

# 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

Winter 2010

## WHEN LEMON LILIES ABOUNDED

By Ben Killingsworth

Ordinarily, when we think of “history,” we think of people, like George Washington, maybe, important events, like WWII, or perhaps things like the invention of the light bulb by Thomas Edison. But let’s add something else – something you probably never thought of before – or maybe never even heard of in your entire life. We’re talking about the history of a flower – not just any flower, mind you, but a flower that plays an important role in the history of our beloved mountain. We’re talking about the Lemon Lily.

Now, if weren’t for the fact that the Lemon Lily is such a beautiful flower, most of us would be familiar with it – at least the name. But, you see, it is so beautiful that when you see it, usually growing beside a babbling brook, you immediately think about having one at home growing in your very own garden. And that is precisely what happened to our Lemon Lilies – the ones that used to grow in abundance alongside Strawberry Creek, and elsewhere on our beautiful mountain – a mountain not quite as beautiful as it once was, thanks to the near disappearance of our vast supply of Lemon Lilies. Well, how the heck did that happen?” you’re about to ask.

To answer that, we have to go back nine or ten decades, to a time when visitors — flatlanders we call

them now — were just starting to make their way up to our mountain. They came for many reasons: some to make money in the logging business, some to escape the hot summer weather down below, and others to play in the snow. But, most of all, they came to admire the natural beauty of the trees, the gurgling streams, the abundant wildlife that populated the mountain in those days, and, of course, the beautiful Lemon Lilies.



A grayscale picture of the beautiful Lemon Lily does not begin to do it justice, so just imagine a bright yellow flower, growing on a five-foot stalk, along Strawberry Creek. These flowers probably bloomed at night, then stayed open for about 76 hours.

Lemon Lilies (*Hemerocallis Lilio-asphodelus*) grow up to five feet tall, usually in moist soil beside the banks of small streams at altitudes between 4,000 and 9,000 feet. The flower is a native of northern China, Korea and eastern Siberia, where, in times past, at least, the locals didn’t limit themselves to just admiring its beauty, or smelling its fragrance – they also ate it, and used it for medicinal purposes. It’s been growing in gardens since about 1570, and was first named by Carl Linnaeus in 1762.

Linnaeus became fascinated with plants and their names when just a boy. After disappointing his parents by not entering the priesthood, he decided to study medicine. Yet, he still spent a great deal of his time studying various kinds of plants, since the study of medicine, at that time, included botany because doctors were expected to develop and prescribe medicines derived from plants. Linnaeus earned his medical degree in 1735, the same year he published his book, the *Systema Naturae*, on the classification of all living things, which, although much changed, is still in use today. *Continued on page 2, See Lemon Lily*

## Lemon Lily *Continued from page 1*

Flowers, when you stop to think about it, are a very important part of our lives, and have been since the days of the caveman, who painted pictures of them on the walls of his cave and invented myths glorifying them. Today, we not only grow them in our gardens in order to enjoy their sheer beauty, but we use them widely to express love, honor the dead, congratulate one another on a variety of occasions, beautify our homes, and even as the focus of one of the biggest and perhaps most photographed parades known to man – the Rose Parade, which, of course, is made up of dozens of flowering plant varieties, almost certainly including the Lemon Lily.

So here we are, smack in the middle of one of the finest Lemon Lily growing areas in the country, and most of us would be hard pressed to find one if we had all day. So why don't we just go out and buy some Lemon Lily seeds, take them down to a nice moist spot with plenty of sunshine next to Strawberry Creek, stick them in the ground, then come back in a few weeks and enjoy the fields of blooming lilies – maybe even pick a few and take them home.

But, it's not that simple, because from seed, to bulb, to flower, takes about four years. Not only that, but if the seeds you planted have been pollinated with other varieties of daylilies, there's no telling what color the flowers will be.

Yet, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could somehow get our Lemon Lilies back – enough so residents and visitors alike could enjoy them.

Well, it's going to happen, if, that is, the organizers of the *Lemon Lily Festival* have their way. The festival will be held right here in Idyllwild on July 16, 17 and 18, 2010. It is being sponsored by the Friends of the San Jacinto Mountain County Parks (better known as the Nature Center), and the Idyllwild Garden Club.

For up-to-the-minute news about what promises to be a wonderful event, log onto [LemonLilyFestival.com](http://LemonLilyFestival.com). Once there, you'll be able to sign up for a newsletter and stay abreast of what's going on.

The steering committee meets every Thursday at 1 pm at the Nature Center.

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## *Idyllwild and the High San Jacintos*

By Bob Smith

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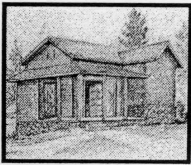
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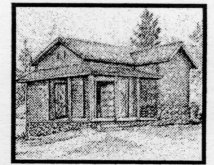
Please mail your check, payable to IAHS, along with this form to IAHS P. O. Box 3320, Idyllwild CA 92549.

To see our ONLINE INDEX for this book, go to the publications page on our website, [Idyllwildhistory.org](http://Idyllwildhistory.org), and click on the blue link.

If you have questions, please call (951) 659-8725



## Challenge Grant Target Met



Once again, loyal members and friends stepped forward to meet a challenge!

After Bob and Adele Smith this past September challenged the community to come up with \$12,500 in donations and pledges by December 31, the gifts poured in. Ranging from \$10 to \$1,000, every donation helped push us along. In a photo finish, on New Year's Eve the mail brought checks sufficient to reach the combined \$25,000 target and then some.

We're now running the gauntlet of Riverside County's Building Department to obtain our permit. Watch for word of the ground-breaking. We hope to move in by summer's end.

A happy new year is dawning for IAHS, and we deeply appreciate the generosity of the more than 130 donors, whose contributions large and small combined to produce a successful capital campaign. If you missed out, donations are still more than welcome at P.O Box 3320, Idyllwild, CA 92549..

### Challenge Grant Donors

(\* indicates major donors)

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*Continued on page 5*

# LOOKING BACK AND DRIVING FORWARD

By Ben Killingsworth

Imagine this conversation, one that might have taken place 80 years ago, around 1930:

“Hey, Bob, is that your new car?”

“Sure is, George – a brand new Model A Ford is what it is.”

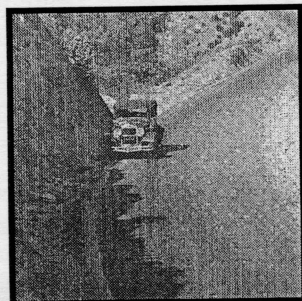
“Boy, I’ll bet that set you back a pretty penny!”

“Sure did – three hundred and eighty-five smackers! But how else you gonna get a car with a water cooled 201-cubic-inch motor? It’s got 40 horsepower, but even with all that power, it still gets 25 to 30 miles to the gallon.”

“My lord! How fast will it go, anyway?”

“Well, I’ve only had it up to about 40, but a friend of mine got his up to 65 – can you believe it, 65 miles an hour?”

“Good grief, man – 65! That’s gettin’ up there – that is flat out flyin’! Has she given you any trouble?”



We’re not sure where this picture was taken, or who took it, except that it is Highway 74, which had just opened in 1929. We’re not even sure it’s a Model A, but it definitely looks like one. Photo from *The San Jacintos*

may surprise you)

“You know what, Bob – I’ll bet you about 80

years from now people will be getting together and formin’ clubs – you know, Model A clubs, where people get together and drive different places and have picnics, stuff like that.”

“George! Are you listenin’ to yourself? Have you lost your mind?

Why in the world would anybody want to do that?”

“Well, by then they’ll probably have cars that can go even faster, like 70 maybe, and then cars like yours will be collector items. Rare, if you know what I mean.”

“George, that is the stupidest thing I ever heard of. For one thing, if a car were to go over 65 it would

probably blow out all of its inner tubes, and if you didn’t crank your windows all the way up the wind would blow your hat right off your head!

“And for another thing, Henry Ford kept building the Model T for 18 years, which goes to show you how hard it was to come up with somethin’ better. Eighty years? A car that can go faster than 65? I don’t think so, George! I think you’re dreamin’.”

Well, George may have been dreaming, but, as we know, it was a dream that came true. There are, in fact, Model A clubs all over the world, and one of them, the San Diego Model A club, just paid us a visit.

About 20 members of the San Diego club, which just celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, drove their Model A’s up the mountain on October 23, 2009 (there was no mention of overheating), and stayed for two nights at the Silver Pines Lodge.

During their stay, they stopped by our museum and were met by Bob Smith, who gave them a special tour.

For those of us who aren’t in tune with such matters, *Continued on page 6 See Model A’s*

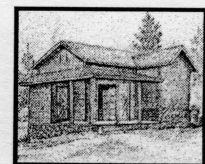
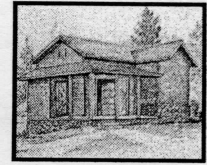


After the long drive from San Diego to Idyllwild, the San Diego Model A Club Fords take a well-deserved rest while their owners enjoy a guided tour of the Idyllwild Area Historical Society Museum, courtesy of Bob Smith.

Photo by the San Diego Model A Club

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## Model A's *Continued from page 4*

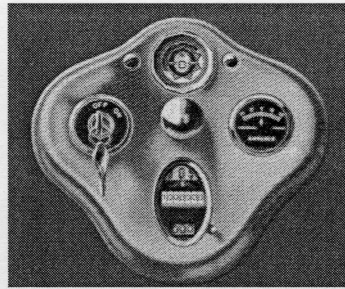
it may come as a surprise to learn that the first ever International Model A day was celebrated on July 26, 2008. That's as close as they could get it to Henry Ford's birthday anniversary, which was July 30<sup>th</sup>.

The club is affiliated with the Model A Ford Club of America, and has patterned its constitution and by-laws after that body. Yes, they have a constitution.

According to Wikipedia, "The Model A was the first Ford to use the standard set of driver controls, with conventional clutch and brake pedals, throttle and gearshift; previous Ford models used controls that had become out of date and uncommon to drivers of other makes. The Model A's fuel tank was located in the cowl, between the engine compartment's fire wall and the dash panel. It had an optic fuel gauge and the fuel was distributed to the carburetor by gravity. In cooler climates, owners could purchase an after market cast iron unit to place over the engine's exhaust manifold to bring heated air into the cab. A small door could be opened or closed to adjust the amount of hot air entering the cab. Model A was the first car to have safety glass in the windshield."

Now, if you don't believe it was "High

Tech" just check out the instrument panel in the photo below. I can say from personal experience

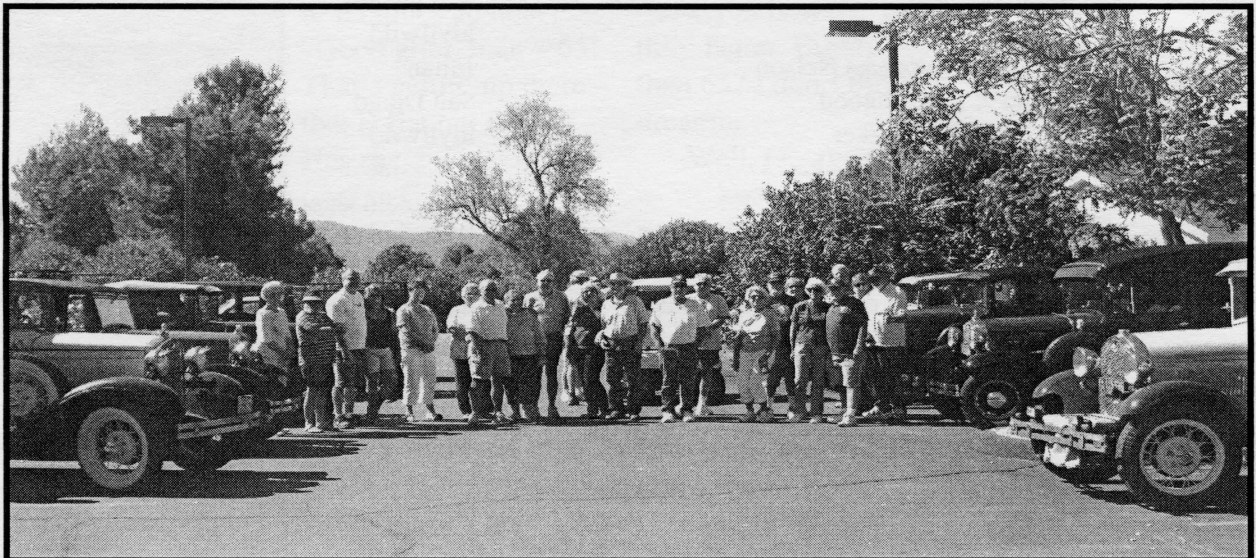


that the speedometer (shown at the top of the oval window at the bottom of the panel) tended to wobble back and forth, making it difficult to tell just how fast you

were going, and even harder to establish a top speed record as I did on Magnolia Avenue in Riverside in 1945. (The wartime speed limit was 35mph.)

With my foot pressing the accelerator ( we just called it the gas) as hard as I could, the fenders on the old car began to vibrate as if we were approaching the speed of sound, which is what it felt like. The speedometer, which bore no resemblance to a modern day speedometer, wobbled toward 60 mph, inched past 62 (give or take) and finally hit 70 mph, which, as it turned out, was the best she could do. That was the last time I called on her to try and crack the sound barrier, which probably saved me a couple of pistons and an intake valve or two.

But I have to say, that even to this day, the sound of a 4-cylinder Model A engine, is like music to my ears.



Visiting members of the San Diego Model A Club after enjoying their tour of the IAHS Museum. According to their website, they had a wonderful time. Photo by the San Diego Model A club

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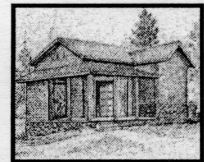
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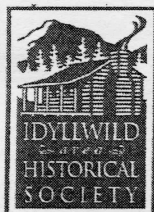
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