

THE ROOTS OF A COUNTRY NEWSPAPER—THE ALPINE SUN

Clark Irvine used his Tavern Road home in Alpine as a retreat from his busy Hollywood life, as a Warner Brothers publicity man, in the 1930's. Living among Hollywood's greats, he considered Myrna Loy, Will Rogers, Lon Chaney and Douglas Fairbanks, among others, his friends. In 1949, Clark and his wife Alice put Hollywood aside and moved to their former weekend retreat in Alpine and made it their home.

Sensing a need for a local weekly newspaper, the Irvine's started *The Alpine Sun*, in 1952. Clark, whose father was also a newspaper founder and editor, called himself "Your Editor" and was reported to have had "several lifetimes of experience in his seventy plus years." Originally from Oregon, he worked as office boy, played bit parts in films and on stage, ran a merry-go-round, wrote a syndicated column called "Studioland", was San Goldwyn's publicity director, fought in World War I, covered the Honolulu waterfront and lectured for the United Press.

Alice and Clark Irvine raised three daughters—Cynthia and twins Celeste and Cecile. The girls grew up learning to help with all the needs of what he affectionately called "America's tiniest newspaper"—*The Alpine Sun*. Alice was always there to help in any way possible and when Clark became seriously ill, she and the girls took over and got the paper out on time. The girls were raised to be reporters, columnists and news photographers. It was a family affair to be sure.

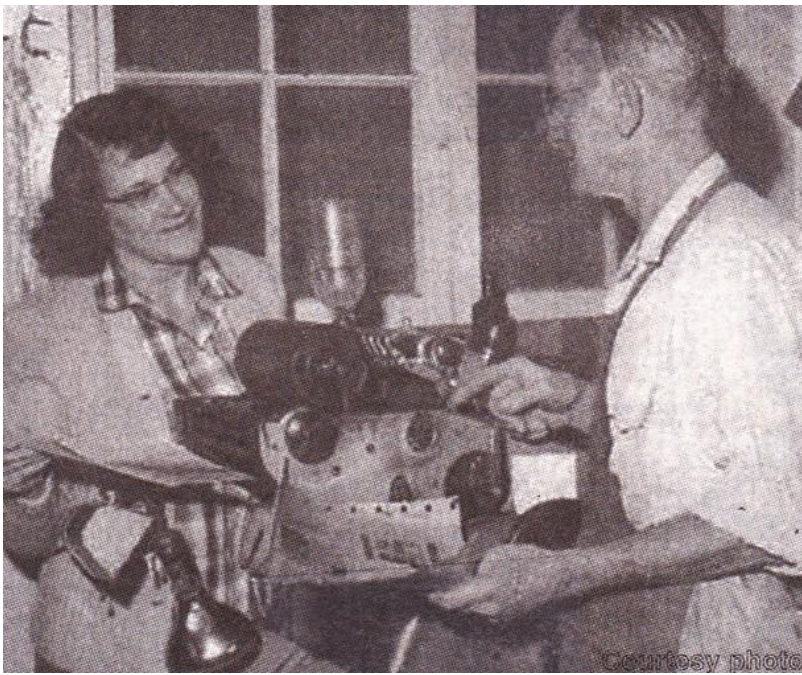
In the summer of 1964, *The Alpine Sun* was sold to Ron and Edith Van Til and in September of that year the Van Tils acquired *The Alpine Echo*, another local paper. They planned to merge the two papers; however, the merger failed. The Irvines soon had *The Alpine Sun* back and ran it as if it had never changed ownership. Since its inception, *The Alpine Sun* has been the number one source for news and events in the community.

Clark Irvine passed away some time ago. Alice is now living in Oregon, their daughter Cynthia lives nearby. Celeste is still living; however, her twin sister Cecile passed away in November, 2007. The tiny old building which housed the newspaper office still stands on Tavern Road across from Boulder Oaks Elementary School. Down the road stands the old Irvine home. The Irvine family is indeed forever a part of Alpine's history.

On February 10, Vonnie Greathouse Sanchez, a longtime employee of *The Alpine Sun* and personal friend of Cynthia Irvine, will speak at the Historical Society's quarterly meeting. Vonnie is going to tell about the early days of our local newspaper and growing up in the Alpine in the 1950's. All are welcome to attend this meeting—call Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544 for more information.

Information for this article, in part, was taken from Beatrice La Force's book, *Alpine—History of a Mountain Settlement*.

Carol Walker and her husband Paul lived in Alpine for 19 years. Carol is the Membership Chairman of the Alpine Historical Society. She can be reached at cwalker@alpinehistory.org or 619-741-4629.



Alice and Clark Irving, the original owners of The Alpine Sun, stand over the newspress that used to print “America’s Tiniest Newspaper.”