



# The Coffee Break

Suggested donation \$1

Volume 2, Issue 5

Every last cent goes to the Coffee Creek Volunteer Fire Co.!

This month we observe Memorial Day to honor those who have served the nation in her great conflicts. Here in the North Lake Community we are fortunate to have as friends and neighbors, two recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Jim Swett served our country during WWII. Jim Taylor served during the Vietnam Conflict. Our original intent was to interview both of them this month. Instead, we have decided to feature Jim Swett in the May issue and Jim Taylor in the June issue.

There have been 3514 recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor since its inception during the Civil War. 74% of these have been awarded posthumously. There are 144 living recipients. The award is given by the President in the name of the Congress, upon recommendation by the recipient's unit commander, after review by the chain of command, the President, and finally approval by the U.S. Congress. The requirements - a witnessed act involving service above and beyond the call of duty while placing one's life at risk. Jim Swett says that those who receive the medal do so as custodians for those who didn't come back, and for those whose acts were un-witnessed or lost in the din of warfare.

We want to take this opportunity to thank both Jim Swett and Jim Taylor on behalf of the community, not only for their service to a grateful nation, but also for, along with their families, being good friends and neighbors and adding to the rich fabric that is our community

## Who's Who

Do you remember where you were on April 7th, 1943? Jim Swett does! He recalls each detail with the vivid clarity of a person whom fate has tabbed with the need to re-live one or more brief periods of time over and over. Jim belongs to one of the most select clubs in the world. He is a living recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. On April 7th, 1943, while most Americans were ending their day, Jim and his U.S. Marine fighter squadron, consisting of 8 Wildcat F4F3 aircraft, engaged in aerial combat over Tulagi, Florida Island, in the New Hebrides Islands. The odds-an Imperial Japanese attacking force consisting of 150 dive bombers and 75 Zero type fighter escorts versus 8 young Marines, yet to be tested, flying the Wildcat fighters.



Jim Swett

Up until that time, Jim had a classic American youth. He was born June 15, 1920 on Mercer Island in Lake Washington near Seattle in his aunt's bed. Jim is the oldest of three children. When Jim was three weeks old the family moved to San Mateo, CA. There, Jim's father was a manufacturers representative who represented Skinner Engine Co. The family firm, George E. Swett and Co., offered a product line consisting of a variety of marine equipment. Jim's mother was a homemaker. Jim and his brother and sister grew up in San Mateo. Jim attended San Mateo High and San Mateo College, where he majored in Mechanical Engineering, graduating in 1939. Jim says that he had a great childhood and youth. He had a car and a girl. What more could a guy ask for? He remembers wonderful times and a lot of beach parties.

During 1938 and '39 a couple of things happened to Jim that would stick with him into later life. In 1938, during a trip to the Russian River, he met a spunky young redhead, Loui, to whom he entrusted his watch to hold for him while he was chasing a pair of twins. She didn't give it back. In 1939 he had a trip to Trinity County with Dr. Alan Sharp, to fish the Trinity River, where they

camped in tents. Jim vowed to come back someday.

After finishing his degree Jim entered Civilian Pilot's Training, preparing for a hitch in the Coast Guard. While there, Jim trained in Porterfields and in Waco UPF-7 biplanes. He was in flight school in Corpus Christi, TX when the war broke out. He attended advanced carrier training in San Diego. Jim was a Seaman, 2nd Class in the Navy when he met Col. Morrison who said, "Jim, we need you", and convinced him to transfer into the Marines as an aviation cadet. He then received his commission as a 2nd Lt. in the Marine Corps, where he spent "29 years, 8 months, 5 days and 3 hours". After flight school Jim spent time in Ewa, Hawaii and was then assigned to the "USS Sangaman" for transport to the South Pacific, crossing the International Date line and the equator for the first time and losing what little hair the Corps had left him in the ensuing ceremonies.

Flashing back now to April 7th, Jim and his squadron had been flying first at Espiritu Santos in the New Hebrides and then in Feb. 1943 they were sent to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. This island had theoretically been captured from the Japanese, but there were still plenty of holdouts tucked away on the island waiting to ambush our soldiers. They flew their first combat mission where enemy contact was probable on April 1st, but they saw only distant aircraft that were hard to identify. On the morning of the 7th they flew a 3 am mission over the Russell Islands. Later that morning they flew a mission over Cape Esperance. Finally they flew a later mission over Tulagi, "where all hell broke loose". They were 40 miles from their base at Henderson Field, when the eight Americans went up against the more than 200 Japanese aircraft.

Jim remembered reading a piece describing air tactics written by Gen. Gunther Rall, a German ace. He recalled Rall's advice to come in be-

hind and just under the dive bombers, so that the tail gunner couldn't get a clear shot without hitting the tail of his own aircraft. Then, Jim says, "you just shoot 'em in the tail!". He says that the first 3 kills "were duck soup, just like Rall described". After that Jim says things got hairy. There were so many planes, all mixed up, and all firing and taking evasive or pursuit action at once, that it was very hard to keep up with whom was where. Jim ended the day with 7 confirmed kills and an 8th un-witnessed kill, the dive bomber that shot him down!. Later this 8th aircraft was found on a beach and the name of the plane was cut out of the skin of the plane and given to Jim, who still has it.

In the action with the last plane Jim got a little too far forward and the tail gunner of the dive bomber hit Jim in the port wing and the engine and shattered his canopy with 30 caliber machine gun fire. Jim fired on the enemy plane, killing the tail gunner, and they disengaged. Jim suffered some very bloody face and head wounds from the shards of his shattered windshield. His plane was badly damaged, and he had a very hard time seeing clearly. He headed back to Tulagi where the dive bombers were again forming up. He landed in the water just as his prop stopped, and his plane sank quickly, leaving him clinging to a damaged one man rubber raft. He was picked up by a Coast Guard picket boat, treated for his wounds and given morphine. Then the commanding colonel took him into his quarters and gave him a glass of scotch. On top of the morphine, the scotch was too much and the combination made him very sick.

During this action all 8 of the planes in Jim's squadron were shot down, but all 8 of the pilots survived to fight again. A PBY flying boat took Jim back to Guadalcanal. The pilot of that plane, Walt Whitman, had been in flight school with Jim. He was sent to Koli Point Hospital. The doctor who treated him, delivered his two sons after the war.

After this battle Jim's squadron had light contact with the enemy until June 30th, when a force of 90 to 100 Wildcats and Corsairs hit a Japanese force of 60 bombers escorted by 60 Zero type fighters while on patrol over Rendova. The Americans shot down all 120 of the Japanese planes. Then on July 11th Jim was flying near New Georgia Island with a flight of four planes. Two turned back due to mechanical trouble. Jim was left with only his wingman. The two saw enemy bombers coming their way. They separated for a "hit and run", in order to "stir things up". Jim got two more kills before being shot down himself by 20 mm cannon fire. His plane hit the water at a speed of about 200 mph. He escaped death once more by ducking and hiding among the plane's wreckage, while the enemy strafed his position in the water again and again. They finally gave him up for dead when the plane sunk. He has a bruise on his leg the size of a 20 mm round from a grazing hit during the strafing. This time he was lost for four days. He paddled his rubber boat around an enemy held atoll to an island, where he was rescued by the local Melanesian natives, fed and allowed to rest overnight on a bed of bamboo poles. He was dehydrated and badly sunburned.

The natives then took him in a large dugout canoe to Segi Point where he was turned over to a New Zealander who was serving as a coast watcher. The Kiwi rewarded the locals with 14 cans of Billy beef and 6 bolts of yard goods. Jim was again picked up by a PBY and taken back to the Russell Islands, minus his plane. At this point some of his friends began to call him "another Japanese ace", having been responsible for destroying two aircraft. Years later Jim and his dad sent the same natives 1500 live chicks, along with all of the necessary food and equipment to raise them. Pan Am transported the chicks for them.

Later Jim had another confirmed "kill", when he "shot down" a New Zealand P-40. The P-40 flew into his fire while he was attacking a Japanese plane in the Solomon Islands. Jim escorted the P-40 back to his base.

Fortunately the Kiwi pilot was able to get the plane down at Jim's base. The two retired to a tent, where they polished off a bottle of Old Forester, and Jim was forgiven!

During his combat career he learned to hide from enemy planes by flying tight left hand circles in the clouds. He says that sometimes it got downright crowded in there. He flew in many more raids on various islands, including support for the landing at Empress Augusta on Bougainville. Jim made 17 confirmed (independently witnessed) kills, plus the one unconfirmed plane of which he later recovered the pieces, bearing the aircraft name. He lost a total of four planes during his career, two in combat, and two more wrecked at Santa Barbara. Jim is among the top 5 or 6 American aces. He lost more planes out from under him than most pilots ever even get a chance to shoot at.

Jim returned to the states in January of 1944, married Loui, and got his watch back! Jim and Loui were stationed at Santa Barbara, and then in January 1945, Jim was assigned to the carrier, Bunker Hill, and they sailed out on fleet strikes on the Japanese main islands. During one mission they sunk a Japanese battleship. Jim was flying at the time the Bunker Hill was attacked by two Japanese Kamikaze pilots, resulting in 400 American deaths and hundreds more casualties. Jim and 20 of his fellow pilots dropped anything that would float to the survivors of the Bunker Hill who were spread out in the wake of the great ship. The aviators were unable to land on the Bunker Hill and were low on fuel, but they were able to land on the USS Enterprise. There were too many planes on board, and some had to be shoved overboard. Jim's plane was shoved over the side by Lee Hayes, now of Trinity Center.

Jim came home again in June of '45. He and Loui were stationed in El Centro and El Toro. They spent time in France, England, New Zealand and Australia. At the beginning of the Korean War Jim's squadron was sent to Korea, but he was reassigned stateside. Now a Lt. Col. He visited the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps in Washington to request that he be sent along to Korea. The Commandant denied his request because he was a holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, because of his rank and because there was no declared war. Jim requested a change in status to the reserves, which was granted. He came back to San Mateo in 1950 where they lived for 20 years.

Later, they moved to an apartment in Belmont and bought property near Trinity Center, fulfilling another promise they made to themselves. They spent several years dividing their time between Wynton Resort at Trinity Center and at their business in the bay area. In 1983 they moved here permanently. Jim's son, John, now works in their business. Over the years they

have specialized in fire pump systems. His son, Jim Jr., works for a medical plastics manufacturing company. They lost Loui in 1999. She was well known and well loved by the community. Jim says, "she loved it here".

Jim is a member of the North Lake Lions, The Quiet Birdmen, The Medal of Honor Society, The American Association of Fighter Aces, The VFW and the American Legion. When asked how he felt about this area and the community he says "glorious".



Jim "Ace" Swett



# Times Past - "The Coffee Creek Gold Rush" - by Vi Karrer

The lovely old home, shown in this photo, was located on a ranch that later became Stringtown. It was probably built about 1900 by either the Grave brothers or Henry Carter as they were the men responsible for the Coffee Creek Gold rush. The property was later sold to Charles and Adam Kingsbury. Charles Kingsbury and Matthew MacLuvaine and his wife lived in the house for many years. Mrs. MacLuvaine was Charles' sister. She was a school teacher and taught the school at Trinity Center in 1923 or 24. The MacLuvains had two daughters, Agnes and Helen. Agnes married Clarence Carr. She died at an early age and is buried in the Carrville cemetery. The property was later sold again to Elmer and Louise McDonald. The home was eventually destroyed to make way for Highway 3.

The Gold Rush of 1897 began when the Grave brothers and Henry Carter discovered rich pay ground at Morrison Gulch which ran into Coffee Creek. Their first take was several thousand dollars. They later discovered a run of porphyritic rock carrying free gold and then ran a tunnel to work it. The vein turned out to be very rich and by the end of August of that year they had nearly \$80,000 in gold. The output filled three iron horse buckets with course gold and nuggets, and, in addition, they took out the largest and finest nugget ever taken from a mine in California or the United States.

The Graves brothers took the greater part of their bullion, amounting to \$88,000, to Redding on their way to San Francisco. The gold was carried in a buckboard, an armed outrider preceded the team and an

armed man followed. The tunnel where the gold came from was left in charge of trusty men.

This same tunnel produced one of the finest specimens of gold ever taken from an American mine, and it was the third largest specimen reported in the records of gold mining in the world. It measured three feet in length, eight inches in width, and three inches in thickness. It was worth by actual weight over \$12,000. The value would really be a lot more at today's prices.

Many other good paying mines developed on Coffee Creek and its tributaries over the years. There are probably a lot of beautiful nuggets still hiding and waiting to be found.



Gold Rush House in Old Trinity Center

## Memorial Day Weekend Big Event!

Coffee Creek School and Coffee Creek Fire Company Flea Markets, BBQ, Raffle and Day of Music will be held Saturday, May 26th from 8 am until ? at the Coffee Creek School and Country Store Park.

Come Join the Fun

Flea Market Donations Accepted  
For school call 266-3809  
For CCVFC call: 266-3579



## Season Opening of the Coffee Creek Gift Shop

The Coffee Creek Gift Shop run by volunteer "Fireflies" will have its season grand opening Memorial Day weekend. They will be open on Saturday, May 26th and Sunday, May 27th.

You won't believe the many handmade items made by the 'Fireflies' which provide that perfect one of a kind gift. After the opening Memorial Day weekend the store will be open on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 10 am until 4 pm. All proceeds from the store go to the Coffee Creek Volunteer Fire Company.

## SCRUBBERS

Mention the word "scrubber" around the Fireflies and you're likely to hear a chorus of moans and groans. That's because they have made a billion of the colorful little disks that look like a version of a flying saucer. Well, these little one dollar items are a big best seller. I couldn't understand what the big deal was when I moved to these parts, and I must confess it took a few years before I broke down and bought one. Now I'm a "scrubber convert" and I have drawers full of the funny little UFO's.

While dishes aren't my normal thing (you can tell by the number of times I am seen at the local eating establishments) I can't resist the fun, yes folks the fun, of doing dishes with these remarkable hand crocheted items made by my fellow fireflies (crocheting isn't my talent either).

Discover the wonders of the Firefly Scrubber at the gift shop, located adjacent to the Coffee Creek Country Store, and stock up on these one of a kind dish scrubbing marvels. Don't be the only person on your block without one. (Now did I mention the Firefly Dishcloth?)



# Fire Call



There was a good deal of interest in a recent presentation at the Trinity Center Fire Hall detailing the merits of a new product called Barricade. A representative of the manufacturer explained how Barricade can work to save property during a wildland fire. Using a flame thrower, he demonstrated how a piece of wood was impervious to the flames when pretreated with Barricade. The product is sprayed on a structure and/or surrounding vegetation in anticipation of an advancing fire. The substance has protective benefits for up to 30 hours and can be washed off later with a high pressure hose. It is a non toxic polymer based substance that holds tremendous quantities of water in suspension.



**Residents Learn about "Barricade"**

## *From the Chief (Butch Garrity-Coffee Creek):*

The bathroom at the Coffee Creek Fire Hall was completed, thanks to Herculean efforts by many people, just in the nick of time for the Annual Chili Feed and Auction. It was a great night, attended by more than 150 people, who



**Lining Up for the Feast at the Coffee Creek Chili Feed and Auction**

enjoyed the food and the company. Over \$4,000 dollars was raised to aid in the ongoing efforts to complete the inside of the new hall. Our thanks go to all the volunteers and "check

writers" from our communities who made this a success. As usual John Eaker's chili was excellent and Robert Kausen's auctioneering talents was surely a major factor in the success of the event.

Things are moving along at the fire hall. Over the last month, a construction crew headed up by Mark Hollister and his cousin, Tom, have put in our new bathroom. Since then we have painted and put protective plastic on the walls. We are in the process of laying ceramic tile and we should have it completed in a couple of days. Construction on the meeting room, kitchen and office may start as early as April 26<sup>th</sup>. Barry Bowen is in charge of the building committee and he continues to do a fantastic job.

Coffee Creek sent two firefighters and Trinity Center sent four firefighters to a two day fire school in Weaverville over the weekend of April 21 and 22. This school focused on oil and propane fires. People come from all over California, Nevada and Oregon to attend. There were 225 students and probably 50 instructors and safety observers. Firefighters were required to wear full turn out gear as well as SCBA's (self contained breathing apparatus.) The training was very beneficial.

## **Coffee Creek and Trinity Center Life**



**Barry Bowen and Bonnie Groves Give the Gift of Life at the Lions Club Blood Drive**

Once again there was a great turnout for the Lions Club Blood Drive on Friday, April 20th. Twenty six pints of blood were donated by residents of Trinity Center and Coffee Creek. The next drive will be on Friday, June 15th, from 9 am until 2 pm at the IOOF Hall. Mark your calendars and eat your spinach. Let's top our April total!

Have you noticed the two new bus shelters for the local school children? The Trinity Lake Lions club has sponsored shelter construction once again. Randy Spencer gets credit for the construction, but used some additional help to place them.





## The Solid Country Band

**We play Oldies and Goodies.**

**Will play at all occasions.**

**\$250**

**Call Jimbo – 266-3696**

## Town Crier



The Coffee Creek Country Store Deli Counter is now open for the season. They have fresh macaroni salad, deli sandwiches and homemade burritos and enchiladas (at times).

The Garden Club will enjoy a “Mass of Daffodils” this month at 1 pm at Charlotte Scott’s residence on Long Canyon Road. The date will be announced, since there is still snow at Charlotte’s residence and the club want the daffodils to be at their peak. Members will carpool due to limited parking. Wait for your regular telephone call for the date. Call 266-3440 for more information. Also just to remind you—the very popular Plant Exchange meeting will be held on **June 5th** at Olga Darling’s home. Be sure to mark the date on your calendar.

The Langford's are back, which means the Langford’s Nursery in Trinity Center is now open for spring business. The nursery is open from 10 am until 3 pm every day except Mondays and Tuesdays.

Judie Hart will return to visit in July. There will be a social event at the IOOF Hall for all of Judie’s friends and neighbors.

The North Trinity Lake Improvement Association annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration will be held at the IOOF Hall on Wednesday, **May 2nd** from 5 - 8 pm. This wonderful Mexican dinner features enchiladas, chili relleno casserole, rice and beans, dessert, lemonade and coffee all included for \$10 per person, or children under 10 for \$5. Beer and wine will be \$2. There will be a serenade performed by Judy Eaker. All proceeds benefit the IOOF Hall.

On **May 21st** the Traveling Lanterns will be performing at the IOOF Hall in Trinity Center. Their performance is entitled “Lewis and Clark”. The sponsors, North Trinity Artist’s Guild” would like to invite the public.

## School Days



### *Coffee Creek School*

Coffee Creek School wants you to know that they are accepting all usable, clean donations for their Spring Fling First Annual Rummage Sale. Bags and hangers are also appreciated. If you want booth space, there is space available with a donation.

The school also appreciates any General Mills product box tops. General Mills has a donation program for education based on box tops collected.

There will be a Community Open House and Science Fair on May 1st at the Coffee Creek School. The open house will feature area history models, such as the Carrville Inn and the Barn from the old Scott Ranch as well as the Trinity Center Cemetery. Refreshments will be served.

The kids from Coffee Creek will spend the day on May 4th at the Coffee Creek Ranch, enjoying outdoor activities such as archery and horseback riding.

On May 31st the Coffee Creek School children will go on a field trip to Weaverville Elementary School to enjoy a presentation of “Guys and Dolls”.

### *Trinity Center School*

Trinity Center School children will be presenting their school play, “You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown” on May 22nd and May 23rd. The morning performance is at 10:30 am and the evening performance will be at 6:30 pm. Don’t miss what promises to be an exciting event. Everyone is welcome!



## Got Your Goat?

Jack Simmons, mailman extraordinaire, recently had to endure the ultimate “postal humiliation”. He is used to regaling anyone within earshot with his stories of harrowing mailman heroism. Of course this includes the snow, ice and dead of night stories we have all heard since we were wee ones at our mother’s knee. (Obviously, mother, did not live in this world.)

In any case, Jack, was on his normal rounds and was eagerly expecting the usual contingent of chasing dogs when he glanced in his rearview mirror and was stunned by what he saw. “It couldn’t be”, he sighed with immense resignation. There, amid his favorite dogs, was a goat eagerly enjoying the chase. Jack will probably never be able to hold his head high again at postal conventions and will lose a stripe or two off his mailbag. Oh well, we still love him!



Every last cent from the sale of this newsletter goes to the Coffee Creek Volunteer Fire Company!

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Coffee Creek Fire Co.



A Coffee Creek Firefly Publication

## Walk of Hope

Did you see the guy with the sore feet hoofing it down Hiway 3 this past month? Well, it was Norman Ball, the 58 year old grandfather, who is walking 8500 miles across the U.S. and Canada to help what he terms the "throw away children" around the world. He and his wife, Dianne, and helper, Jeff Short, have already covered 1200 miles. They began in Arizona, January 1, 2000 and will complete the walk in October of 2002 in Phoenix. Norman walks around 20 miles a day in his oversized sneakers, which he pads with foam rubber to help ease the arthritis in his feet, knees and hips. Norman is already well traveled throughout the world and is a scuba diver, pilot, wilderness survival and gun safety instructor. He has managed thousands of acres of duck hunting marshes. For much of his career he was in sales and marketing training and management. He has owned and operated two marketing companies, a publishing company and a telephone company. He and his family originally hail from Canada.

Norman says he has a "winning mindset. I'm totally determined, I have surrounded myself with dynamic and powerful people, and I pray each day that God will direct this effort."

All of the money raised by this "Walk of Hope" goes to the children. If you want more information about Norman's efforts, you will find it at [www.walkofhope.org](http://www.walkofhope.org).



Norman Ball Rests Awhile at Eagle Creek Ranch

## I Remember Mama – Sue Dahm

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I remember mama in all her precious ways,  
Songs that she would sing to make us happy.  
How she'd sit with me for hours teaching me to sew,  
Like a mother bird, she held her little ones close.

We always loved the Sundays best.  
Sometimes I'd help her bake.  
The recipes we used were Grandma's secrets.  
No one left the table to go hungry through the night.  
Chicken and dumplin's were our favorite.

Lovin' memories, the treasures of my heart,  
Such happy days that I can hold forever.  
All the riches in the world could never take the place  
Of one goodnight kiss from Mama.

After supper she would sit in her old rocking chair.  
We'd gather around her feet just to hear a song.  
The evening fire felt so good,  
And then Mama would say a prayer.

She's tuck us in and kiss us, one by one.  
When the shadows came to light and danced across the wall,  
Mama would tell us all a bedtime story,  
Then she'd gently blow the candle out,  
And leave me to the night.

Dream'n with my raggedy old dolly,  
And that's how I remember Mama.

(Don't forget Mother's Day)

If you have food in the refrigerator,  
clothes on your back, a roof overhead  
and a place to sleep...you are richer than  
75% of the world.

## Did You Know.....?

