instead of a human being, what's the best thing you could hope for? Even more specifically, what if you were a incense cedar and had lived for well over 500 years before dying beside a narrow road in a small town hidden away in some beautiful mountains? Maybe you'd stood there for another 100 years or so without anyone taking any particular notice, until one day someone decided you were in the way. That's right – in the way.

Oh, you'd had your days, all right. There was the time someone climbed all the way to your top and cut off a small section of your crown, then attached a small platform where they sat hour after hour, looking for something. Birds, maybe – or enemy airplanes?

You also remembered someone planting a sign by your trunk, "A.C. Lovekin, 1944." Years later no one could be sure why the sign was put there, but suffice to say, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

*(Continued on page 6) See **LOVEKIN TREE***

HOLLYWOOD STARS (Cont. from page 2)

Edward G. Robinson, Humphrey Bogart, and Bette Davis. Wayne Morris played the part of a bellhop who became a boxer after surprising everyone by knocking

out Bogart's best boxer at a party during a dispute involving Bette Davis. Later in the film, Morris became known as Kid Galahad. The film's climax features Robinson and Bogart almost simultaneously shooting each other to death.

Actually, Presley's *Kid Galahad* was the second remake of the 1937 film. The first remake, called "The Wagons Roll at Night," also starred

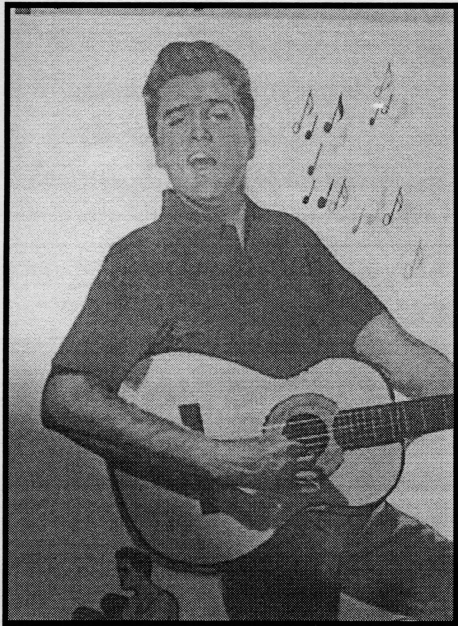
Humphrey Bogart, along with costar, Eddie Albert. Strangely enough, this film, made in 1941, was not about boxing, but rather, about a circus. Bogart played the part of a circus manager, and Albert was a lion tamer. In effect, the focus of the film was changed from the boxing ring to the lion's cage.

Even the two versions of *Kid Galahad* differed. Perhaps the biggest difference was that the second version, referred to as a light hearted musical, included Presley singing several songs, including, "I Got Lucky," and "King of the Whole Wide World." Probably disappointing his fans in Idyllwild, Presley recorded all of his songs in a Hollywood studio. Another difference was having Presley play a garage mechanic before turning to boxing, rather than a bellhop as Morris did in the 1937 version.

After Presley's *Kid Galahad* film was released, the 1937 version was still being shown on TV, so to avoid confusion, it was renamed "The Battling Bellhop."

Idyllwild was also the location used for several opening scenes of the once popular TV show, *Bonanza*, used during show's twelfth and thirteen seasons.

(Continued on next column)



The footage used was filmed in June of 1970, followed by additional footage shot in January 1971 of a double riding Michael Landon's stunt horse, Paint.

And not to be overlooked, Garner Valley was where they captured pictures of Elvis Presley driving his jalopy during the filming of *Kid Galahad*. Surprisingly, no one has reported seeing him lately, but it's a sure bet that at least one Garner Valley resident remembers Elvis sleeping in their spare bedroom.



YUM - ANOTHER ICE CREAM SOCIAL COMING SOON

WHEN: Saturday, September 1
11:00 AM—2:00 PM

WHERE: Historical Society
Museum Grounds

WHO'S INVITED: Everyone,
members, and the
general public alike

COST: Absolutely Free!!

LOVEKIN TREE (Cont. from page 4)

Still, you were in the way, they said, and for a time it looked as though you were headed for a lumber mill, at best, or a large bonfire, at worst. But that sign..... no one knew why it was there, exactly, but they knew A. C. Lovekin must have been somebody important, and after a few phone calls, and some pictures in the newspaper, a miracle happened. You were not to be sawed into small pieces, or burned to ashes; you were to become part of a monument of sorts, right in the center of town.

You'd heard stories about another tree that wound up in the same place you were destined to stand, a tree that became a focus of attention and the subject of tens of thousands of photographs taken by tourists and others. Its likeness had been used on magazine covers, signs, and even t-shirts. There was even a special committee to make sure it was well taken care of. But the ravages of time, weather and too many hungry birds eventually took their toll, and, sadly, the end came for that other tree.



The Tree Monument, or as some called it, the Totem Pole, recently taken down in the interests of safety

But now you were to take its place. You were to stand proudly before admiring visitors and proud townfolk for many, many years to come. From your place of honor you would witness thousands of meetings, some between couples, and others involving dozens. People would use your beauty and popularity to set up booths in your shadow, from which they would try to sell all manner of things.

How could you have ever imagined that "being in the way" could turn out so well?

IDYLLWILD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Home Tour—Co-Chairs

Corrinne Brown, Nanci Killingsworth

Hospitality

Linda and Larry Turner

Website

Francoise Frigola

Newsletter

Ben Killingsworth and Adele Smith

Contributing Photographers :

Bob Smith Ben Killingsworth

Counting time is not as important as
making sure our time counts -Unknown

**A VERY SPECIAL EVENT
THE AVERY FIELD EXHIBIT
GRAND OPENING
AUGUST 12th - 3:30—7:00 PM**

While it's entirely possible that many readers have never heard of Avery Field, in the world of photography he is extremely well known. He was the premiere commercial photographer in Riverside for most of the first half of the twentieth century. The name Avery Field was synonymous with photographic artistry and high technical quality for three generations of Riverside residents.

Field retired from business in 1952. After his retirement, Field became enamored with the desert and its photographic opportunities. He died in Riverside on October 31, 1955. After the death of his father Gaylor Field worked in the business until his retirement in 1978.

In 2005, the Field family gave IAHS more than 120 negatives of photographs Avery Field took in Idyllwild during the 1920's. IAHS feels extremely fortunate to have received this gift from the Field family, and in honor of that gift, has arranged a public grand opening event featuring photos developed from these negatives, which will be held at the museum on Sunday, August 12th from 3:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

**FOUR NEW VOLUNTEER
DOCENTS RECEIVE TRAINING**



On June 20, 2007, IAHS board member Corrinne Brown (left) provided training for four new museum docents, Sharla & Dan Carpenter, Pat Norrell, and Carolyn Record, shown above gathered around this year's raffle prize, a stainless steel wall sculpture by award-winning local artist Dore Capitani. Welcome to the fold, docents, you're going to love it. Now all we need is another group to train and put to work. How about you? Please call Mary Austin at 659-2250.

If you're not a member, become one today

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

DATES TO REMEMBER:

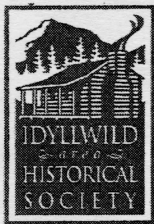
August 12 - Annual Meeting at The Rainbow Inn 1:30 PM

August 12 - Grand Opening, Avery Field Exhibit at the Museum 3:30 PM

September 1- Ice Cream Social at the Museum 11:00 AM—2:00 PM

September 15 - The Idyllwild Home Tour 10:00 AM—4:00 PM

**PO Box 3320
Idyllwild, CA 92549**



Non-profit
Organization
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