

# 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

WINTER 2013

## ELIZABETH MAXWELL – A WOMAN TO BE REMEMBERED

*By Ben Killingsworth*

We've all heard the old saying, "Behind every successful man there stands a woman," and you can bet that during the 1940s and '50s that was probably true in most cases. But certainly not always, and a good case in point is the couple best known for starting the Idyllwild Town Crier. We all know what a great contribution Ernie Maxwell made to our community, but what is not generally known and appreciated are the contributions made to our community and beyond by his wife, Elizabeth (Betty) Maxwell.

Born in 1906, Betty began her professional stage acting career when she was just 10 years old. After graduating in 1926 from Bennett College in Millbrook NY, where she studied drama, she continued her acting career in New York for another seven years, then, like many before her, headed for Hollywood.

During that same period Ernie had graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in fine arts. Soon after, he moved to New York to work as a cartoonist, but living in New York was not his cup of tea; he soon came back to California and settled in Los Angeles.

And that's when a friend offered him a ride in the rumble seat of a Model A Ford, and to his surprise, he found himself sharing the rather tight quarters with Betty. About five years later they were married. Ah, those rumble seats!

After their marriage in 1938, they set up



Betty Maxwell

*Photo courtesy of IAHS archive*

housekeeping in the Los Angeles area of Laurel Canyon. Betty went right on with her acting and directing career while Ernie found full-time work at the famous Farmers Market, illustrated books, and sold cartoons to various magazines in his spare time.

Then, in 1939, they were driving home from a vacation when they saw a sign that pointed to a place called "Idyllwild," and they decided to check it out. Like many of us who also wound up living here, they adopted Idyllwild as their favorite get-away.

After WWII started in December, 1941, Ernie spent the next four years serving in the US Army Air Corps, where he was assigned to help with the production of the weekly US Army newspaper, "Yank." Hundreds of his popular cartoons entertained 2.6-million readers before the paper was discontinued in 1945.

Meanwhile, although Betty had continued with her stage career, she discovered metaphysics, something that more or less took over her life for several years.

[Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy going back to the days of Aristotle that deals with "the true nature of reality," or, put another way, "the exploration and understanding of reality." It is akin to spirituality but is not based on any particular religion.]

Before long Betty became a very active and accomplished metaphysical lecturer, teacher, and

*(See Maxwell, page 4)*

# IDYLLWILD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Board of Directors

*President:* Carolyn Levitski  
*Vice President:* Charlotte Groty  
*Secretary:* Marlene Pierce  
*Treasurer:* Bob Smith  
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(\*on leave)

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

## Special Advisors

Harry Bubb, Kay Cenicerros, Janice Lyle,  
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*Archive:* Darlene Beebe, Nancy Borchers,  
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Bob Smith, Cecilia Tepel

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*Museum Shop:* Nancy Borchers

*Oral Histories:* Corrinne Brown,

Lynnda Hart, Carolyn Levitski

*Research:* Bob Smith

*Webmaster:* John Drake

## Arti-Facts

*Co-Editors:* Adele & Bob Smith

*Layout:* Halie Johnson

*Feature Writer:* Ben Killingsworth

# THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

Once again in 2012, the members and friends of IAHS continued to keep our programs well funded. Unrestricted operating income totaled \$28,711 vs. expenses of \$20,169. The surplus just compensated for last winter's long-deferred replacement of the museum building's roof.

We continue to rely on three main sources of income – annual dues, two major fundraisers, and museum revenue – in roughly comparable amounts.

Income from the annual home tour and raffle were down a bit in 2012, but that drop was balanced by several members who raised their dues payments to the Benefactor (\$250) and Patron (\$500) levels.

In addition to our operating income, we received nearly \$2,000 in gift and grant funds targeted to two specific projects. One is the village garden being developed on our campus by the Idyllwild Garden Club; the other is digitizing early volumes of the Town Crier for posting on the Web.

Our major annual expenses relate to our physical plant. Nearly half of all operating expenditures go to insurance premiums, utility bills, and maintenance of buildings and grounds. Other expenses in the \$1,000-3,000 range include Museum Shop inventory, quarterly newsletter production, office and archive supplies, and home tour costs.

Careful stewardship of your tax-deductible dues and donations has kept IAHS in the black each year since our founding in 2001. 📖



**2012 Raffle  
winner Susan  
Weisbart relaxes  
happily at her  
Idyllwild cabin  
with her new pine  
desk, crafted for  
IAHS by Jerry  
Holddber and  
Pine Cove Water  
District staff.**

*Photo courtesy of  
Susan Weisbart*

# THE COMPANY WE KEEP

New and Renewing Members - October through December 2012

## NEW MEMBERS

### Benefactor

Robert Reyes, PhD & Patrick Kennedy, Long Beach

### Family

Doug Ashcraft & Darren Schilling, Idyllwild  
Tim & Pam Nunn, Pomona

### Individual

Nick Bachman, Los Angeles  
Gina Genis, Laguna Woods  
Cecilia Tepel, Idyllwild

## RENEWING MEMBERS

### Founders Circle

Janet & Richard Goldberg, Idyllwild  
Janice Lyle, Idyllwild

### Patron

J.H. Deal, Riverside

### Benefactor

Rich Honn & Ann Snow, Pasadena

### Sponsor

Jim & Dawn Deshefy, Laguna Hills

### Organization

Idyllwild Garden Club, Idyllwild

### Contributor

Ann Copeland, Palm Desert  
Morrie Copeland & Dick Dorisse, Idyllwild  
Nancy & Jack Fletcher, San Diego  
Alice & Darryl Mallory, Ashland, OR  
Earl & Peggy Parker, Idyllwild  
Harry Quinn, Mountain Center  
Adele & Ron Voell, Idyllwild

### Family

Terry Bauman & Charlene Wagner, San Diego  
Doug & Maureen Boren, Palm Desert  
Diann Coate, Idyllwild  
Annette & Bill Cooper, Idyllwild

### Family (cont'd.)

Bobbie & Gary Glasheen, Idyllwild  
Eugene Hubbard, San Diego  
Bronwyn Jones & David Hiemenz, Idyllwild  
Kathleen & Dennis Kieferdorf, El Cajon  
Charles & Mildred Krueger, Desert Hot Springs  
Ron Perry & Doris Lombard, Mountain Center  
Bill & Ginny Millard, Rancho Mirage  
Joyce & William Miller, Santa Ana  
Liz & Walt Mueller, San Diego  
Robin & Sarah Oates, Idyllwild  
Brad & Karen Radis, Torrance  
Carol & Will Summers, Laguna Niguel  
R.B. & Janice Sutton, Riverside  
Sandi Tenerelli, La Canada

### Individual

Barbara Desforges, San Clemente  
Ken Harrison, Cardiff-by-the-Sea  
Ron Kelley, Rancho Mirage  
Laura Long, Valley Village  
Sharen Metz, Idyllwild  
Marge Muir, Idyllwild  
Alma McGaugh Peters, Mountain Center  
Carol Scanny, Palm Desert  
Annette Wassell, Idyllwild  
Barbara & David Wilke, Idyllwild

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_



**MAXWELL ...** (continued from page 1)

practitioner, and an acolyte of the famed prophet, Edgar Cayce. She was most active in Hollywood and San Francisco, where she lived for a time while Ernie was in the army. In Hollywood she served as the “Leader - Teacher - Counselor” of the Hollywood Truth Foundation until sometime in 1943.

To illustrate the depth of her involvement in that organization, an August 1942 schedule of activities lists her as giving lectures 18 times during that month. Some examples of the subjects she spoke about are “Commanding the Day,” “The Rule of Action,” “The Practice of Power,” and “The Habit of Success.”

In addition, during the years 1943 to 1951, she often lectured four or five times a week at the Metaphysical Library and Book Club in San Francisco, and she was a frequent lecturer at the Institute of Religious Science in Los Angeles. Later on she also gave lectures in Idyllwild when she found time, and they were very popular.

Our Historical Society Museum archives contain many letters and heartfelt notes written by her students who rave about her passion, knowledge, and speaking ability. She also worked one on one with anyone who asked for help. One letter, written in 1943 by a woman in Concord NH, seems to say it all. She wrote to thank Betty for the lessons she was apparently receiving by mail: “I cannot tell you how much your lessons have meant to me. They have truly changed my whole existence and outlook on life.”

In the middle of all this, after Ernie was discharged from the Air Corps at the end of WWII, the couple somehow found the time and energy in 1946 to move to Idyllwild on a permanent basis.

The village then had fewer than 450 full-time residents, but the town grew quickly after the war.

They weren’t here very long before some friends began urging them to start a newspaper, probably because there wasn’t one at the time, and both Ernie and Betty had been editors of their college newspapers, not to mention Ernie’s work in the Army on “Yank.”

After continual prodding, they launched the paper in late 1946. Actually, it was just a two-page mimeographed publication first offered as a throw-



**Betty Maxwell (2nd from left) works beside Ernie in their living room, assembling an early Town Crier edition, helped by Marge Shideler, Hazel Cress, and Minnie Hodge.**

*Photo courtesy of IAHS archive*

away, then sold for \$1.00 for ten issues. It eventually became a weekly but didn’t always keep to that schedule. One thing that saved them occasionally was that Ernie was able to quickly draw a cartoon or two to fill in any spaces not already occupied with news.

But make no mistake – this was not an “Ernie and a helper” situation. This was a “we” arrangement, as in “we” started the paper and “we” wrote the contents, and “we” published it.

Obviously, Betty was an independent person, an extremely busy one, and apparently very good at whatever she decided to take on. In addition to everything else, she served on the board of directors of the Idyllwild Chamber of Commerce, and directed the community campfire program and a little theatre group.

Betty died in 1977 at the age of 71, but I can’t help wishing she were still around, giving those lectures and changing people’s lives for the better. 📖

## RECENT ARCHIVE ACTIVITY

### *Additions to Our Collection*

We continue to receive donated historical artifacts, photographs, and documents. In the past three months, for example, we added a collection of 55 photos documenting the Jerry Johnson family and friends in the early postwar years, courtesy of Carol Ann Johnson Adamson of La Quinta. Also, Charla Burton Elliott of San Jacinto brought us photographs and Desert Sun School yearbooks, all from the 1950s, when her parents operated, and the family lived in, the Sportland recreation complex that once stood on the site of today's Fort.

Our most curious acquisition was left anonymously at the museum door: a Monopoly-style game board of the sort that was popular in the 1980s, this one called "the Game of Idyllwild," featuring local landmarks and businesses of the era.

Other generous donors included Terry Bauman of San Diego, Janice Coopersmith of Idyllwild, Alice & Darryl Mallory of Ashland OR, and Audrey Parmiter of Tujunga.

### *Archive Upgrades*

We are ever so grateful to board member Jeff Wu for our most substantial donation of recent years, two new computer systems for our office and archive buildings, replacing seven-year-old machines that were becoming obsolete.

These new assets have allowed us to upgrade our museum software and centralize all work on our collection in the Frank & Mabel Moote Archive and Research Center, greatly enhancing the productivity of our capable volunteer staff.

### *Research Projects*

During 2012 we responded to 43 inquiries requiring research in our collection. In two-thirds of the cases we were able to provide useful information for the inquirers.

Examples include providing historic photos for the State Park to display in its Visitors Center; for the Forest Service to display at a historic site in the national forest; for the Idyllwild Library's grand opening; and for fire-history research at UC-Riverside. We also provided information for several botanists doing field surveys in our mountains. We worked with Idyllwild Community Recreation Council's



**Donated computer is at the heart of newly completed archive work area.**

*Photo by Bob Smith*

archaeological consultant on the new community playground. And we consulted with the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council, evaluating old cabins needing wood-shake roof replacement.

The most common questions we receive, about old family cabins, are the most difficult to deal with, because of the vast number of cabins and random nature of the information we have from particular families. It's proven easier to track down vacation homes of well-known owners, such as the Chauncey Clarkes of La Quinta and Cornelia White of Palm Springs.

Finally, the archive now admirably supports continual research for "Before Our Time," the monthly historical column in the Town Crier. 📖

## A PLEA FOR HELP

We need your help in finding old copies of the Idyllwild Town Crier for scanning and posting on the Web.

Our most urgent missing issues include:

Volume 1, #2-5 (Nov-Dec 1946)

Volume 1, #8-9 (Feb 1947)

Volume 1, #13 (Apr 19, 1947)

Volume 1, #15 (May 17, 1947)

Volume 1, #19 (Jul 5, 1947)

Volume 1, #23-25 (Aug 1947)

Volume 1, #27 (Aug 30, 1947)

Volume. 2, #5 (Jan 3, 1948)

Volume 2, #8-13 (Feb-May 1948)

Volume 2, #15 (Jun 12, 1948)

Volume 2, #24-26 (Sep 1948)

If you have or know of collections of early issues, please contact us at [info@idyllwildhistory.org](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.org) or (951) 659-2717. 📖

## PINECRAFT FURNITURE TO BE FOCUS OF IDYLLWILD LECTURE

On Friday, March 15, Idyllwild's popular community lecture series will turn its attention to the renowned Pinecraft Furniture legacy.

The speaker will be Ted Belden, son of Pinecraft founder C. Selden Belden. It is most appropriate that a family member represent the Belden enterprise, as Pinecraft was truly a family business. A marketing slogan read, "We make each piece so nice we'd like to keep it ourselves."

You can get the flavor from the Town Crier ad on the next page, which appeared during construction of the Pinecraft factory showroom on Highway 243. (Since 1960, the building has housed a series of restaurants, currently the Mile High Café.)

Selden Belden built and marketed his trademarked craftsman furniture in Idyllwild between  
*(See Pinecraft, next page)*



Samples of Pinecraft on permanent display  
at the IAHS museum.  
*Photo by Bob Smith*

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## THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR MUSEUM DOCENTS

Our museum is central to IAHS's educational mission, and we opened our doors to the public 124 days in 2012. Our rotating corps of 39 volunteer docents greeted 3,963 visitors and handled \$7,089 in sales and donation income. They patiently waited out slow days, when as few as four visitors showed up, but just as often handled crowds as large as the 117 who toured the museum on Home Tour day. Their service is vital to the museum's operation, and the Board of Directors wishes to recognize and thank deeply these sterling volunteers:

Nancy Borchers  
Susie Bowman  
Corrinne Brown  
Dan & Sharla Carpenter  
Sara Clayton  
Diann Coate  
Morry Copeland  
Susan Cowper  
JoAnne Curren  
Dick Dorisse  
Janice Duquette  
Tuck Ernst  
Katy Grigsby  
Charlotte & George Groty

Leann Gudmundson  
Carolyn Hall  
Lynnda Hart  
Barbara Jones  
Carolyn Levitski  
Doris Lombard  
Virginia Lumb  
Sherry McClain  
Joyce Miller  
Diane Olsen  
Peggy Parker  
Ron Perry  
Marlene Pierce  
Susan Righetti  
Bob Smith  
Larry & Linda Turner  
Cecilia Tepel  
Adele Voell  
Nickie Watts  
Elaine Weiler  
Betty Wilcox  
Barbara Wilke  
Helen Ziler

... and their hard-working coordinators: Joan McCullough, Charlotte Groty, & Pat Stastny. 🐦

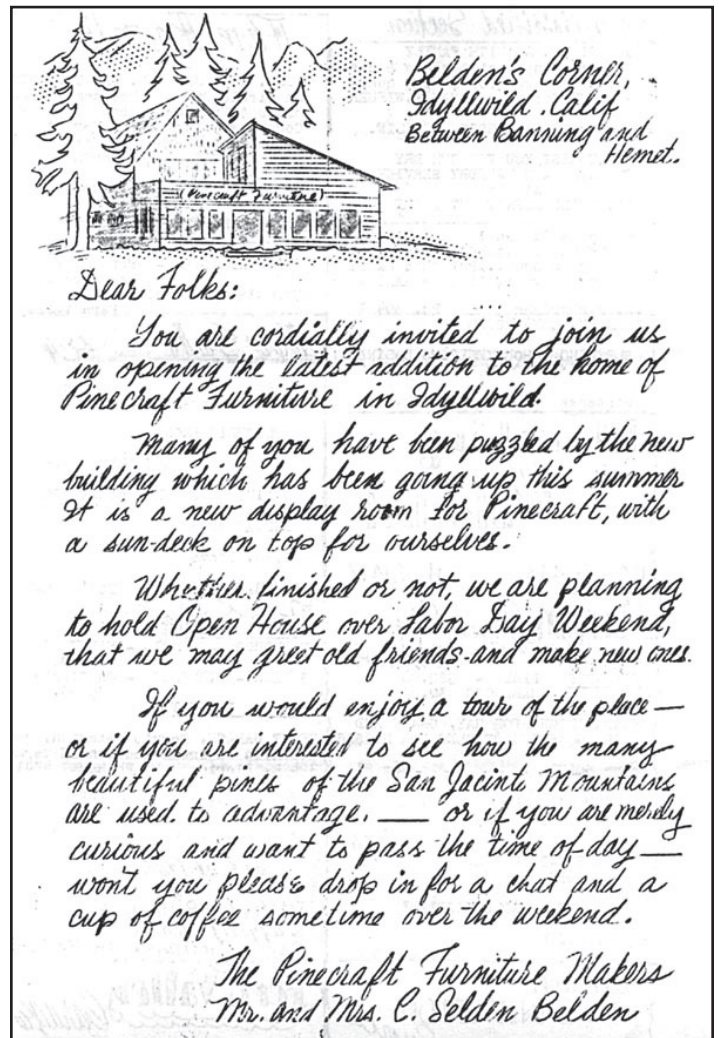


## PINECRAFT ... (continued from previous page)

1937 and his death in 1952. At that point his widow, Coral, and son Ted took over the business, which continued until 1960.

Belden has published a memoir of growing up in Idyllwild and the birth of Pinecraft. Copies will be available for purchase at the lecture. (It is also available through our Museum Shop.)

This lecture is co-sponsored by IAHS and the Idyllwild Community Recreation Council. It will take place at Silver Pines Lodge beginning at 6:00 p.m., preceded by a wine-and-cheese reception at 5:30. Both events are free to the public. 📍



Belden's Corner,  
Idyllwild, Calif.  
Between Ranning and Hemet.

Dear Folks:

You are cordially invited to join us in opening the latest addition to the home of Pinecraft Furniture in Idyllwild.

Many of you have been puzzled by the new building which has been going up this summer. It is a new display room for Pinecraft, with a sun-deck on top for ourselves.

Whether finished or not, we are planning to hold Open House over Labor Day Weekend, that we may greet old friends and make new ones.

If you would enjoy a tour of the place — or if you are interested to see how the many beautiful pines of the San Jacinto Mountains are used to advantage, — or if you are merely curious and want to pass the time of day — won't you please drop in for a chat and a cup of coffee sometime over the weekend.

The Pinecraft Furniture Makers  
Mrs. and Mrs. C. Selden Belden

### BREEZIN' ALONG WITH THE EARLY "IDYLLWILD BREEZES"

A large list of social activities in the June 1926 "Breezes" shows a very busy social calendar here in town: Liberty Ball, Idyllwild Hospitality Day, two Treasure Hunts, Bridge Tournament, Costume Ball, Barbecue, Duplicate Bridge Tournament, Barn Dance, Tennis Tournament, and Tournament Dance.

WHO KNEW? From a 1926 "Breezes" comes this happy note: "It is a real source of satisfaction to have a car drive up to our garage and fill the tank with gas at the same price as in Hemet. Service with a smile and no thought of taxing drivers all the traffic will bear."

THE TAN AGE (August 1929 "Breezes"): "The geological and natural histories of the world tell us of various ages, such as the Stone Age. This is the Tan Age, as the vogue right now seems to be a coat of tan. It is not something which can be shed like an ordinary garment but is the gift of the sun. It must be long enough to cover the entire anatomy from hairline to heel, and the browner it is the more highly is it esteemed.

"The genuine article cannot be obtained at the gents or ladies furnishing stores but is best acquired at Idyllwild along the trails, in the outdoor plunge, at the golf links, on the tennis courts, and numerous other places in these enchanted mountains.

"In order that this coat of tan may be displayed to better advantage, various pieces of personal wear are being cast off. The stockings are being chucked and hats are flung to the winds. Where socks still survive, even they are tan colored as a substitute for the real thing.

"This is the Tan Age. Bathing suits are now cut to print the tan on the back so it will be coincident with the evening dress. In some cases almost everything is discarded and the sun is given his one big chance at the human race."

## ELVIS FANS

### JUST CAN'T STAY AWAY!

In August we were visited by the Elvis Fan Club of Victoria, Australia, on their annual tour of U.S. Elvis sites, including New Orleans, San Francisco, Las Vegas, San Antonio, Shreveport, Memphis (of course!), and Los Angeles. In a recent note, their president sent special thanks to our staff for opening up the "Kid Galahad" archive for their enjoyment and wonder. He also remarked "what a wonderful town this is and so little changed over the many years." The group especially appreciated the friendly help offered by neighbors, when they stopped to view the old Hidden Lodge where much of the film was shot. (Some of our locals who were extras in that film have fond memories of the 1961 filming here in Idyllwild.) 📍

## Museum Hours

11 am - 4 pm

Winter Schedule September 8 - June 16:  
Saturdays, Sundays, and  
Monday holidays

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

E-mail: [info@idyllwildhistory.org](mailto:info@idyllwildhistory.org)

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

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**Admission Free**

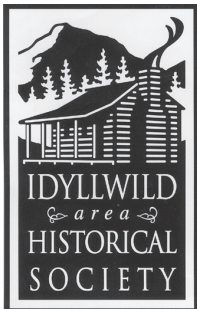
**Donations Welcome**

**Date to remember:**

**Friday, March 15 — ICRC Speaker Series**  
**“Pinecraft Furniture” by Ted Belden**  
**6:00 pm at Silver Pines Lodge (reception at 5:30)**  
**Co-sponsored by IAHS**

(See pages 6 & 7 for more information)

**P.O. Box 3320**  
**Idyllwild, CA 92549**



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