

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 2015

FROM EVANSWOOD TO JAMES RESERVE

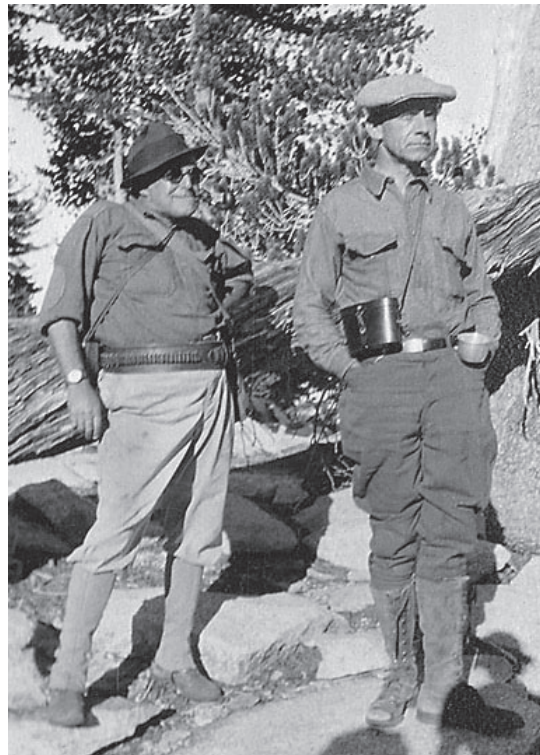
By John Blodgett

As its investors hoped, a parcel of land in Hall Canyon on the Banning-Idyllwild Road proved desirable. Though their own vision for the land went unfulfilled, the 30 acres they called “Evanswood” has served others’ dreams, and does to this day as the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve.

In 1920, Francis “Frank” Moote formed an investment group of 7-9 acquaintances that became known as the Pinewood Syndicate. Banking on Southern California’s economic boom, it sought to build a mountain resort surrounded by cabin lots to be sold. The development would be named Pinewood.

It wasn’t until 1924 that the syndicate settled upon a suitable property in the San Jacinto Mountains: an 85-acre homestead, owned by Bill Decker, located at the 1878 site of Fuller’s Mill. At the same time, Moote and a few others from the syndicate expressed interest in a 30-acre parcel in Hall Canyon, owned by Decker’s acquaintance John C. Skene. Moote’s grandson Bob Smith believes they hoped to develop and sell the smaller parcel quickly to help finance the larger Pinewood project.

Unfortunately, by the time both properties were purchased in spring 1925, the region’s boom had devolved into a recession that weakened the market for the land. But other problems arose in the



Would-be developers Richard Sumner (l) and Frank Moote explore sites for the proposed Pinewood resort in 1924.

IAHS archive photo



Harry James
Town Crier photo

envisioned mountain paradise. Issues surrounding water rights further cooled what demand existed, and the partnership that purchased the smaller parcel began to crumble.

Partner C. Richard Sumner, a surveyor who, with partner Edward W. Silent, a real estate agent, left the heavy lifting to the other two partners — Moote and land and water investor Louis Evans, Evanswood’s owner of record and namesake — infuriated his partners by unilaterally surveying and subdividing the 30-acre parcel into 33 lots, handing them a bill Moote deemed exorbitant. Further, both Sumner and Silent were still delinquent on paying their share of the purchase price.

Evans eventually found someone to help pay off Skene, but dissension among the partners remained. Evans rebuffed Moote’s suggestion that the two of them buy out the other two; Evans got on Sumner’s

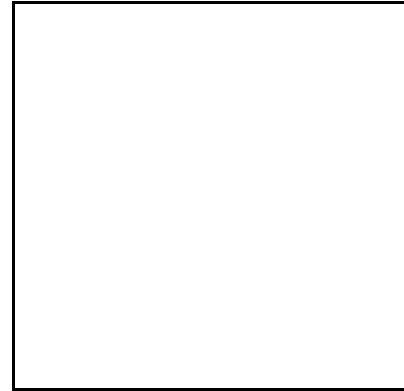
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New Board Member

IDYLLWILD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

President: Marlene Pierce
Vice President: Charlotte Groty
Past President: Carolyn Levitski
Secretary: Barbara Jones
Treasurer: Laura Caster
Directors: Nancy Borchers, Suzy Bowman,
Diann Coate, George Groty,
Carolyn Hall, Joan McCullough,
Bob Smith (on leave), Linda Turner



Board meetings are open to the membership and are held in the archive building on the 2nd Friday of each month at 4 p.m..

Current Volunteer Staff

Accounting: Laura Caster, George Groty
Archive: Darlene Beebe, Nancy Borchers,
Lynnda Hart, Barbara Jones,
Joan McCullough, Bob Smith
Digital Media/Website/Facebook: John Drake,
Rebecca Frazier, Bob Smith
Home Tour Coordination: Charlotte Groty,
Carolyn Hall, Nanci Killingsworth
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Membership: Darlene Beebe
Campus Maintenance: Richard & Carolyn Levitski
Museum Docent Coordination: Barbara Jones
Museum Operation: Suzy Bowman,
George Groty, Lynnda Hart
Museum Shop: Nancy Borchers
Oral Histories: John Blodgett, Corrinne Brown,
Morry Copeland, Lynnda Hart
Research: John Blodgett, Lynnda Hart,
Betty Parks, Bob Smith

Special Advisors

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Arti-Facts

Co-Editors: Adele & Bob Smith
Feature Writer: John Blodgett
Layout: Halie Wilson

We're delighted to welcome Diann Coate to the IAHS Board of Directors. Elected at the recent annual meeting, she has been a member of the society since 2002 and a fixture in the museum as a docent ever since it opened.

Diann brings a rich background of experience in Idyllwild, having lived here since 1974. As an avid hiker she was attracted to our mountains and forest, and she's never looked back since the moment she first rounded the Bluebird Hill curve on Highway 243 and entered Strawberry Valley.

Born in Indiana into a military family, she moved from place to place while growing up. Diann earned a degree from the University of Nevada, Reno, did her graduate work at the University of California, Riverside, and taught school for many years. Even after moving to Idyllwild she continued commuting daily to her school in Moreno Valley, a rarity among Hill dwellers in those times.

Her disposition toward environmental conservation led her immediately to engage with the local Izaak Walton League chapter, where she became a close friend of Idyllwild icon Ernie Maxwell. In addition, she has worked with Idyllwild Arts, the SMARTS school art program, Mountain Community Patrol, and the Idyllwild Community Fund.

With such longevity on the Hill and broad-based volunteer experience in the community, Diann has much to offer as an IAHS Director.

JAMES ... (continued from page 1)

case for not pursuing water rights with the United States Forest Service.

Moreover, a drought in summer 1928 further dissuaded buyers already wary in the soft market. Eventually, Moote's partners pulled out, leaving him with the mortgage. He held onto Pinewood — where Bob Smith and his family still enjoy Moote's resort site — and eventually found a buyer for Evanswood. In 1942 Harry and Grace James deemed it an ideal camp site for their Trailfinders School for Boys, which they founded in Los Angeles in the late 1920s.

Trailfinders, a program for junior high school boys, was like the Boy Scouts with a dash of culture. Over 40 years, it touched the lives of more than 40,000 boys and attracted many supporters. One of the latter, M. Amelia Foshay, principal of a Los Angeles school where Trailfinders meetings were held, purchased Evanswood as a gift to the Jameses.

At first, the property served as a summer home for the Jameses and a summer camp for the Trailfinders. They built a log home and named it Lolomi Lodge after the Hopi word for “peace.” Within a few years, the couple decided to retire and live year-round on the property. There Harry James fought to protect the Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness from encroachment by the Palm Springs Tramway.

In 1965, Mildred Mathias, a UCLA botanist and friend of the Jameses, recommended they gift their land to the University of California's new Natural Reserve System. In exchange for allowing university students and professors to use the land for teaching and research, the Jameses could continue to live there. The idea appealed to them, and the following year the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve became one of the first reserves under the designation of the fledgling system.

In service now for almost 50 years, the reserve is “off the grid but connected to the world,” said Assistant Director John Laundré.

The reserve wasn't always connected to the world, as the necessary technology did not exist until the 1990s. But it's always been off the grid. Andy Sanders, a wildlife biologist hired as the reserve's first manager in 1978, established a tradition of scientists doubling as maintenance engineers. One of his first tasks was to rebuild a wildfire-damaged spring house that supplied water to Lolomi Lodge, where the Jameses still lived. He maintained a finicky generator, repaired rain-

damaged roads, and cleared roads of snow.

Months after Sanders arrived, Harry James died and Grace James moved to Banning. Sanders helped move their library and record collection to the University of California Riverside library, and himself moved into Lolomi Lodge, home to reserve directors since.

Sanders left in 1979 and was replaced by fellow UCR student Ken Berg. In roughly three years, Berg started construction of Trailfinders Lodge to provide classroom space and helped the Forest Service establish the nearby Paul Canyon Research Natural Area.

It was Michael Hamilton, director from 1982 to 2008, who connected the reserve to the world. At the turn of the 21st century, the University of California system was awarded a \$40 million grant he co-wrote to create and explore a network between nature and technology. Roughly \$5 million went to the James Reserve, which Hamilton used to hire staff and spend almost a decade inventing and deploying instrumentation that remains today.

“It all used wireless sensing systems,” Hamilton said. “Most were very small. Some had cameras that could pick up continuous observations of birds in nest boxes or insects at flowers. Some were listening devices. We made a lot of breakthroughs, a lot of patents.”

Hamilton installed bigger solar arrays to power the servers behind the systems, and installed fast Internet connections to connect the reserve to the University of California and beyond.

Jennifer Gee, reserve director since July 2012, said she spent much of her first two years keeping the place up and running. She had a generator rebuilt, added four new buildings and hired Laundré as an assistant.

After that, Gee started looking beyond. Whereas Hamilton enabled research to be performed from offsite, Gee wants researchers to come work onsite.

Gee is also expanding her local outreach. She and Laundré write for the Town Crier and speak to community groups. They installed cameras around Idyllwild to photograph passing wildlife. Gee was excited to ride a James Reserve float in this year's July 4th parade.

As a scientist, Gee said the San Jacinto Mountains are “an excellent place to be” with “lots of interesting biology” to study. As an individual, she finds Idyllwild “such a delightful place.”

“I feel good here,” she said. “I'm definitely going to be on the Hill forever.”

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

New and Renewing Members - July through September 2015

NEW MEMBERS

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Contributor

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 Terri Miller & John Metroka Idyllwild
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 Gerald Corey & Marianne Schneider Idyllwild

Contributor

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 Bobbie & Gary Glasheen Idyllwild
 Terry & Diana Kurr Idyllwild
 Susan Miller Hemet
 Jeanette Schultejann Idyllwild
 Marianne McConnell Smith Eagle Mountain UT
 Carson & Donna Struthers San Diego
 Larry & Linda Turner Idyllwild

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Field Family Photography (Sid Field) Medford OR
 Wooley's (Pam Allen) Idyllwild

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 Darlene & Jerry Beebe Idyllwild
 B.J. & Edith Brix Idyllwild
 Rob & Laura Caster Idyllwild
 Wayne Donaldson Fair Oaks
 Ruthe Donlon & Robert McCullough Idyllwild
 Bob & Peggy Ferguson Laguna Woods
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 Corrinna Aragon Los Angeles
 John Blodgett Idyllwild
 Jim Boyd Downey
 Laurie Cole Van Nuys
 Richard Davis Moscow ID
 Jan Jaspers-Fayer Idyllwild
 Barbara Jones Idyllwild
 Ron Kelley Rancho Mirage
 Dorothy Koepcke Palos Verdes Estates
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 Sharen Metz Idyllwild
 Karen Morton San Marcos
 Larissa Moss Idyllwild
 Linda Otterbeck Palm Springs
 Jeannine Sherrick Reno NV
 Sallie Warwick Idyllwild
 Elaine Weiler Idyllwild

DONORS TO THE ARCHIVES

Alumni of Desert Sun School	Nick Curry	Downey	Bob Smith	Idyllwild
Terry Bauman	San Diego	Katie Grigsby	Santa Barbara	Sparre family
Suzanne Bowman	Idyllwild	Lynnda Hart	Idyllwild	Chuck Stroud
Corrinne Brown	Idyllwild	Joyce Miller	Santa Ana	Chris Swartz
Laura Caster	Idyllwild	Walter Parks	Riverside	Adele Voell

HOME TOUR HITS A HOME RUN

What can we say? We would have been content with modestly exceeding last year's record turnout of 529 visitors. But this year we again drew perfect weather and no fires, plus the unexpected bonus of attracting the interest of AAA's Westways magazine for its "5 Worth the Drive" feature.

The result: an astounding 658 people bought tickets, many of them getting their first taste of Idyllwild. (Although it seems a bit crass, we must use the numbers as a primary measure of success, because nowadays we rely on the Home Tour for nearly half our annual income.)

Better yet, our veteran coordinators came through with another fascinating selection of homes to show. The key was Nanci Killingsworth's sharp eye and persuasive personality,



Tour-goers marvel at the intricate kitchen in one of the homes.

FrazierDrake photo

The generosity of those who open their doors to hordes of curious visitors is another basic ingredient for a successful tour. We certainly thank this year's homeowners: Wayne Boyer & Roger Carrillo; Jeff Chojnacki & Chris Vueringer; Rocky & Andy Cohen; Janet Reynolds & Bill Faurot; and Chris Singer. Also Gary's Deli, Idyllwild Gift Shop, La Casita restaurant, and A Cut Above Salon & Day Spa, who contributed appreciation gifts for the owners.

It takes dozens more volunteers on tour day, and we are indebted to each of the following:

Hostesses: Nancy Borchers, Jorgine Brause, Diana Kurr, Marlene Pierce, Melinda St. Pierre

Docents: Suzie Bowmn, Mary Broadhurst, Diann Coate, Susan Cowper, Joyce Cummings, Barbara Cutter, Karen Dorn, Lauri Gillette, Jim Gilliland, Carole Herman, Bobby Hynes, Pamela Fojtik, Linda Justus, Marilyn Kemple, Lynn Kollar,

See Home Tour, next page



Home Docent Pamela Fojtik welcomes visitors (l-r) Charles Russell, Evan Mills, and Carol Russell.

FrazierDrake photo

enlisting residents to open their homes for the day. Carolyn Hall recruited volunteers to staff the homes. And Charlotte Groty, oversaw the rest of the thousand details that undergird a successful tour. The proof of their skills is the high proportion of repeat tour-goers who attend each year.

HOME TOUR ... (continued from previous page)

Virginia Lumb, Kathy Masey, Art Mason, Sandra Mathers, Cal McIntosh, Joan McCullough, Larry Medinger, Joyce Miller, Diane Pappalardo, Ed Pyncombe, Carol Simonek, Toni Sullivan, Jimmy Tyson, Marilyn Van Herk, Jolene Wallace, Sallie Warwick, Mary Whitaker, Betty Wilcox, Hedy Zikoratch-Tyson

Parking: Dan Carpenter, Chic Fojtik, Mike Kollar, Larry Kribs, Terry Kurr, Tom Pierce

Musicians: Vicki Jakubac, Barbara Rayliss

Logistics, Signage & Refreshments: Richard & Carolyn Levitski, Bob Smith, Larry & Linda Turner

Database: Mary Carroll

Tour Booklet: John Drake, Rebecca Frazier, Charlotte Groty, Nanci Killingsworth, Joyce Miller, Bob Smith

Ticket Sales: Sharla Carpenter, Kathy Duncan, Virginia Mathas, Dawn Miller

Media Relations: Charlotte Groty, Marlene Pierce

Accounting: George Groty

NOW mark your calendar for the 16th Idyllwild Home Tour on Saturday, September 17, 2016!



Charlotte and George Groty serve up the ingredients of sundaes and floats at the annual Ice Cream Social on Labor Day weekend.

Bob Smith photo

FROM OUR MAILBAG

We recently received the following mail from one of our far-flung members in Utah, who grew up in the next-door house just up North Circle from our museum property:

Dear Friends,

I so enjoy the quarterly newsletters from IAHS. In particular I enjoyed the article about the phone company in the 40s/50s. In 1949 I moved to Idyllwild with my parents after they purchased the house directly across from the Catholic church — (I believe just west of Alderwood?). We had the phone service that was described; had to listen to see if anyone was using it, and then ask for the number or person we wanted to contact. I remember the switchboard and as I got older, I became friends with Lee Luck and would go up and watch her work the switchboard. She would let me handle some of the phone calls; it was a unique experience.

I look back on the time I spent in Idyllwild growing up and think how fortunate I was to be

in such a small community, going to a two room school (until the classrooms in front were added), riding my horse to school or taking a sled in winter to ride down the hill in back, going to the movies in the building by the Community building--before Froehlich's built the theater in town. As I got older I got to work for Doug and Frankie Emery at the Fern Valley Bakery. He made the best bread! I remember the campfire meetings on summer weekends with Emax doing his cartoons and talks, the Boy Scouts doing their Indian dances and Desert Sun's presentations and, of course the old time campfire songs! Isaac Walton breakfasts (my Dad flipped the pancakes) at the County Park. So many good memories.

. . . Again, thank you for your enjoyable publication. I wish I were closer to be able to take advantage of some of the activities.

Regards,
Marianne (McConnell) Smith

P. S. My membership check is in the mail.

IAHS Scenes

Bob Smith discussed his research on the surprising history of Fuller's Mill at the IAHS annual meeting in August.

FrazierDrake photo



Above: Ronn Rohe, who restored the old Desert Sun School sign from the Saunders Meadow Road entrance, delivers it to IAHS in the form of a table donated by the Desert Sun alumni.

Carol Rohe photo

At right: the elegant carved-wood sign now rests in the Moote Archive & Research Center by a chair from the school headmaster's office.

Ronn Rohe photo



September museum visitors included five of Ted Belden's daughters, here to view the family's history in Pinecraft furniture: (l-r) Penny Johnson, Kathleen McFarland, Vicki Hinrichs, Deanna Palmer, and Jeanne Richardson.



Researcher Betty Parks works in the Archive & Research Center on her project documenting old mountain cabins and lodges.

Bob Smith photo

Museum Hours

11 am - 4 pm

Winter Schedule (September-June)

Saturdays, Sundays, Nov. 27,
Dec. 26-29, & major Monday holidays
(closed Christmas Day)

Summer Schedule (June 17-Labor Day)

Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays,
4th of July, & Labor Day

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Visit our website

www.idyllwildhistory.org

For special tours and other business,
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Admission Free

Donations Welcome

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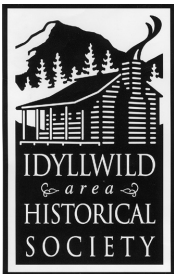
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