

## Jon Provost

Posted on [April 30, 2008](#)



*Photo of former Provost residence, 1195 N. Washington Ave., Pomona, by REN*

As you may have seen, [today's column](#) is about Jon Provost, who played Timmy on "Lassie" from 1957 to 1964 and lived in Pomona from 1954 to 1959. You can visit [his website](#) and/or buy his autobiography, "[Timmy's in the Well](#)."

A few local tidbits were squeezed out of the column.

Provost had a role in "Country Girl" with Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly. Here's what Provost wrote in his book concerning his activities on April 1, 1955, shortly after he turned 5:

"I made a personal appearance at the United Artists Theater in Pomona where 'Country Girl' was playing. According to the Pomona Progress Bulletin, I ate five cans of Camp Fire Girls peanuts that night."

(Because he was a child, for a lot of stories he has to rely on published accounts or adults' memories.)

He debuted on "Lassie" on Sept. 8, 1957. At first he and his family had to go next door to their neighbors' to watch the show because the Provosts didn't have a TV.

With "Lassie," his personal appearances picked up. Within weeks of his debut, he was in the Pomona Christmas Parade — although unlike certain people (ahem), he wasn't grand marshal — and the Rose Parade, and he also made an appearance with Lassie on "The Jack Benny Show."

In 1959 he was in the May Day Parade in Cucamonga and weeks later, in perhaps a marginally more electrifying event, he was a guest at Disneyland for the dedication of the Matterhorn, Monorail and Submarine Voyage attractions. While there, he had the privilege (?) of sitting on Vice President Richard Nixon's lap during the parade.

Not bad for a kid from Pomona.

Anyone want to share memories of the "Lassie" show or of Provost himself?



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## NEWS

## Collie's best friend returns to Pomona

By **DAVID ALLEN** | [dallen@scng.com](mailto:dallen@scng.com) | Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

March 30, 2010 at 12:00 am



**TIMMY WAS** in Pomona last week, 50 years after the "Lassie" child star left the city for good.

Jon Provost, now 60 and a Santa Rosa resident, was a guest at the Collie Club of America's national convention at Fairplex, posing for photos, signing autographs and handing out awards.

Lassie, of course, is America's most famous collie, and Provost's TV role from 1957 to 1964 as Lassie's pal Timmy connected him in the public mind with the breed.

"Ninety percent of the people here have come up to me and said, 'You're the reason I have a collie and I'm here today.' That's kind of cool," Provost told me.

We were chatting Friday evening in the bar of the Sheraton Fairplex, where Provost and his wife, Laurie Jacobson, were staying for the convention, which ended Sunday.

During his five-day visit he did not fall into any wells, abandoned mines, storm drains or rivers, nor did he tumble into the Fairplex lagoon. Whew. Although if he had, there was no shortage of collies to rescue him.

"We've sure been seeing a lot of collies," Provost admitted. "But we've been having a good time."

Provost lived in Pomona from 1954 to 1959, from ages 4 to 9, when his father, B.A. Provost, was an engineer at Convair, later General Dynamics, a Pomona aerospace giant.

Already the veteran of seven movies and some early live TV, the 7-year-old joined the cast of TV's "Lassie" in 1957.

His memories of Pomona are hazy. Much of his childhood was spent on Los Angeles soundstages. At age 9, his family moved to Beverly Hills to shorten their son's commute.

On Thursday, after the convention's second day wrapped up, Provost and Jacobson rekindled some of his Pomona memories.

They drove to 1195 N. Washington Ave. to see the house where he'd spent part of his childhood, and also Kingsley Elementary across the street, which he had attended intermittently from kindergarten to second grade. He hadn't been back in 20 years.

"Everything looked the same, pretty much," Provost told me later.

No one seemed to be home at the Kingsley house. Provost didn't check to make sure.

"They had a big dog in the front yard and a big fence. I decided not to try it," Provost said. "I know dogs. He looked like he could protect the house."

What a headline that could've been: "Timmy bit by dog."

When the Provosts lived there, the expansive property had an orange grove and among the pets were pigeons, a horse and a goat. No dog.

Provost visited Lassie at his trainer's ranch, but Lassie didn't visit him. After all, the dog was a star.



"Kids would come over and they thought Lassie lived with us," Provost said. "Kids assumed, it was your dog, it should be at your house."

Seeing the layout at Washington and Kingsley avenues reminded Provost of a couple of childhood scrapes.

Once he was clowning around on his bike in the cul-de-sac behind the house. The next thing he knew, he was waking up on the family sofa with a doctor hovering over him. He'd had a concussion.

Another time, he hid in a culvert and hurled a rock at a passing car. It hit the window.

"The car braked. The driver got out. It was the principal of Kingsley," Provost said. "I got in big trouble for that one."

Some neighbors and classmates contributed reminiscences to Provost's 2008 autobiography, "Timmy's in the Well." When he attended Kingsley during the "Lassie" years, he didn't know how to act around children his age. And awestruck classmates followed him around the playground in a sort of conga line.

"Several girls wrote and said, 'Jon kissed me.' Each thought she was the only one," Jacobson, the book's co-author, said.

A half-dozen people who knew Provost back then were invited to meet us at the Sheraton bar, but only one showed up.

Sharon Paine was Provost's babysitter.

"Both of our dads worked at Convair," Paine, an Upland resident, told Provost. "You were about 4 when I started babysitting you."

Paine, then Sharon Palmer, was eight years older and a student at Emerson Junior High. She read to him and, later, helped him with his homework.

The most memorable incident was when Provost, then 6, was outside playing and Paine couldn't find him.

"I was frantic. His parents were due home any minute. I went out and called again and you started giggling," Paine said. "Your sister heard you and said, 'He's up in that tree.'"

That scamp.

Jacobson said that from all accounts, Provost was something of a brat.

"He wasn't so bad," Paine said. "The vice president of engineering at General Dynamics, I babysat his kids and they were much worse."

She babysat Provost a few times when he was on "Lassie." At least two friends who were fans of the show pestered her about coming along so they could meet Timmy but she refused.

At the Sheraton, Paine posed for photos with Provost and asked him to sign her copy of "Timmy's in the Well" and a Lassie-and-Timmy postcard she's kept pinned to a bulletin board at home for years.

The "Lassie" bug seems to have skipped a generation in her family. Her impending visit with Provost got a mixed response at home.

She got a blank look when she asked her daughter, "Does the name Jon Provost mean anything to you?" A grandchild piped up, "Mom! That's Timmy!"

"My grandkids are so excited. They still watch 'Lassie,'" Paine said.

The series' reach continues to surprise Provost. At the collie convention, he said, a woman approached him.

"This will sound weird," she said, "but I grew up watching you in Ethiopia."

Not bad for a kid from Pomona.

*David Allen writes Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, three dogs. E-mail*

*[david.allen@inlandnewspapers.com](mailto:david.allen@inlandnewspapers.com), call (909) 498-9559 or write 2041 E. Fourth St., Ontario 91764. Read his blog at [dailybulletin.com/davidallenblog](http://dailybulletin.com/davidallenblog)*

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By Teen Vogue

**REWRITE**

Regardless of political affiliation, impactful leaders typically share certain traits. Here are 8 important lessons...



### David Allen

Since 1997, David Allen has been taking up valuable newsprint and pixels at the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, where he is a columnist and blogger ([insidesocal.com/davidallen](http://insidesocal.com/davidallen)). Among his specialties: city council meetings, arts and culture, people, places, local history, dining and a log in a field that resembled the Loch Ness monster. The Illinois native has spent his newspaper career in California, starting in 1987 at the Santa Rosa News-Herald and continuing at the Rohnert Park-Cotati Clarion, Petaluma Argus-Courier and Victor Valley Daily Press. A resident of Claremont who roots for the St. Louis Cardinals and knows far too much about Marvel Comics, the Kinks and Frank Zappa's Inland Valley years, he is the author of two collections of columns: "Pomona A to Z" and "Getting Started."

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# Jon Provost



Los Angeles Times

## Stars



TV: (/hollywood/star-walk/type/tv/page/1/) South side of the 7000 block of Hollywood Boulevard

Actor (/hollywood/star-walk/tag/actor/page/1/)

Born March 12, 1950 (/hollywood/star-walk/year/1950/) in Los Angeles, CA (/hollywood/star-walk/location/los-angeles/)

**J**on Provost made his movie debut when he was 2 1/2, playing Jane Wyman's son in "So Big."

He went on to play the son of Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly in "The Country Girl," the son of Teresa Wright in "Escapade in Japan" and toddler roles in several other films.

His breakout finally came — at age 7. He was cast as Timmy in the beloved TV series "Lassie," propelling him to international stardom.

But after seven years of chasing the collie around the Martin farm, Provost grew tired of the role and started chasing around L.A.'s Sunset Strip, where the 1960s were in full bloom.

Yet it wasn't long before he fled that wild urban scene and in a figurative sense, returned to the farm, settling in rural Northern California, where he lives to this day.

The Provost saga is told with refreshing candor in his new autobiography, "Timmy's in the Well: The Jon Provost Story," which he wrote with his wife, author Laurie Jacobson. (For the record, Timmy never fell in a well.)

Fully a third of the text consists of testimonies from family, friends and co-workers, which shine light on a complicated boy and man.

Provost was a natural as a screen actor with his tousled blond hair, bright eyes and innocent face. As an actor, he had the advantage of a hard-driving mother who pursued jobs for him and protected him by being on his movie sets almost every day. His father did not interfere.

"The main problem with being a child star was not having an identity other than your character's," Provost says. "Everybody called me Timmy, which was not my real name; it was Jon. Having that thrust on you and not having any control over it is not good."

As he entered puberty, Provost was able to play more mature roles, notably in "This Property Is Condemned" with Natalie Wood.



His 16th birthday brought another landmark for the actor: his driver's license. He began to frequent the Sunset Strip, where nightclubs offered the music of Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, as well as ready access to alcohol and drugs.

"When I turned 18 and graduated from high school, I had been working for 15 years," he says. "So it was time for a break for me, and that's when I left the industry. The last thing I did was a Disney movie with Kurt Russell in 1969."

Eager to escape the Hollywood hoopla, Provost followed a girlfriend north and enrolled with her at Sonoma State University. They didn't last long. She returned to Los Angeles after six months; he stayed.

When he finished his education, Provost went to work in real estate, in which he remained for more than 20 years.

Then came those weekend autograph shows that helped Provost escape from despair over a failed first marriage. After years of trying to abandon his "Lassie" identity, the events were like coming home.

"Nowadays, I do a lot of nostalgia shows and autograph shows around the country," he says. "I do a lot of fundraising for pet shelters. Also I've been involved with Canine Companions for Independence that supplies service dogs for persons with disabilities."

— Associated Press in the Los Angeles Times March 29, 2008

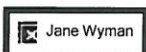
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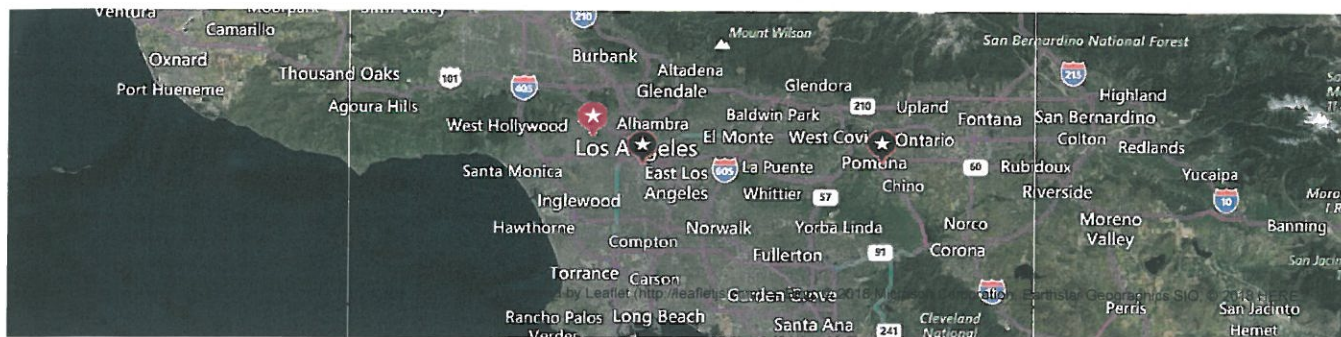


June Lockhart  
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Costar

Natalie Wood  
(/hollywood/star-walk/natalie-wood/)

Provost's screen debut came in "So Big" (1953) with Jane Wyman playing his mother. He was 2 1/2 years old.





1. Place of birth: Los Angeles, CA
  2. Childhood home: Pomona, CA
  3. Hollywood Walk of Fame Star: TV
-




## Five thoughts about Jon Provost (/hollywood/star-walk/feeds/profiles/jon-provost)

“

jon has been the gentalest person not only to animals but to people he is thee most wonderful person in the world. so many people love him for him


”

— connie sager, March 5, 2010 at 11:59 a.m.  (/hollywood/star-walk/jon-provost/#c22506)

“

Yes Jon deserves to be on the hollywood walk of fame. jon has gone out of his way to touch peoples lives. I really know that he is very good with animals. He qouted that all animals deserve to be treated with respect. Jon has helped animal activist with Amanda Blake and myself. Jon has been connected with several of others as well.


”

— cindy Pekarek, March 5, 2010 at 7:26 p.m.  (/hollywood/star-walk/jon-provost/#c22544)

“

Barbara Eden will be "Jeannie", Larry Hagman will be "J.R." and Jon will be "Timmy Martin" for everlasting time.He really deserves to be a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.  
I grew up with Jon as "Timmy", because "Lassie" was a very successful TV-show in the 60`s and 70`s here in Germany.

”

— Helmut Heisig, March 6, 2010 at 10:30 a.m.  (/hollywood/star-walk/jon-provost/#c22567)

“

Jon Provost deserves to have his star shine brightly on The Hollywood Walk of Fame because we all have grown up with him. He made us laugh and cry each week on Lassie.Even Bob Hope was a fan.Jon Provost has so many special connections to many stars on The Hollywood Walk of Fame. He made his professional debut with Jane Wyman. He played the motion picture son to Hollywoods royalty Grace Kelly and Bing Crosby. Jon was carried in the bossom of Anita Ekberg on the set of The Six Who Came Back along with Rod Steiger and Jesse White who were also co-stars members too. Cameron Mitchell and Theresa Wright chased their motion picture son through the streets of Japan in Escapade of Japan.

Then Bonita Granville Wrather discovered their future star Timmy Martin (Lassie master) while watching the dailies from Japan.From there Jon worked with another great Jan Clayton, George Cleveland and Tommy Rettig. June Lockhart who came from a legendary show biz family traded her high heels for an apron , warm smile and became worrying mom for Timmy Martin and of course Lassie . Jon and Lassie were always busy saving the world, or saving each other for seven years while all of us grabbed the kleenex boxes ,cried along with our parents and ate Campbell Tomato Soup.

Jon was a fan favorite with Tiger Beat magazine. Jon would blow surfer bubbles off of his tongue and send wind up to his hair to show the girls how truly cool he was as a teen!

Jon was always a regular in The Santa Claus Lane parade which was held in those days the night before Thanksgiving.

As a teen,Jon would always appear gladly for many charitable causes such as Muscular Dystrophy, Easter Seals and Vista Del Mar.

Before Jon went off to college, he made one last film with Kurt Russell called The Computer Wore Tennis shoes.

As an adult Jon continues to serve On The Board of Governors of Canine Companions For Independence. And to think, it was his mom Cecile who had stars in her eyes. She wanted to meet Jane Wyman. So when

she answered the church ad, she thought she would meet Jane Wyman. Instead her cute adorable Jon with those beautiful blue eyes, blond hair and that unmistakeable dimple won a walk on role in So Big. Cecile met Jane Wyman. But a new star was born ...her little tyke Jonny Provost aka Jon Provost. Cecile Provost was fortunate enough to see her son earn a Star on The Hollywood Walk of Fame. Happy 60th Birthday Jon.

Love, Laurie and Carly

”

— Laurie Ackerman, March 6, 2010 at 12:24 p.m. [📧](#) (/hollywood/star-walk/jon-provost/#c22571)

“

jon is the best of all in my life, im a big fan of him and lassie. the best movies and shows of all. timmy thats jon was so bright. bye.

”

— eva, January 25, 2011 at 8:26 p.m. [📧](#) (/hollywood/star-walk/jon-provost/#c45155)

## Share a thought about Jon Provost

- Did you ever meet Jon Provost? Share your memory.
- Which other stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame have connections to Jon Provost?
- Are other places in the world important to Jon Provost?
- Does Jon Provost deserve this star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame?

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