

# ARTI-FACTS

*The Newsletter of the Award-Winning Idyllwild Area Historical Society*

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

SUMMER 2013

## Searching for Validation, or How an Ugly Duckling Gains Recognition

*By Joyce Miller*

If you're lucky enough to have a home in Idyllwild, then you're lucky enough...and I feel especially lucky to own the cabin my grandparents began in 1922. All my childhood memories are of summers spent there; consequently, I've managed to overlook the fact that the

cabin is one of the homeliest I've ever seen, and never, in my wildest imagination, did I envision nominating it to the National Register of Historical Places.

My saga began with the County's survey of Idyllwild's original historic core where, included along with a handful of other early cabins mostly described as "fine examples of Craftsman style," was mine. The others seemed to fit that description, but mine was decidedly not a "fine example" of anything, much less Craftsman.

Although slightly miffed at the survey's failure to identify its style, I was nevertheless thrilled that, in the architects' opinion, it merited consideration for the Historical Places list. Was it even remotely possible my "ugly duckling" might someday boast a bronze plaque proclaiming it a gem worth preserving?

I enthusiastically downloaded the nomination form. As page after page unfolded on my computer



screen, I was more than a little taken aback by its sheer complexity. It became quickly apparent that being old and upright wouldn't cut it – that was NOT one of the criteria listed for consideration. I knew it was single-walled (weren't they all?), but I researched the subject and discovered a fact

that could make mine stand out. Single-walled and single-wall construction aren't the same thing, and the cabin falls into the latter category – no studs, no corner posts, no support other than the walls themselves. In earthquake-prone California, old and still-standing might have some merit, after all!

With two criteria covered – its contribution to village history and its archaic form of construction – I felt I was on a roll, but I was determined to make my nomination just a bit more tantalizing to the National Register board. After all, they must receive hundreds of nominations yearly.

Reasoning that there must be some reason for my cabin's odd look, I plunged headlong into architecture. My months spent researching the San Jacintos' history plus all aspects of single-wall construction – both blessedly cut and dried – didn't nearly prepare me for the journey to come.

*(See Miller, page 3)*

# Idyllwild Area Historical Society

## Annual Meeting

### Board of Directors

<i>President:</i>	Carolyn Levitski
<i>Vice President:</i>	Charlotte Groty
<i>Secretary:</i>	Marlene Pierce
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Bob Smith
<i>Directors:</i>	Nancy Borchers
	Laura Caster
	George Groty
	Carolyn Hall
	Barbara Jones
	*Joan McCullough
	*Shirl Reid
	Linda Turner
	Adele Voell
	Jeff Wu
	(*on leave)

*Board meetings are held monthly  
on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday at 4 p.m.*

### Special Advisors

Harry Bubb, Kay Cenicerros, Janice Lyle,  
Walter Parks, Kent Steele, Lynn Voorheis

### Current Volunteer Staff

*Accounting:* George Groty

*Archive:* Darlene Beebe, Nancy Borchers,  
Barbara Jones, Shannon Houlihan Ng, Shirl Reid  
(Asst. Curator), Bob Smith, Cecilia Tepel

*Digital Media:* John Drake, Rebecca Frazier

*Docent Coordination:* Barbara Jones

*Home Tour:* Charlotte Groty,  
Carolyn Hall, Nanci Killingsworth, Shirl Reid

*Hospitality:* Linda & Larry Turner

*Membership:* Darlene Beebe, Adele Voell

*Museum Maintenance:* Richard Levitski

*Museum Shop:* Nancy Borchers

*Oral Histories:* Corrinne Brown, Lynnda Hart,  
Carolyn Levitski

*Research:* Betty Parks, Roberty Reyes,  
Bob Smith

*Webmaster:* John Drake

### Arti-Facts

*Co-Editors:* Adele & Bob Smith

*Layout:* Halie Johnson

*Feature Writer:* Ben Killingsworth

On Sunday, August 11, at 4 p.m., IAHS members will gather in the Creekstone Inn at Fern Valley Corners for the society's annual meeting.

The business portion of the meeting will include reports on the past year's accomplishments, our financial condition, plans for the coming months, and the annual election of officers and directors.

After five remarkable years of leadership, President Carolyn Levitski's term is up. She will retire from that position, but remain on the Board of Directors as past president. Directors whose two-year terms expire this year include Nancy Borchers, Shirl Reid, Linda Turner, and Jeff Wu.

The nominee to replace Carolyn as president is Marlene Pierce, who in her relatively short time with us has already made major contributions as secretary, museum docent, and raffle coordinator. She brings extensive leadership experience as an officer and director of several nonprofit organizations like ours. Barbara Jones is nominated to take over as secretary.

Nancy, Linda, and Jeff have accepted nomination to new two-year terms as directors, which will provide continuity in what has been IAHS's hardest-working board ever.

As always, the meeting program will feature a guest presentation. This year's speaker will be Shanna Robb of the Art Alliance of Idyllwild, who currently heads up the alliance's historically oriented "deer sighting" project of public art installations. IAHS will be host to a family of sculptured and painted deer in the village garden on the museum grounds. Shanna's topic is "Idyllwild – A Secret Worth Sharing," a historical celebration of our fair village.

So join us August 11 for an informative meeting and refreshments in the relaxing ambience of the Creekstone Inn. 🍷



**Creekstone Inn**  
*IAHS Archive*

I was already familiar with Craftsman style – it’s warm, it’s cozy, it invites you home for the holidays – and I knew that wasn’t mine. Nevertheless, I pored over architecture books in the library and bought Gustav Stickley’s “Craftsman Homes;” on the internet, I researched every home kit ever offered by Sears and a plethora of other catalog companies.

Fascinating information, all, but ultimately disappointing, so I went on to explore other 1880s-1930s styles.

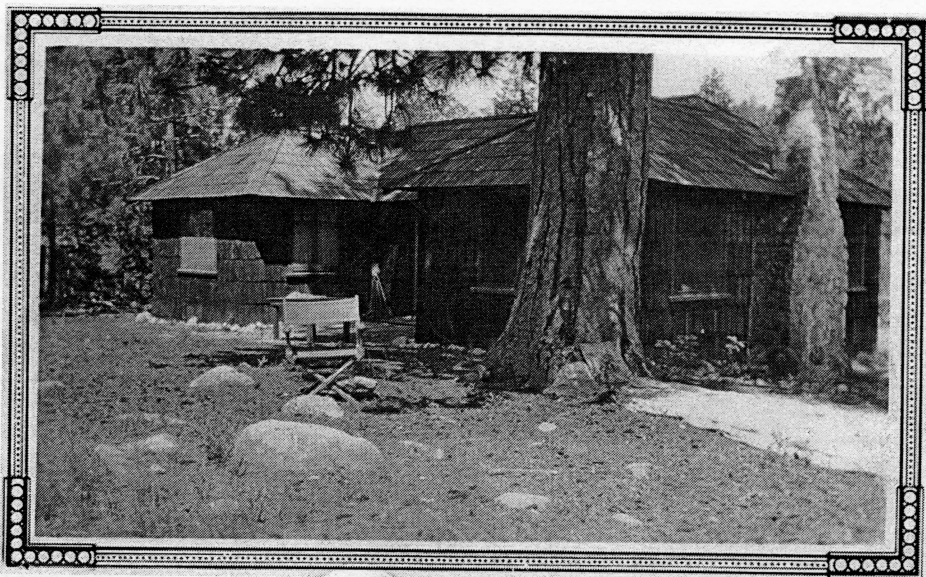
I became a semi-expert in all things Dog Trot, Log Cabin, Mission, Rancho, and a few others, but none of them came close. Maybe my “duckling” just wasn’t a style at all? I moved on to architects of that period, but the only name I even recognized among all of them was Frank Lloyd Wright, and I’d already run across his homes, all enormous, soaring, modern edifices. But ... he had also been the landscape architect of the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exhibit in San Diego.

Hey! My grandfather and great-grandfather were bank owners in San Diego at that time and it was still sort of a backwater – what were the odds they and FLW had been business acquaintances? I already knew he was as famous for his architectural philosophy as for his buildings, and the more I read, the more excited I became – my cabin fit almost every aspect of his philosophy, albeit in a very rustic way. Maybe he’d sketched the plan out on a cocktail napkin over a business lunch with my relatives – or not. In any case, I felt that here was an architectural/philosophical argument I could make to the National Register, and I jumped with both feet into the application’s required essays.

Everything was going swimmingly – I astounded myself with the facts of Idyllwild history I’d absorbed, and I had single-wall construction down to a “T” – after all, I’d crawled through the attic and under the floors, made umpteen measurements, etc. But when I had to explain the relationship between F.L. Wright’s philosophy and the cabin, I just couldn’t pull it together.

Discouraged, I shelved the project.

After four more months of intermittent mental turmoil, I pulled out the application again. My cabin



might be worthy of preservation or it might not, but in any event, I had to know. All the architectural arguments that had been simmering during those intervening months finally found their rightful places in my narratives, and nearly eighteen months after I first laid eyes on the County Survey, I sent the nomination, photos, site plans and drawings off to the State Office of Historic Preservation for validation.

If my nomination has merit, I will be invited to attend a scheduled public hearing and can defend my statements. Assuming it passes that hurdle, it will go on to the National Office. I have no idea what the outcome will be at any level along the way, but surprisingly, I’m not on pins and needles any longer.

I feel gratified that I finally understand and can appreciate my cabin’s uniqueness and feel certain that if Frank Lloyd Wright had designed a cabin, it would have been just like mine with many large windows, an open floor plan, spacious rooms, and an orientation to the views and western breezes. The long road to this conclusion has been interesting, perplexing, discouraging and exciting, and ultimately worth all the hours, days and months I put into it.

The criteria I chose to pursue are only a few of many leading to a National Register listing. The qualifying categories are myriad, and if you have a unique home, consider exploring what makes it special – your research might ultimately result in not just a much-loved home, but a true gem worth preserving.

*Joyce Miller, who provided the photos, has long been an IAHS museum docent and officer of her hometown Tustin Historical Society. You can see her cabin on this year’s IAHS Home Tour.* ♪

# The Company We Keep

New and Renewing Members – April through June 2013

## NEW MEMBERS

### Contributor

Shannon Houlihan Ng, Idyllwild

### Family

Tom & Jennie Adamson, Salida, CO  
Dave & Shanna Robb, Idyllwild

### Family (cont.)

Jimmie & Hedy Tyson, Riverside

### Individual

Diane Miller, Idyllwild

## RENEWING MEMBERS

### Benefactor

Chris & Catherine Allen, Encinitas

### Sponsor

Wayne Donaldson, Sacramento  
Jim & Doris Ferguson, Riverside  
Joe & Nancy Hart, Carlsbad  
Ben & Nanci Killingsworth, Idyllwild  
Bonnie Lynn Lawrie, Cerritos  
Phyllis Marling, South Pasadena  
Joyce McGaugh Silberstein, Anaheim  
Kay Wanner & Charles Wix, Idyllwild

### Business

Mile High Café, Idyllwild

### Contributor

Nancy Beddingfield & Paul Leverenz, Idyllwild  
Nancy Borchers, Idyllwild  
Suzanne Bowman, Idyllwild  
Earlie May Brosterhous, Hemet  
Dore Capitani & Trish Tuley, Mountain Center  
Jeff & Helen Hixon, Los Angeles  
Marilyn Kemple, Idyllwild  
David & Kim Leonard, Riverside  
Daniel & Jane Levy, Pasadena  
Heloise Marsh, Hemet  
Sheri McClain, Diamond Bar  
Susan Miller, Hemet  
George & Jeanette Schultejan, Idyllwild  
Marianne McConnell Smith, Eagle Mountain, UT  
Lloyd & Shirley Wood, Idyllwild

### Family

Karl & Joy Allgeier, Idyllwild  
Bill & Pat Altman, West Covina  
Irene & Lew Brahm, El Cajon  
Gary & Karen Brown, Idyllwild  
Jeanne & Jerry Buchanan, Idyllwild  
Dan & Sharla Carpenter, Idyllwild  
Bob & Sherry Edwards, Idyllwild  
Lorel Cornman & Will Johnson, Idyllwild  
Joe & Leann Gudmundson, Idyllwild  
Hans & Birgit Illiew, Valley Center  
Ron & Marcia Krull, Idyllwild  
Dan & Mary Beth Lazzaro, San Diego  
Paula Panich & Bill Linsman, Los Angeles  
Ron Perry & Doris Lombard, Mountain Center  
Melinda & Ron St. Pierre, Idyllwild  
Joanne Tenney, La Palma  
Michael Voell, San Rafael  
Jean Waggoner & Cal Gogerty, Idyllwild

### Individual

Bob Cox, Idyllwild  
Barbara Czescik, Del Mar  
Helen Drummond, Yuma, AZ  
Christine Gary, Corona  
Virginia Lumb, Idyllwild  
Linda Otterbeck, Palm Springs  
Linda Wright Miller, Carlsbad  
Margaret Stimson, Eureka  
Lynn Wagman, Rockville, MD

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_ Contributor (\$35) \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor (\$250) \_\_\_\_\_ Business (\$35)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_ Patron (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate (\$750)

Please make your tax-deductible dues check to IAHS & mail to PO Box 3320, Idyllwild CA 92549

If a gift membership, please enter your name and address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

# Brothel on a Home Tour? Really?

By Ben Killingsworth

Yes, and it's scary how time creeps up on us, but here we are getting closer and closer to the time when all hands pitch in to put on the annual Idyllwild Historical Society Home Tour. This will be the thirteenth year in a row for this wonderful event. It is not a small undertaking, but well worth the time and energy it requires.

The first step is to find five homeowners who are willing to allow four or five hundred people to go traipsing through their homes. We don't look for mansions, or anything close to it; in fact, the most popular home often turns out to be the oldest and smallest.

This year we will feature one home built in 1923, one in 1927, one in 1928, another in 1963, and one built in 1979. The 1923 home has been nominated to become part of the National Register of Historic Places, while the 1927 home was once used as sleeping quarters for US Forest Service fire prevention trainees. And the 1928 home? Well, it was once a brothel!

The home built in 1963 has been completely restored by the current owners themselves. When they bought it, they learned later that the real estate agent had been reluctant to show it to them because of its rundown condition, but today you would never know it. The 1979 home is larger than the rest but it's one you won't soon forget. It is a remarkable structure.

In addition to finding the homes and working with the homeowners for several months, another important task is finding and organizing enough volunteer docents to watch over each home to make sure that questions can be answered and that the contents of the home are kept safe. This is basically an all-day job and the tour could not be offered without their participation. Fortunately, most of them love doing it and come back year after year.

The annual home tour is the Historical Society's biggest fundraiser, and putting it together is a team effort. In addition to finding the homes and recruiting the docents, other volunteers take photos of the homes, write the narrative description of each home for the ticket booklet, prepare and distribute advertising and other promotional material, put up signs directing participants to the homes, and, of course, keep tabs on the money both coming in and going out. 📌

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Home Tour



**Saturday, September 14, 10 am to 4 pm**

**\$20 per person**

**Ticket booklets available from 9:30 am at  
Idyllwild Monument on Village Center Drive**

**More information:**

**(951) 317-4613 or (951) 201-1400**

*Photo by Frazier Drake*

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## The Generosity of Friends

During the past six months, in addition to buying postcards and souvenirs online, we've received several donations for our collection from members and friends of IAHS. Most sizable, thanks to David Jerome, was a gift of office furniture and cartons of historical materials from the former Idyllwild Chamber of Commerce.

Also notable were a pair of Ernie Maxwell's horse sculptures from Peg Holsclaw of Carson City NV. Local resident Larry Kueneman brought us an original typescript copy of a 1957 master's thesis on human use of the San Jacinto Wilderness, which provides a valuable historic backdrop to the long-running controversy over construction of the Palm Springs Tramway.

*(See Friends, page 7)*

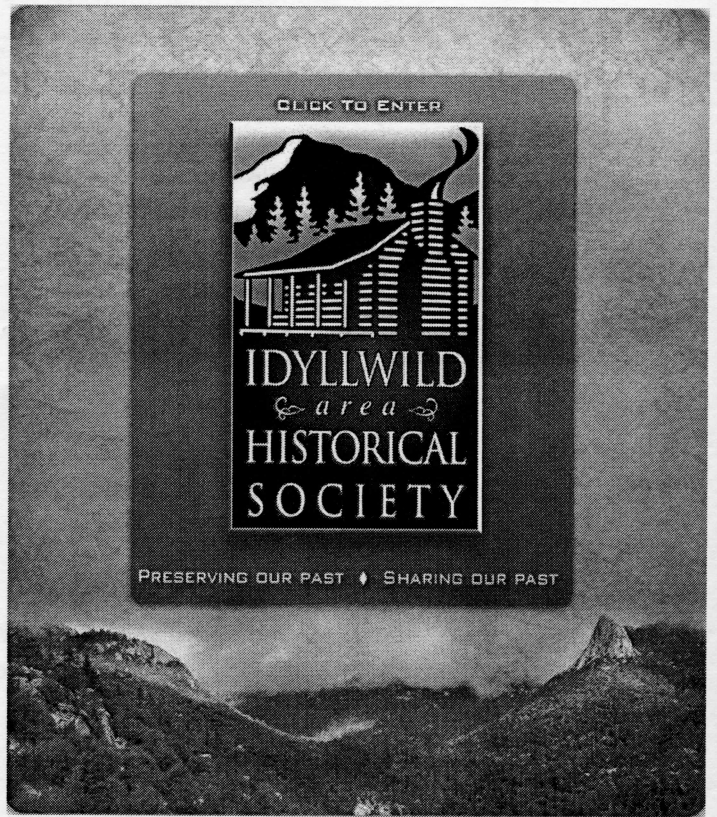
## All-New Website Launched

Lest you haven't yet noticed, last month IAHS launched a totally redesigned website. Pass through the portal depicted here, and you can learn more about Idyllwild and San Jacinto Mountain history; check out our pictorial calendar of events; keep up with what we're offering by way of books and merchandise in the Museum Shop; and (for visitors) how to contact us, find the museum, and know its current open hours, or join our membership.

The project began way back in the fall of 2011, when the Board of Directors discussed the need to enhance our outdated on-line presence. Newly elected director Jeff Wu, CEO of Ci Design of Irvine, graciously offered his company's resources to help us rethink our approach.

IAHS webmaster John Drake, writer Bob Smith, and President Carolyn Levitski first conferred with marketing and information technology staff of Ci Design. From that discussion, John developed a design concept, Bob began preparing text and selecting visual content, and Carolyn donated implementation software.

At that point the project suddenly hit the brakes, as John took a new full-time job and Bob assumed leadership in archive development in the wake of founding archivist Shirl Reid's departure. But bit by bit through 2012 the team refined and fleshed out the site's design. Pieces fell together until it was time for the detailed work of mounting the resulting website online.



The new IAHS web portal presents our logo and mission over the spectacular FrazierDrake panorama of Strawberry Valley flanked by Suicide and Tahquitz rocks.

For the final push we contracted with Idyllwild web designer Jim Crandall, who saw the project through to final implementation, adding a few creative touches of his own. We are also indebted to Jeff Taylor of Green Café for generously continuing to host the website. 📌

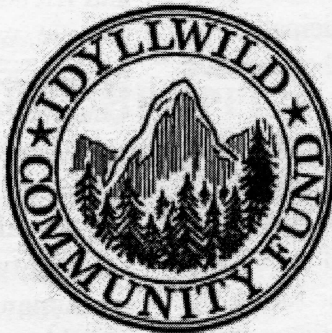
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## Town Crier Project Progresses

Our effort to make old issues of the Idyllwild Town Crier available on-line in a searchable format for personal historical research is moving along. All issues from 1949 through 1953 have now been beautifully scanned by NewsBank Inc., thanks to a grant from the Idyllwild Community Fund and gifts from the Town Crier and Rotary Anns.

We have been testing the search engine and piloting a few small research projects to assess the value of this unique resource. Our first



impression is extremely positive.

**Now we need your help in two ways:**

(1) If you have a question for which these early papers might hold an answer, please contact Bob Smith ASAP at [info@idyllwildhistory.org](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.org) or 951-659-2717.

(2) If you or someone you know has old copies of the Town Crier from 1946-1948, 1957-1959, or 1964 and beyond, please let us know. We need to borrow them, in order to continue the project. 📌

## Daybreak at Idyllwild

Some lavish hand  
That chanced to pass  
Has scattered pearls  
Upon the grass,  
And of each slender  
Bending blade,  
An iridescent  
Necklace made.

This opulent  
And careless hand  
While strewing jewels  
On the land  
Upon each quiet green  
Let fall  
An iridescent  
Sapphire ball.

And on the moss  
Of every glade  
A precious gem  
Of emerald laid.  
And flashing round  
The rim of day  
Are opals, lately  
Tossed away!

— Lewis L. Thomas, Editor *Idyllwild Breezes*, Sept. 1929

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### FRIENDS ... (continued from page 5)

In addition we received historical materials from Meg Garner of Garner Ranch, Jim Tanner of Hemet, Becky Clark and the Town Crier, the Krone Museum at Idyllwild Arts, the Viv Larson Estate (through Jan Fast), and Hill residents Lynnda Hart, Johnnie Johnson, and Mary Ann Miller. We are thankful for the photos, clippings, books, articles of clothing, research materials, postcards, plaques, albums, and art works from these generous friends to enrich our collection.

We also gratefully thank Marlene & Tom Pierce and Adele & Bob Smith for monetary contributions in memory of Tom McCullough. Also, donations from the Pine Cove Property Owners Assn., Charles & Charlotte Bird of San Diego, Gina Genis of Idyllwild, Bradley Huckle of Eden Prairie MN, Robert Reyes of Long Beach, and anonymous donors are much appreciated.

### Museum Grounds Gain Popularity



A steady stream of visitors recently enjoyed a relaxing Saturday afternoon on the museum grounds, as IAHS member Gina Genis signed copies of her new book, *Everybody and Their Mother - Idyllwild, CA*. This artistic collection of environmental photo portraits of Idyllwild residents in their favorite settings is now available in our Museum Shop

*Photo by Bob Smith*

**Museum Hours:**

**11 am - 4 pm**

**Summer Schedule June 21 - Sept. 2:  
Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays**

**Winter Schedule Sept. 8 - June 16:  
Saturdays, Sundays & Monday holidays**

**For special tours and other business,  
call (951) 659-2717 or**

**Email: [info@idyllwildhistory.com](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.com)**

**Website: [www.idyllwildhistory.org](http://www.idyllwildhistory.org)**

**Admission Free**

**Donations Welcome**

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**Dates to remember:**

**Sunday, August 11 — IAHS Annual Meeting  
(see page 2 for more information)**

**Sunday, September 1 — Ice Cream Social (12-2 p.m.)**

**Saturday, September 14 — 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Idyllwild Home Tour  
(see page 5 for more information)**

**Saturday, October 12 — Art Walk & Wine Tasting**

**October — IAHS Museum 10th Anniversary (date TBA)**

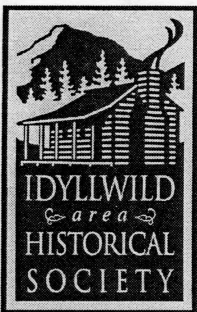
**Friday, December 13 — Annual Raffle Drawing**

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