

## Find Something Worth Dying For...

***“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”***

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

As Valentine’s week 2007 draws near a close, my mind wonders to Nell and Jim Hamm, who celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this month. You may not remember Nell and Jim by name but by incident. Last month, while the couple was hiking, in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park situated in Northern California, Jim was attacked by a 200 pound, eight foot long mountain lion.

This lion, pouncing seemingly from the sky pinned Jim to the ground. Nell, age 65, didn’t even hear the animal. She turned to find Jim, 70 years young, underneath the lion with his head partially in the animal’s mouth. “He didn’t scream,” Nell later said. “It was a different, horrible plea for help.”

The next few minutes were a fight for life. It was seeing everything important to the couple flashing before their eyes. It was pain and blood and sweat but most of all, love. Nell could have ran. She could have gone for help but she didn’t. There, before her was the most important thing in here life, something worth dying for.

With that in mind she reacted, grabbing a log and began beating the animal. When that didn’t work, she took a pin from Jim’s pocket and tried to stab one of the eyes of the mountain lion. She poked until the pen was bent and unusable...then she picked up the log again and beat. She beat and beat.

It worked, the lion finally backed off. He looked at Nell one last time and disappeared into the foliage. Nell was afraid to leave her bleeding and dazed husband. She was able to move him about a quarter of a mile to a trail head where she covered him with branches, to protect against another attack , then waited for help.

“She saved his life, there’s not doubt about that” said a spokesman for the Department of Fish and Game. When asked if she was a hero however, Nell shook her head no. “You hear remarks of hero. It wasn’t that. We love each other very much.”

In that moment, Nell found one thing in her life worth dying for...she was willing to go toe to toe with a powerful animal and risk her own death for her husband and their life together. And some do lay down their lives for powerful and positives purposes; some of these purposes are saving another, for our freedom, for a child...But dying for most of us isn’t about literally wrestling mountain lions but instead the fears, anxieties and beliefs that hold us back. We are sometimes afraid to speak up or act when we know we can make a difference. We may hold our tongues when someone is harming themselves or another. We stay behind instead of following that light deep within. The reason’s we don’t act is that we think that in acting a part of us will die...and we can’t live without that piece. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may have said it best, “Our lives begin to end the

day we become silent about things that matter." Die a little today for something powerful and positive that is worth dying for...and in so doing save your life and another along the way.

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