

Arti-facts

The Newsletter of the
Idyllwild Area Historical Society

Volume III Issue 3

Summer 2003

Preserving the History of Idyllwild and Neighboring Communities in the San Jacinto Mountains

A Delightful Surprise!

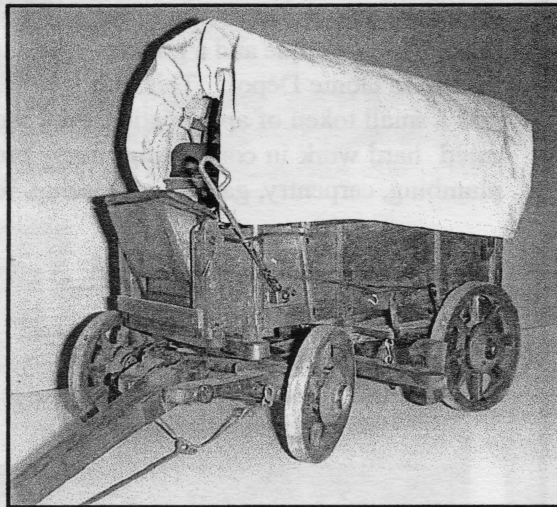
Our latest acquisition, pictured here, is a charming covered wagon model crafted by Claudius Lee Emerson and donated by Mrs. Ann Smith of Bakersfield. Emerson made the wagon for his sister, Mrs. Smith's grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Emerson Warner, in 1920's or early 1930's. The wagon is a replica of the one that his family used on their way west. Complete in every detail, the brakes work, the front axle turns, and the linen like fabric is still intact. The accessories include a child's cradle, cooking pots, an oxen yoke, water barrel, and a miniature frying pan which was a souvenir from the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

In 1917, Claudius Lee Emerson, his brother and two others bought the Idyllwild Inn and 1000 acres in the surrounding area from Strong and Dickinson. The Emersons bought out the others and for twenty-one years the Idyllwild Inn was an Emerson family operation, with Claudius Lee in charge. The Inn became the social center of Strawberry Valley.

Emerson's dream was to make Idyllwild one of the premier resorts in Southern California. To build his "dream community," Emerson donated land to the Boy Scouts, (Camp Emerson), religious groups and to Riverside County for a

public campground. Thirteen acres were donated for the Idyllwild Pines religious school in 1928.

During the 1920's, Emerson's Idyllwild Incorporated offered half-acre home sites for \$350. 114 homesites were sold during a two year period. More were sold later.



Our present museum located at 54470 N. Circle is on a half acre parcel which Emerson owned and later sold to Della Ferguson in 1922. Our Society has the original bill of sale for this transaction.

Claudius Lee and Zelma had five children: Marjorie, Nell, Alice, John and Lee Jr. John, residing in Colorado and Lee Emerson in Piedmont, CA are members of our Society.

The covered wagon was brought to our attention by Phyllis Marling who is the great niece of Claudius Lee and a cousin of Ann Smith's. Thanks to both Phyllis and Ann, "The Emerson Legacy" display in our museum will be greatly enhanced by this gift.

by Sheila Meyer, president

Note: Some of the historical information is taken from "The San Jacintos" by John W. Robinson

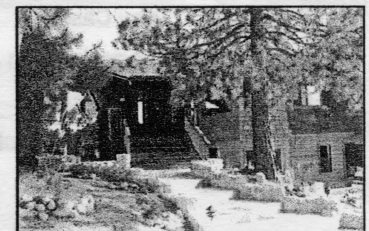
3rd Annual Harvest Home Tour

Saturday, October 25, 10am - 4 pm

Tour five distinctive and beautifully decorated Idyllwild Area homes. This is our last event of the year and our major fund raiser in support of our museum fund.

SAVE THE DATE AND TELL YOUR FRIENDS! \$15 per person.

Due to a sell out last year, tickets will be limited.



Our Past Events ...

"Volunteer Appreciation Party" Sunday, June 8th

The IAHS Board of Directors hosted the 2003 volunteer appreciation BBQ. In appreciation for the hard work that the volunteers have contributed during the last 3 years, the Board provided a delicious salad bar, and cooked and served hot dogs to all the volunteers. This event was an opportunity for the Board to give back to the volunteers.

President Sheila Meyer presents to Richard Levitski, Volunteer of the Year, a plaque and a gift certificate to Home Depot. This gift was a small token of appreciation from the Historical Society for his dedicated hard work in completing many projects for us, such as, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, gardening, glazing, fencing – just to name a few!



"Fourth of July Parade"

For its third annual participation in the Idyllwild Fourth of July parade, IAHS had an entry made up of three classic cars and trucks supplied and driven by patriotically dressed volunteers.



*1948 MGTC Restored by Richard Levitski
Driven by Carolyn Levitski with passengers
Norm and Bonnie*



*1957 Chevy Bel Air 2 Door Hardtop
Restored and driven by Richard Levitski with
passengers Packy Wassell and Elise Brett*

OFFICERS

President	Sheila Meyer
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Ann Ashby
Blair Cenicerros
Joe Hart
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Kent Steele

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Oral History	Carolyn Levitski
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Publicity	Blair Cenicerros
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Newsletter	Terry Casella
Photo Album	Nancy Harrison
Field Trips	Anna Gerdes
Website	Francoise Frigola
Home Tour	Lynnda Hart

Thank You!

We greatly appreciate the donation of items from

Harry and Berdie Bubb, Idyllwild Heating, Village Hardware, Terry Casella, Greg Demetre, Bruce Clark, , Dwight Harris, Elizabeth Ann Smith, Dawn Miller, Larry Kribs, Harold and Millie Bird, Bob Smith, Juan Perez, Don Ziegler, Bill Caldon, Rotary Anns, and The Women's Guild of the Idyllwild Presbyterian Community Church. And a \$500 donation from Tenet Healthcare Corporation in recognition of Terry Casella's volunteer efforts for IAHS.

We would like to acknowledge the talent and services provided by

Richard and Carolyn Levitski, Norm and Bonnie Doshier, Packy and Celesta Wassell, Kretsinger Plumbing, Charlie Clayton, County Parks Nature Center, Chuck Clayton, Idyllwild Fire Department, and Franz Huber

And More Past Events ...

"Old Fashioned Community Picnic" Saturday, June 28th

Our second Old Fashioned Community Picnic was held in the park area of our museum on South Circle Drive. Many community members and visitors brought their picnic lunch, tables, chairs, and umbrellas. Everyone had fun eating, playing games, and being entertained by musicians and storytellers from our community.



Photo by Sheila Meyer

Board member Kay Cenicerros,
Riverside County Supervisor Jim
Venable, and Elise Brett.



Photo by Sheila Meyer

Family enjoying the food and music

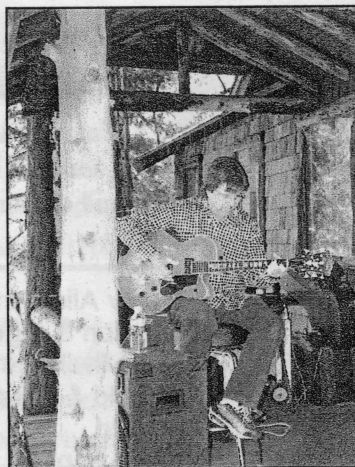


Photo by Sheila Meyer

Guitarist Michael O'Dorn
entertains on the front porch of
the museum



Photo by Sheila Meyer

The very popular checkers table



Photo by Sheila Meyer

Family enjoying the food and festivities

Don't forget our 3rd Annual Harvest Home Tour

Saturday, October 25, 10am - 4 pm

You won't want to miss what has become a very special mountain event!

So make sure to join us for this important fund raiser!

Museum Update!

Things are happening in the Museum building. The office/archive is finished and up and running with a staff of dedicated, fun and hard working volunteers. Now that the office can be left in their very capable hands, another group of volunteers are turning their skills and talents to the restoration of the main building.

For you members who have not had the opportunity to drive by your museum property, a new rustic split-rail fence has been added to encompass the property. Volunteers Richard and Carolyn Levitski, Joe Hart, Don and Lynnda Hart gamely took up the challenge, along with a very powerful and determined gasoline driven post-hole digger and managed to define the large park area in front of the museum in a day and a half!

Heady with the success of that challenge, some of us are moving on to what "Volunteer of the Year", Richard Levitski, calls *The List*. Armed with volunteers, we will be restoring the beautiful old window casings, polishing walls and windows, installing doors, scrubbing the fireplace stones, building displays, installing a security system, exhibits and installing exhibit lighting. Three issues the Board decided needed outside expertise were the aged fir floor, fireplace hearth and heat. We have been blessed on all three accounts but for different reasons. The floor company did a fantastic job of replacing old broken boards, sanding, coloring and sealing. Member and stonemason, Charlie Clayton, laid a beautiful new hearth, matching the existing fireplace front, as a donation. Kretsinger Plumbing and Village Hardward donated labor and materials in preparation for heating. The problem of heating our buildings was solved by the very generous donation by Idyllwild Heating of a fireplace insert for the museum and a wall unit for the office/archive. When we open, our members and visitors will be not only be warm but in beautiful surroundings, too!

We hope to open in the fall sometime but until then please considering calling and volunteering as there is so much to do. You will look back on the experience with great fondness. Working with old friends, making new friends, creating a history of your own and gifting it to the community!

For Members with Email

Please email us at info@IdyllwildAreaHistoricalSociety.org so that we can clearly capture your email address for your membership files. We would like to be able to notify you quickly of upcoming events and IAHS news.

Membership

For the past few weeks, all of our membership data including category, date joined and renewed is being transferred to Past Perfect, our museum collection software.

The task of keeping track of memberships and renewals has been a great deal of work on the part of several people including myself. The goal of using Past Perfect is to simplify, be more accurate in keeping the membership records, and facilitate the sending out of renewal notices, and generate other correspondence. We are grateful for the assistance of Francoise Frigola, Shirl Reid and Lynnda Hart for working on this task.

If you find any errors on your membership label or with your renewal notices, please notify us by mail or call our office at 659-2717. We hope to have this new system up and running by the time you receive this newsletter.

A hearty thank you also to Barbara Burgess and Cathy Priem who send out the renewal notices and thank you letters.

And lastly, thanks to all of you, our members. Our Society would not exist without your support. Your membership enables us to continue our mission of establishing a museum to preserve and share the history of this very special place.

Blair Cenicerros, Membership Chair

Membership Update

Welcome to our new members since the last newsletter. We look forward to seeing you at our *gatherings* and on our field trips. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Larry Allen, Indian Wells	Information Technology
Gordon & Inge Austerman, Idyllwild	Group, Palm Springs (Debbie Zimmerman)
Harold & Patsy Ball, Idyllwild	Ron Kanmeyer, Idyllwild
Dore Captani, Mountain Center	Barbara Kozera, Idyllwild
Hodge Crabtree/Katie Boskoff, San Diego	Doug & Judy Kyle, Walnut Creek
Wayne Donaldson, San Diego	Carol McClintic, Idyllwild
Susan Ellsworth, Santa Ana	Aurelio & Patty Perez, Idyllwild
Erich & Patsy Everbach, Northridge	Arlene Norton Pierce, San Clemente
Doriane McCord, Idyllwild	Rayelle Roe, Idyllwild
Dennis & Darcy Gerdes, Idyllwild	Raymond Roman, Palm Springs
Bob & Kathy Herrmann, Irvine	John & Dolores Sizer, Idyllwild
Frank Jasko, Palm Springs	Jim Walsh, Hemet
	Ralph & Renee Winkler, Los Angeles

Memories of Idyllwild by Marion K. Snidecor

I first saw Idyllwild July 3rd 1894. Hemet High School was held in San Jacinto for 2 yrs. pending the building in Hemet and the whole High School which was held over until July camped in Strawberry Valley for 2 days. It was my first experience with camping and the bonfires, moonlight nights, hikes were long to be remembered. Among the party were Maud and Blanche Saunders, Cecil Huntoon, Fred Fairchilds, Albert Rheinhardt, Arthur Wright, Lupe and Estella Estudillo, Alda and Bessie Whetlock, Fred Morris and myself, then Marion Kimmell. We camped in front of the Strawberry Valley Hotel near where the school house now stands. Idyllwild was then a group of cottages near where the stables are now located. The following summer I visited the Whitlocks in Idyllwild, and remember one night one of the familiar characters around there jumped to the middle of the dance floor and began firing pistols into the air. We all scattered.

The bonfires at night were the crown of the day. Ira Hards who took the part of "The Little Minister" in a New York play gave reading as did also his sister.

I have climbed the mountain in a variety of ways, lumber wagon, mule team, horseback, tallyho, even walked up from the foot of the trail over the old switchbacks, waited hours for the auto control and maybe sometime I'll fly.

I left Hemet in 1908, and in 1917 my husband, Geo. E. Snidecor and I made a trip up to the peak. Returning hot and tired, we sat down to rest under a group of 3 old cedars. A lovely cool breeze seemed to be playing around that locality. The next day we visited the same spot again, and the same cool breeze greeted us. My husband went back to the hotel, wrapped the little cool breeze in a deed to the lot and carried it home in his pocket as a surprise to me. And we always had the little cool breeze at "The House by the Side of the Road". We built the cabin in 1918 - a little shack that was always bulging at the seams with happy company. Our boys, John & Elwyn are better men for the lesson this old mountain taught them.

Soon Coronans joined us. The Glasses, Andrews, Willetts, Joy & T.C. Jamesons, Claysons, Mullers all built cabins. At one time we banded together and entertained the old country club (60 people) for 3 days.

Our cottage was headquarters for the searching parties who combed the mts. for Harold Johnson, who was separated from a boy scout group at the peak, but who finally found his own way down the desert side to the Fish Hatchery.

Coronans have loved Idyllwild, but for one reason or another they have cased coming, and their cabins are owned by someone else, except the Joy Jamesons, Glasses, Andrews and now the Bogles own the Snidecor Cabin.

Vaya con Dios.

Mrs. Geo. Snidecor

(note: There is no date on this letter, but was with a group of hand written letters written by early settlers in the late 1940's)



The Corona Country Club Members at "The House by the Side of the Road" c: 1918 Built by Marion and George Snidecor

3rd from left back row is Marion Sniedcor and 4th from left is George Snidecor

The house is now owned by Dave and Barbara Burgess.

Membership Information

Join IAHS or Give a Gift Membership and Receive

- **Arti-facts** Newsletter
- Field Trips
- Gatherings
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Support of Historical Research, collection and documentation of photos and artifacts
- Support for the Idyllwild Area Museum

Won't You Join Us?, Send Your Annual Membership to:

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email Address _____ Telephone: _____

Gift card from _____

- \$10 Individual
- \$20 Family
- \$25 Business/Organization
- \$100 Sponsor
- \$500 Patron
- \$1000 Founder's Circle: **Lifetime membership and plaque in museum**
Installation plan available - \$100 per year for 10 years

Send this membership form and check to:

Idyllwild Area Historical Society, PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 ● (909) 659-3569

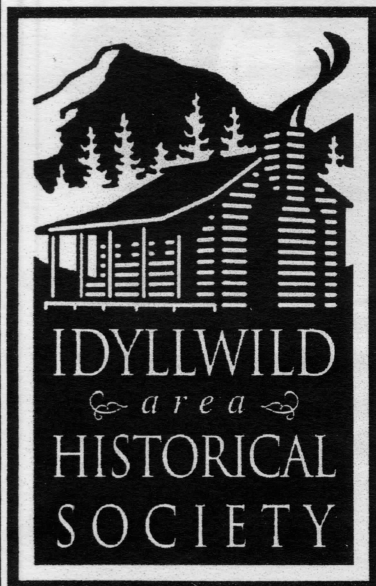
- We appreciate your support -

All dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Idyllwild Area Historical Society, PO Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549 ● (909) 659-2717

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Newsletter Editor - Terry Casella



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