

*THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – February 3, 2011*  
*Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society*

**THE HOWELL BROTHERS OF ALPINE**

If you don't know the Howell Brothers, you will after you read this article. These two guys do more for our community than you could ever imagine.

Charles "Charlie" Neil Howell, Jr. was born in North Fork, Va. On May 12, 1934, and his brother Robert "Bob" Edwin Howell was born in Coronado in 1939. Their father was in the Navy so they moved around a lot.

The family was living in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed by the Japanese. The boys were out in the yard playing when they saw the planes fly over their house. They even saw the battle ship Utah explode and the USS Arizona flip over after it was hit.

Japanese bullets landed inside the walls of their house and Bob still has those bullets. At the time of the bombing their father was stationed near Midway Island on an aircraft carrier.

Charlie went into the Army Special Forces and became a Green Beret. He was stationed at Fort Mead until he went to Korea in 1953. The war ended in 1954 and Charlie was sent back to the States. He retired from the military in 1979 and became an inactive reservist.

Bob worked for the Federal Government North Island Naval Air Repair facility on the flight line repairing planes. He worked there for 29 years until he retired at the age of 51. He took an early retirement and opened a jewelry business. His father had a jewelry store in Pacific Beach so Bob opened his store in Coronado. Then a few years later he opened one in La Mesa.

When Charlie got out of the Navy in 1979 he started hanging around at the jewelry store. He would talk with the customers but wouldn't get any work done. Eventually Charlie started working in the La Mesa store.

Bob's wife wanted a place with some property. A friend of hers from high school, just got her realtor's license and found the perfect place for them in Alpine. Bob opened Howell's Opal Shoppe on Alpine Boulevard in 1982. It was where the Florist Shop is located today – further east on the Boulevard.

Bob asked Charlie to come up to Alpine to live. Charlie came here on February 11, 1980. He remembers the date because on February 14 it started to rain in San Diego, causing one of the biggest floods in San Diego's history. He said it was worse than the rain we had a few weeks ago.

Both Charlie and Bob are members of the Kiwanis Club of Alpine and spend many hours volunteering their time not only for Kiwanis but for many other organizations.

You can call Charlie “Mr. Community Center.” When he first started volunteering it was in the old Community Center building, where the Alpine Academy is located today. He drove his van and delivered meals and medications to home bound seniors as far away as Santee.

Today he helps wherever he is needed. From making sure there is soap in the bathrooms to setting up chairs for events, unlocking the tennis courts and running errands for Thrifty Threads thrift store. You can count on seeing Charlie every day at the Community Center, rain or shine.

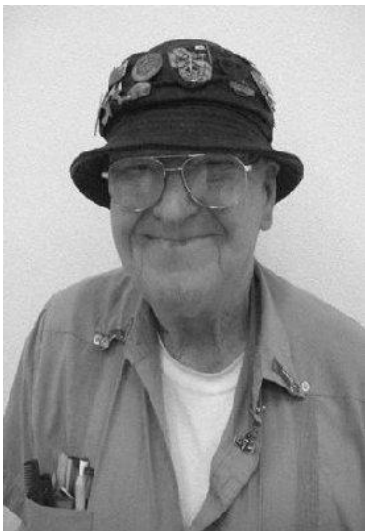
Bob is also involved with so many things. He helps with the Kiwanis Bike Give Away, puts the letters up on the school marquees for the schools, puts out the flags and takes them down for holidays.

He also volunteers every year for the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades when they put on their school play. He provides them with refreshments and snacks between rehearsals and is there to help out in any way he can. He opens up the building and moves chairs around. He also helps the students with their homework when they are not rehearsing.

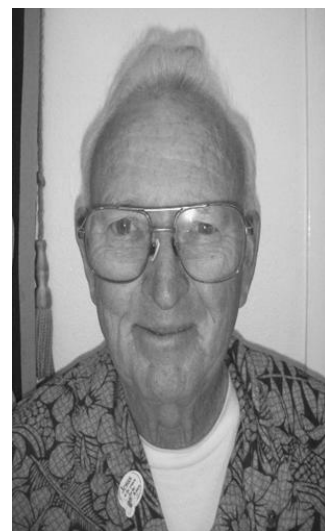
The play they are performing this year is “Little Abner.” It will be held at the Alpine Woman’s Club on Thursday, March 31, Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2, and the following week on April 7, 8 and 9.

For ticket information please call Boulder Oaks Elementary 445-8676.

By Carlette Anderson



Charlie Howell



Bob Howell