

# The BEAR FACTS

A publication of Mountain C.A.R.E. (<http://www.mtncare.net>)

Autumn 2023 Volume 17 Issue 3

## Humility on the Mountain

by Diana Anderson

You wouldn't believe me if I told you why I moved to Forest Falls three years ago. I should probably spare myself the embarrassment of the story. What I will tell you is, that I made the best decision I could at the time for my family. Sometimes in life we do what feels like extraordinary acts of kindness, altruism or even naivete for the people we love most.

I've always been a sun worshipping, safety first, convenience is key type of gal. Sounds kind of crazy that I chose to move to the mountains, right? It was crazy and also one of the best decisions I've made my entire life, but it wasn't without its many moments of fear, bewilderment, and so much doubt: would life here ever feel normal? Would I ever stop feeling like a clumsy, ignorant newbie who bit off way more than she could chew? Which is why I'm writing this article now: to, perhaps, make the newbie a human, rather than someone to laugh at. It's also a story of hope for other newbies that are battling their own struggles. It's a chance for each of us to shift our perspective, just enough, to make an even stronger community.

I can still remember sitting in the driveway waiting for the realtors to arrive to show us the house. There was something majestic about the property. I halfway expected fairies to greet me at the top of the stone path heading to what seemed like a million dollar view. I walked inside to find my eyes filling with tears. The home was absolutely beautiful but far from my usual taste in home aesthetics. Wood floors, wood walls and wood ceilings are not exactly what I gravitated toward. Still, I felt overwhelmed with emotions. It was as if the home was touching my soul. Needless to say, we decided to purchase the home despite my fears of snow, flash floods, fire danger and "one way in, one way out."

We were in escrow through both the Apple and the El Dorado fires, which gave us our first taste of how uncertain living conditions can be up here. The fires also extended our escrow, which meant winter was upon us much sooner than expected. I had never been so cold in my entire life. I had never chopped wood, never shoveled snow and most definitely had never driven in it. I had



absolutely no idea that driving in heavy snow at night would transport me into hyper space. "Don't slam on the breaks when you hit ice," I would tell myself. But then I would hit the brakes every time. I thought that I had driven in fog down the hill, but I hadn't really: not dense, soupy, open the door to find the road-lines kind of fog. Then the flash floods came, the wind events, the fire-anxiety, power outages, water outages, "boil" notices, and the fear of crossing paths with a bear or cougar. Then the mother of all storms hits, as if things weren't exciting enough. Despite my terror of what Mother Nature threw at us, my biggest fears lurked on Facebook. I quickly learned that you can and will be attacked for just about anything you post, warranted or not. I also had hopes of a warm, welcoming community—which I found in my close neighbors—but Facebook threads robbed me of my broader expectations. But, it was a few encounters with Caltrans that pushed me to my lowest point. I am not a defiant, ignorant or careless individual. I simply didn't know the proper winter weather protocols. Honestly, I

*continued on page 12*

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## Mountain C.A.R.E. President's Message

by Debi Welch



Hello Friends and Neighbors!

As I type this president's message with the windows & doors open allowing the wonderful cool air of late Summer and sound of thunder fill the office, I'm so thankful for this life we have on the mountain.

While our sunflowers are still in full bloom, Autumn is just around the corner. The leaves and acorns are starting to fall and the evenings and mornings are cooler. With every new season, I think this is my favorite, but Fall is truly the most glorious in mountain communities.

With an influx of new canyon residents we are working on putting together a town hall meeting under the auspices of MT CARE w/ Kevin the wildlife Biologist who helps when we have bears in need. Also we will be having Finazzo's Pizza Box in attendance so there will be snacks for those who attend; can you say yummy? Please watch for a solid date for this meeting which will be held at our Community Center, Big Falls Lodge. We currently have a lot of bears in the canyon and need to remember how to live in harmony with them.

Also with the holidays just around the corner, we want to invite everyone to downtown on Tuesday October 31, 2023 at 5:30 pm for Trick or Treat fun. Please



bring your lawn chairs,

candy and a blanket to enjoy this clean down home event. As always we will be serving hot apple cider and look forward to seeing our canyon kids dressed up and ready to trick or treat. As we get closer to the date, we will begin compiling a trick or treat trail map, with homes participating after you leave downtown for ease of access.

### Downtown Trick-or-Treat

Please don't forget how blessed we are to be a part of this small town. We count on each other in times of need, ie natural disaster, fire, flood etc. The best way to have a good neighbor is to be a good neighbor! With that in mind keep your eyes and ears open, we help each other out here. If you see a neighbor struggling and can help, please do, you will have a friend for life!

I'd like to take a moment and thank every one of you who've been out there graffiti busting and cleaning up in the creek as you are out and about. You are making a difference!

Lastly the MT CARE website has changed to: <https://www.mtncare.net/> and from this site you can access the webcams. We will be adding a new cam in front of the waterfall and possibly a few others so please check the site out pretty regularly.



photo by Doyle Raines

## From the Editor, Happy Fall

by Marianne Belletini



The dogs' days of Summer! Ever wonder what that means? Well, when you have a cool down then it heats up again, they say we are in the "Dog Days of Summer". Hopefully the fall days will be more of puppy dog, than full grown dog! Just my humor!

I have been thinking a lot about what to write for the Fall Edition. Well over and over again the voice in my head says to write about Faith. Now I do not mean faith as in religion, that does not work for all.

So, what is Faith? Well faith is what everyone holds onto at some moment in time. We all have faith for something or one another, at one time or another. Think of it like a football game. We have faith our team will win! Of Course, Always!! Well, when they lose is becomes sad or frustrating. But we must hold on to faith, that they will become winners again!

Faith is purpose. Without purpose we can become lost. So, humans put purpose in whatever they hold dear to themselves and the conditions around them that give them purpose.

Let's go back to the sports analogy. Having faith in a team is great. But having faith in one person or yourself becomes harder. When I was young, I played both team and single sports. I will say the team sport was a lot easier than the single sport, which was running. With running is what up to me and my legs to get me to the winning spot! So having faith I could beat all my opponents took a lot! With faith in one's self you must be able to pull you self-up alone to reach your winning goals. But with a team you have many players to have faith you will win. So, if one team member is on the fence, the other team members can help them to climb over to the winning side!

Since the Fall season is beginning, and winter is approaching. Many will be alone with their faith in themselves. You see winter keeps us indoors and if you're like me, talking a lot to yourself! Oh well I do that in the warm months as well! So, let's make sure we have faith to comfort others if we see the need. Let's also make sure if we need comfort, we speak out for it! I have not perfected even an ounce of mind reading at this age!

So, have a wonderful fall and,

If you feel the need to sing - Look up George Michaels song "Faith" released in 1987. [Chorus, Cause I gotta' have faith, I gotta have faith, Because I gotta have faith, faith, faith), even though this is a song about a relationship, I love the chorus!

If you just feel like reading, here is a poem, I do not know the author: Faith - Faith has neither wall nor roof, No concrete offering of proof. It's substance frail as winds that pass, or image seen in mirrored glass. Yet mountains move and valleys fill when faith is linked to wish and will!

Sincerely,

Your Bear Facts 2023 Editor Marianne Belletini



# Thanks to the Canyon Clean-Up Team



Many thanks to our Canyon Clean-up Volunteers:  
 Cinder Pile Lot – “Big Horn Flats”: John Ruble, Jeff Wiseman.  
 Metal Recycling: Yholdy & Bill Jones, Bill Loenhorst, Joseph Garcia  
 Big Falls Lodge: Matt Bottenberg, Patrick Kell, Nate & Hanna Lee.  
 Fallsvale School · E-Waste: Jan Skinner Horton  
 Mountain Home Village: Carol Burgess, Andrew & Clayton Coleman, Chris Walker.  
 Graffiti Removal and Trash Removal Team: Deby Anderson, Debi Welch, Donna Maehart, David Wynn, Junior and Melanie, Sal Garcia, Brody Duncan and Phillip Dehart. Junior and Melanie were just visiting FF and stopped to look at the trail and creek. After talking with us they decided they wanted to help so we sent them up to Big Falls trail and told them there was plenty of graffiti along the creek. Phillip Dehart did a great job of picking up garbage while Brody Duncan painted. They worked the Momyer area then got more paint and another garbage bag and head up to end of road.  
 Runners: Debi Welch and Terry Hamilton

# Garden Club - You are Welcome to Join Us!

by Jan Horton VP of Membership, Frozen Green Thumb Garden Club



“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”  
 ~ Marcel Proust

What glorious Spring and Summer seasons up in the mountains! The wildflowers have been riotous in number and color, the trees bursting with health from the abundance of precipitation, and our gardens are buzzing with the presence of happy bees. Members of the Frozen Green Thumb Garden Club are enjoying the precious months of gardening, socialization, and community service while the sun is high in the sky.

So far this year alone, members have made terrariums and miniature gardens, enjoyed field trips to Crafton Iris Farms, UCR Botanical Gardens, and the Big Bear Xeriscape tour. We have learned about plant propagation from San Bernardino Master Gardeners, tree health from Paul Chaney and the history of our canyon from Shannon Wray. Coming up is a lesson on the care and propagation of indoor plants. We are also looking forward to tasting Holiday side dishes and making Holiday cards for someone special.



A special project is in the works. The FGTGC will be updating and refreshing the Welcome sign past the bridge. Be looking for a fresh new look on the sign around the beginning of Fall.

We invite you to come enjoy time with us. Our meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month (except December). Members bring their lunch at 11:30 am and have time to chat with friends. The meeting begins at 12:00 pm beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. We have moments of reflection, inspiration, announcements and then, a quick business meeting before the main event.

The members of our club are community minded and enjoy helping maintain the serene beauty unique to our canyon and mountains. We are always open to new members and hope you will want to join us as we strive to bring joy and beauty to our mountain communities.

Check out the town & road conditions on the

**Mountain C.A.R.E.**  
**Web Cams**

<http://mtncare.net>



# Sharing the Road with School Buses

If you're driving behind a bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car. It will give you more time to stop once the yellow lights start flashing. It is illegal in all 50 states to pass a school bus that is stopped to load or unload children.

## FLASHING RED



## KIDS AHEAD

Never pass a stopped bus from behind – or from the front either. If you're on an undivided road (no center divider) and the bus is stopped, it is stopped to load or unload children who are not paying attention to you. This is not a suggestion, If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop, it's the LAW!

The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus. Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks

Retrieved, 8/14/2023: Back-to-School Safety for Drivers - National Safety Council (nsc.org)

# On Being Prepared

by Mill Creek Canyon CERT



Due to some departmental restructuring at the County level, our local Mill Creek Canyon team will not be providing a "Basic C.E.R.T. Class" this year. We will be focusing on bringing all of our current and

past members up to speed with refresher training and bringing all of the necessary personal information and certification(s) current. There are training opportunities for Basic Training at some of our associate's teams in other parts of the county such as Redlands, and Yucaipa programs. contact us if you would like to know what course are being offered locally.

Special thanks to Laura Dyberg from the Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance for providing the MCC CERT program with the funds to acquire a new bin for CERT supplies.



Any questions about our vital effort on behalf of our community's disaster preparedness plan, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. [fyermannn@yahoo.com](mailto:fyermannn@yahoo.com)



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**ADVENTIST CHURCH**  
 IN WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

## Saturday Services

40551 Valley of the Falls Dr.  
(Next door to the Post Office)

**Bible Study 10:00 a.m.**

**Musical Praise Service 11:00 a.m.**  
(Musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments)

**Worship Service 11:30 a.m.**

**Weekly Potluck Fellowship Dinner 12:45 p.m.**



# The Crazy Wanderer

by Deby Anderson

ATTENTION - Pole dancing in the mountains..... What? Well, I have hiking poles and sometimes I just want to dance while I'm hiking. Anyone who has seen me on a trail knows my poles are a part of me. I have several reasons for using hiking poles:

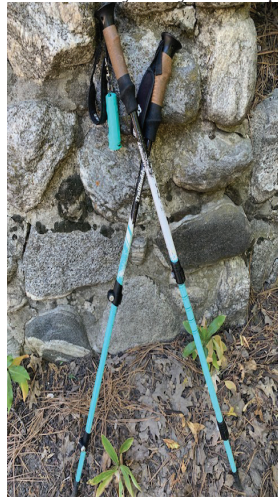
1. To make myself appear larger. I occasionally wave my poles around like a wild woman, just in case I have a kitty kitty stalking me. It's the mountain lion you can't see that you have to worry about.

2. I like to sing while hiking, when nobody can hear me for obvious reasons. I can carry a tune, I just can't take it anywhere... I like to bang my poles on rocks, trees, and bushes to the beat, scaring off those slithering reptiles as I would prefer not to see them.

3. I sometimes lose my balance and find I make moves using my poles that one would think I was attempting to be a ballerina or more realistically, a hiker who thinks she knows what she is doing.

4. In a lifetime ago I was a majorette. I love twirling my poles. They are a little unbalanced as I have a small container of pepper spray attached to one pole.

Whether the above makes me a mountain pole dancer or just a crazy old lady trying to stay safe while hiking the canyon with poles, matters not. My poles are a part of me for many reasons, from safety to entertainment. They say pole dancing is good exercise. I would have to agree.



# The Chili Cookoff Returns

by Patricia Drummond photos by Peter & Alice Burgess Willis

After a six year absence the Forest Falls Chili Cook Off returned with a scorching blaze on Memorial Day weekend, May 28, with a great show of patriotism to celebrate its 21st event. Sponsored



by our own Mtn C.A.R.E. this event provided one of the best raffles ever, while the fantastic weather, was complimented by the Brew Crew who managed a very successful beer garden.

Old friends reunited and new friendships formed as everyone enjoyed the music and tasted some mighty fine Chili ranging from Smoked Elk to vegetarian with a bit of everything in-between.

### Chili is Back!

Congratulations to 1st Place judges chili winner Matt Baker, Finazzo's Pizza and to the People's Choice entry, The Forest Falls Firefighters.

Events of this magnitude are not spontaneous... months of planning and the support of sponsors, businesses and individuals make it possible, so Thank You, to the core committee and



FF Firefighters

sponsors and a big thank you

to the on sight staff, locals and visitors alike, who teamed up to provide the many services needed to pull off an efficient, fun and FUN-d-raising financial success for Mtn C.A.R.E.



Team Finazzo

But wait, it'll be back in 9 months. See you there!

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# Mountain Safety Tips

by Marianne Belletini

Being a new homeowner especially in a mountain community with wildlife is very different than being a homeowner in a community that does not have continuous wildlife present. We moved to Forest Falls in 2000. I am originally from the Midwest and my spouse is native to California. Neither of us lived in the mountains where wildlife was always present. We had to learn by trial and error the best routes for keeping us, as well as the wildlife safe.

## Native Animal Safety Tips:

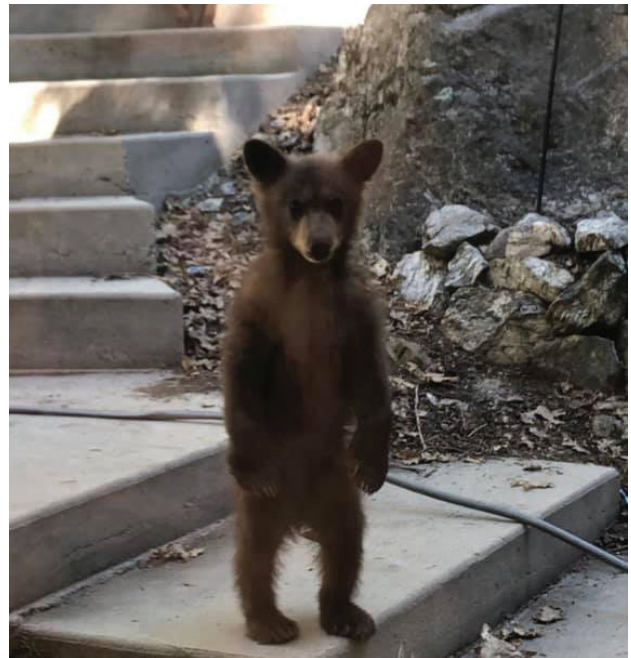
- Bears, Mountain Lions, Coyotes, Bobcats, Big Horn Sheep, Deer, Raccoons, Squirrels, numerous birds and small mammals are the current inhabitants of this community.
- They will look for food wherever they can easily find it. Bears have great noses (even better than dogs) for sniffing out a food source.
- Birdfeeders feed all the wildlife. Bears will find them and eat from them as well. The bears will pull down bird feeders and return regularly to see what's new. Keep them away, don't let the bird feeders become a food source for the bears.
- Mind your Garbage, no matter how clean the cans or how tight the bags filled with food waste are. Bears will find it! Bears get into many garages and cars because they smell the food or garbage. Leave all garbage in your house; until trash day or the day you take it to your local trash receptacle.
- Lock your personal bins, the locks are not for the bears, they are for humans, who use other people's trash barrels.
- If you have trash service and have to leave the cans outside, use Bear Proof cans. They will still try to get into the cans for food but "usually" can't!
- Spring and fall are times when the Bears are very active. They are hungry for food and will go to any means to get it.
- Bears in our communities do NOT hibernate.
- Cars that have any type of food products left inside will be a magnet for the bears! Even if locked they will try to get in to get the food/garbage they smell! (incl pet food or cleaning supplies)
- Watch your small animals, many have been taken away by Coyotes, Mountain Lions and even Bears. Small animals make more noise to protect themselves. Larger predator's find them easier! (I know I have a small older dog that does not go out at night, unless I am with her!).

The article below I found today online. (excerpt from, How to Bear-Proof Your Property)

"Ever had a bear try to claw its way into your house?"

Kara Jackson has, the Forest Falls youngster was home alone one afternoon when a bear tried to climb in through an open kitchen window. Kara knew what to do, however, and made enough noise to startle the bear and chase it away. It was the family's third bear encounter in a month.

Although you might not live in bear country like the Jacksons do, millions of Americans live in rural areas or have vacation homes where bears roam. A thrilling sight in the wild, a bear is less than charming when it's trying to stick its nose in your refrigerator.



bear photo by Josh Olsen

## Fall/Winter Preparation Tips:

- Using wood for heat? Best to start buying, cutting, splitting by September. Have the wood ready to go by October for use. Cover your wood with a tarp to keep it dry.
- Check your fireplace it should be professionally cleaned every other year to prevent a chimney fire; as black creosote builds up from burning fires for warmth.
- Make sure your snowblower is working, (if you have/use one), for taking care of berms that the snow plow leaves behind when plowing the roads.
- Have multiple snow shovels ready for stairs, driveway, and berms. Check for any broken parts.
- Have hand held snow/ice scrapers for removing the snow from your car windows and hood. It is illegal to drive with snow on your hood and covering windows.
- Fill propane tanks early or prior to any incoming storm. Ensure you have enough propane if a storm hits and leaves you stranded in town for several days.
- Fall is the time to clean/trim trees and remove excessive debris from your yard. Homeowners are liable for the properties outside maintenance. Spring is also a good time to clean up your outside property from the winter storms.
- Also, a good idea to check your portable generator to make sure it runs properly.

Remember:



both current & prior issues are online  
with color pictures and live links at:

<http://www.mtnicare.net>



# Community Events & Activities Calendar

## Angelus Oaks - Forest Falls - Mountain Home Village

### Autumn 2023 Special Events

When	What	Where	What else?
Sep 2	<b>Forest Falls Firefighter Dinner</b>	Big Falls Lodge	at Big Falls Lodge from 5-7 pm. choice of Steak or Chicken. Display of Fire Apperatus/Vehicles, Raffle
Sept 1-4	<b>23 Mile Yard Sale</b>	All through towns of AO, FF, & MHV	Labor Day weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday. Dozens of sellers in all three of our lovely towns.
Oct 31	<b>Trick-or-Treat</b>	Downtown	5:30 pm start, bring chairs and lot's of candy
Nov 23	<b>Community Thanksgiving Dinner</b>	Big Falls Lodge	from 2 - 5pm Turkeys, Hams, potatoes, & drinks provided, Bring a side or dessert and your own dinnerware. Reservations are a must and the sign up will be at the post office from Nov. 1-18th
Dec 2	<b>Fire Truck Parade</b>	All through Forest Falls	After dark, Local and guest Fire Trucks will be lit up and driving through town spreading joy and happiness.

## Regularly Scheduled Events

What	When	Where	more details
<b>Angelus Oaks Fire Department</b>	2nd & 4th Tuesdays each month at 6pm	Angelus Oaks Fire Station (98)	
<b>Forest Falls Fire Department</b>	Tuesdays at 6:30pm	Forest Falls Fire Station (99)	909-794-4413
<b>Angelus Oaks Fire Safe Council</b>	Meets periodically	Angelus Oaks Fire Station (98)	Dates announced on the A.O. FSC Bulletin Board in the Angelus Oaks Post Office.
<b>Supper Night at Big Falls Lodge</b>	4 times per year, next: Thanksgiving Thursday	at Big Falls Lodge	Community "Potluck Dinner". Bring a side or dessert and your own dinnerware
<b>Frozen Green Thumb Garden Club</b>	3rd Monday each month 11:30 am - 1:30 pm	at Big Falls Lodge	All are welcome.
<b>Music Night in Forest Falls</b>	Mondays 6:30-9:30 pm	at Big Falls Lodge	All Musicians, all styles, all levels are welcome, anyone can come play or just come to listen.
<b>The Needlers Knitting Group</b>	Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 am	7th Day Adventist Church, Forest Falls	All are welcome, Contact Denise Reid 794-5130.

### Valley of the Falls Community Church

Worship Each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.  
followed by Fellowship Time

Youth Ministry Thursday Evenings  
at 4:30 p.m.  
with a Fellowship Meal

**Thom Wellman**, Pastor  
**Frank Mihelich**, Teaching Pastor (917) 346-6147

40262 Valley of the Falls Drive, Forest Falls, CA 92339

Follow us on Facebook @forestofthefallscommunitychurch





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- How many of these have YOU attended?**

[www.VFCCi.org](http://www.VFCCi.org)

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909-794-0885 events  
909-222-9067 direct  
[events@vfcci.org](mailto:events@vfcci.org)

Caretaker  
Megan Danner  
909-809-7605

Facilities Manager  
Chris Nicholson  
909-762-0998

Valley of the Falls Community Center, Inc. needs YOU! The Board of VFCCi invites the community to be part of the Big Falls Lodge. VFCCi is a non-profit organization supported by donations, grants, private events, and the local residents. We encourage you to join our monthly meetings, become a board member, volunteer, provide your ideas and suggestions... together we can – divided we can't!

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If you want to learn more about VFCCi, attend a board meeting, schedule an event, or be added to our mailing list, please email [director@vfcci.org](mailto:director@vfcci.org) or call 909-389-0585. Visit our website at [vfcci.org](http://vfcci.org), or find us on Facebook. If you'd like to support us with a donation, contact a board member, Paypal to [donate@vfcci.org](mailto:donate@vfcci.org), or send to VFCCi/PO Box 41/Forest Falls CA 92339. See you at the Lodge!



# Thanksgiving, Community Style

Who's craving a juicy Turkey dinner style community gathering?

Well sign up now for the Supper Night Thanksgiving day gathering on November 23, 2023 at Big Falls Lodge from 2 - 5pm. The Potluck Dinner team is in need of turkeys and hams to be donated. Dee Konczal will be the cook the turkeys, hams, stuffing and potatoes. Residents and friends attending are asked to bring a side dish or dessert and sign-up on the special sheet that will be available at the post office in November. We would be most grateful if you could make your reservation and note your dish contribution by Nov. 15th. Volunteer and helpers are needed to make this event happen. Please email [dkonczal2@gmail.com](mailto:dkonczal2@gmail.com) or call **909-794-0885** if you can volunteer to help put this event on!



# Autumn's Cooler Weather

by Marianne Belletini

The 3rd issue of The Bear Facts in 2023 is our Fall/Autumn edition, it's time to think about the cooler weather and change of scenery. I look forward to this time of year! We are blessed to have our green trees turn to a lovely yellow during this Fall Season! If you have planted other fall coloring trees you now get to observed their beautiful colors as well.

Mums are great for fall color in the yard. I find myself buying potted mums every year. Then planting them in the ground to watch them grown then bloom! I have been very lucky with mums growing back from their store-bought containers.

Photos of fall colors are always amazing. So, if you have photos of your fall trees/plants/etc. Send them to [bfeditor2023@gmail.com](mailto:bfeditor2023@gmail.com). Next year your wonderful photos will be in the Bear Facts fall edition!



Photos of mums taken 8/16/203, just at the beginning of the bloom!

## 6th Annual

### 23 Mile Yard Sale 2023

### Mt Home Village - Forest Falls - Angelus Oaks

### Labor Day Weekend

### Fri Sept 1 - Mon Sept 4

8am - 3pm  
Give or take on hours

Days and hours determined by each seller

### 23 Miles of Treasures - Over 35 Yard Sales

### Follow the signs along Hwy 38

### Please drive slow and be mindful of our neighbors




**Finazzo's**  
PizzaBox

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text us your order

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Fri, Sat & Sun



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The Bear Facts is a publication of Mountain C.A.R.E., a non-profit organization.

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The regular schedule for the Bear Facts submissions and issue "in mailbox" dates are as follows:

	Submission Deadline	MtnCARE.com post Date	In the Mail Issue Date
Issue 1 Spring	Feb 1st	Feb 20th	Mar 1st
Issue 2 Summer	May 1st	May 20th	Jun 1st
Issue 3 Autumn	Aug 1st	Aug 20th	Sep 1st
Issue 4 Winter	Nov 1st	Nov 20th	Dec 1st

Please make sure any ad artwork, articles, calendar updates, and photos are sent to [bfeditor2023@gmail.com](mailto:bfeditor2023@gmail.com) on or before the submission deadline (all submissions digital and layout ready please). For questions call the editor, send an email to [bfeditor2023@gmail.com](mailto:bfeditor2023@gmail.com)

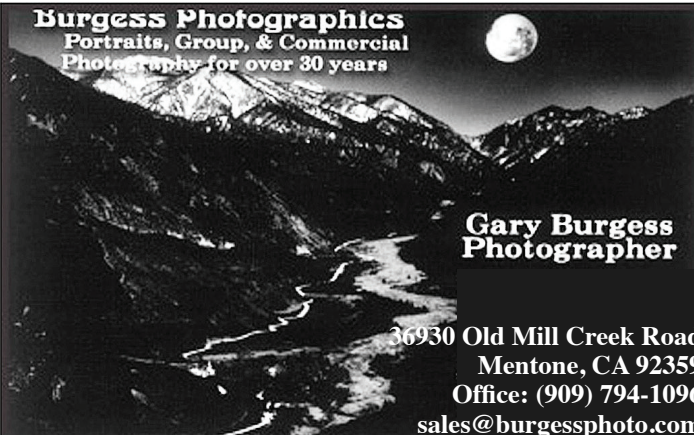
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## Humility on the Mountain

*continued from page 1*

didn't know the difference between Caltrans employees and local boys trying to make a few bucks putting chains on for drivers. I was doing my best to brave the storms I had to drive through to get home. Every time I approached the canyon my heart would pound and my knuckles would turn white grasping the steering wheel. I just wanted to make it home safe. There was no moral support or kindness to be handed out at the chain-checks, only yelling to stop or keep moving—apparently both are wrong. I have never been talked to so cruelly and dismissively by strangers my entire life. Twice I drove away in tears feeling embarrassed, humiliated and like I had made the biggest mistake of my life by moving to the mountains. I started questioning whether those emotions I had felt when I walked into the house were simply a prelude of what was to come. There is nothing mundane or apathetic about living in the mountains. I have struggled, cried, felt frustration, anger and even regret. I have also smiled, laughed and felt more joy and awe than I have in a very long time. There are times I have to remind myself of the positive things I've seen and experienced. And there have been a lot. Mostly, I have found peace and tranquility.

I'm in awe for the overwhelming beauty we're so fortunate to live in. I am not the same woman I was before I moved up here. I'm a stronger woman with a greater sense of respect and gratitude for the forest that gifts us this everlasting beauty. While I don't pretend to have the knowledge of locals who've spent 20+ years here, I am learning to have perseverance, to live with integrity, and to open my heart to the kindness of strangers. There is an unspoken rule of self-reliance required to survive up here—and to be accepted, which makes more sense than it used to. I've come to understand that weakness and thoughtlessness can be your biggest liability, and not just impact yourself but your neighbors and all who live in this tiny bit of paradise. I will continue to learn and grow within this community. I will cringe when I have to drive in bad weather. I'll probably shed more tears. I will most likely ask dumb questions and inevitably make more mistakes along the way. But I will also feel proud of myself for not quitting when I wanted to or could have. I will respect Mother Nature and her wrath. I will continue to stop and pause when I see a beautiful sunset. I will do my best to prepare for whatever may come my way. I will do my part to make this a kind, beautiful community. Moving here has given me and my family the opportunity to make a home. It's a place to learn how to work hard and appreciate the simpler things in life. Those emotions I felt were a prelude of what was to come. The mountain has reminded me to live with passion again and to cherish and embrace every difficult, uncertain moment.

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**“When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.”**

**~ Dalai Lama**

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## Considering Books

by Katherine Bird

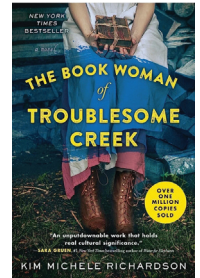
**THE BOOK WOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK** by Kim Michelle Richardson



Fall is a great time to watch the changing colors of the trees leaves floating colorfully to the ground and a time to float and fall into the pages of a beautifully written book! The author, Richardson, lives where Fall happens

in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky where this story takes place. Readers! Get ready for an intense page-turner!

The story begins in 1936 Kentucky and follows Cussy Mary Carter, a mail carrier, who delivers books, newspapers, magazines and letters to the isolated people of Troublesome Creek. Literacy, isolation and female empowerment are themes in this fictionalized history of Eastern Kentucky and the Appalachia. Cussy is 19 and working as a Packhorse Librarian, only there is no horse; a stubborn mule she names Julian protects her and climbs those rugged hills for Cussy.



Cussy is also called Bluet because she is also a “blue” librarian, the last of her kind from the “blue-skinned people of Kentucky on whose skin appears the unusual shade due to a genetic disorder called “methemoglobinemia”. (Don't look this up; it is better for the story to unfold and define it to the reader). Cussy is highly regarded, but as a “blue” she is feared, reviled, experiences and bigotry and racism, discrimination and violence. She is also not allowed to use the “White's Only bathroom while she works with other librarians to pack books!

This book is also about the most important people in world, Librarians. Particularly the Pack Horse librarians who carried reading materials on horseback, mules and donkeys, traveling miles throughout the mountains and hidden hollers of the Appalachia in difficult weather and trail conditions. This is an amazing true story related to the Roosevelt Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky, 1935 – 1943. At its height, more than a 100,000 rural inhabitants received reading materials, including a small rural school and the few children who attended.

Cussy's Pa, who works in the coal mines and suffers from the black-lung disease, wants Cussy to quit her “book” job and get married. She will not have it, but her father puts out the “courting candle” every night so he can buy a husband for her with part of his land. Cussy thinks to herself in this passage:

“Who would marry a Blue? Who would want me? I was positive no one would wed one of the blue people of Kentucky.”

But Charlie Frazer shows up and buys her. What happens next makes the reader skip a heartbeat! Read on!

There are so many heart-rending parts to this book; so many triumphs and mended lives. The author's research is impeccable and there are pictures and notes in the back. According to one critic, Joshilyn Jackson, “This book is emotionally resonant and unforgettable...a book lush-love letter to the redemptive power of books”.

The power of literacy to overcome bigotry and fear are evidenced in this story! Read the quote by T.S. Elliot at the beginning of the book. This book radiates the power of reading and the strength of humanity. We read to understand the world, right?



## Mill Creek Canyon from Above

## Poetry by local artist, Juan Delgado



### *A Fire's Residence*

When a fire has a cracking voice,  
it feeds on orchards, our photos,  
and a mountain range's horizon.  
A deer runs in the middle of the road.

When a fire levels a city block,  
its plumes bruise the skyline  
and bring us to our knees, tired  
and heavy as a pile of bricks.

When a fire leaves driveways  
to divide the mounds of ash  
and drops doorknobs to the ground  
where doors once stood,  
we map out our imaginary homes.

When the spider webs  
covered in ash tremble  
after losing their invisibility,  
we reclaim what is left.



For more info & poetry about this poet, Juan Delgado, go to:  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/juan-delgado>





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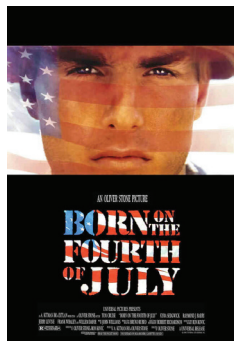
# Have You Seen It?

by Steve & Sharon Cady



For this issue, I've selected three films that deal with US soldiers and their experiences with war. Two of the films *Hacksaw Ridge* and *Slaughterhouse 5*, occur during World War II, and then the Vietnam era *Born on the Fourth of July*.

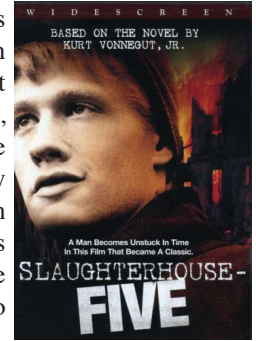
I'll begin with the most recently produced, *Hacksaw Ridge*. Directed by Mel Gibson, the fact-based *Hacksaw Ridge*, is the story of a conscientious objector (CO), Desmond Doss (Andrew Garfield), who feels called by his faith (7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist) to serve in the US Army, but only as a combat medic, not carrying a firearm. The irony is that he would serve in harm's way by helping his comrades who have fallen in harm's way. The attitude toward CO's during WWII was much less tolerant than in my time during the Vietnam War—when CO's generally took non-combatant positions. His fellow soldiers and officers do not understand at all and do everything imaginable to try to convince him to leave the Army. The movie is about his perseverance and what he does that earn a Medal of Honor from President Truman. Be warned that the film is rated R for realistically bloody, graphic war violence.



The second film, *Born on the Fourth of July*, was produced and directed by Oliver Stone in 1989, based on the autobiographical book written by Ron Kovic, who was inspired after viewing a speech by President Kennedy to join the US Marine Corps. In October 1967, Kovic, now a sergeant in his second tour of duty in Vietnam, is on a reconnaissance mission, when his unit encounters and kills a number of Vietnamese villagers they thought were the enemy. Under fire they retreat. More happens during the retreat and, later, Kovic tries to report what happened, but finds the facts fall on deaf ears and is told to keep it to himself. In January 1968, Kovic is critically wounded during a firefight. The remainder of the film deals with his return and adapting to life in the states and a society very distant from its battlefield. Wheelchair-bound, Kovic eventually becomes an anti-war protester. Again, this film is rated R.

The last film, *Slaughterhouse 5*, released in 1972 is based on the novel of the same name by Kurt Vonnegut, is different. A Sci-Fi/Fantasy work, Vonnegut concocts a tale of Billy Pilgrim (Michael Sacks), who has become unstuck in time. He experiences his life out of chronological order, moving back and forth between three key points in his life experience. The film starts with his patrol in the middle of winter in the European theater of WWII. Taken prisoner by the Germans, he is imprisoned in Dresden, where

he experiences a firebombing of the city by Allied Forces and the clean up of the city afterward. Another portion of his life involves his meeting his wife and a subsequent airline crash in which Billy is the only survivor. The final element he is being contacted by Tralfamadorians, beings from another planet who experience all of time all at one moment. They eventually place Billy in a lush "prison cell" in an intra-universe zoo, where he is observed by beings from all corners of the universe, who demand a mate for Billy so they can observe the human species mate. Montana Wildhack, a centerfold model, and Billy eventually fall in love and have a child. Remember, Billy goes back and forth between these experiences in random order.



I hope you will be able to see and appreciate one or more of these films about infantrymen. I bid you good viewing from a US Navy vet.


**“The mind,  
once stretched by a new idea, never  
returns to its original dimensions”**

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

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- [www.AngelusOaks.info](http://www.AngelusOaks.info)
- [www.ForestFalls.info](http://www.ForestFalls.info)
- [www.MountainHomeVillage.info](http://www.MountainHomeVillage.info)
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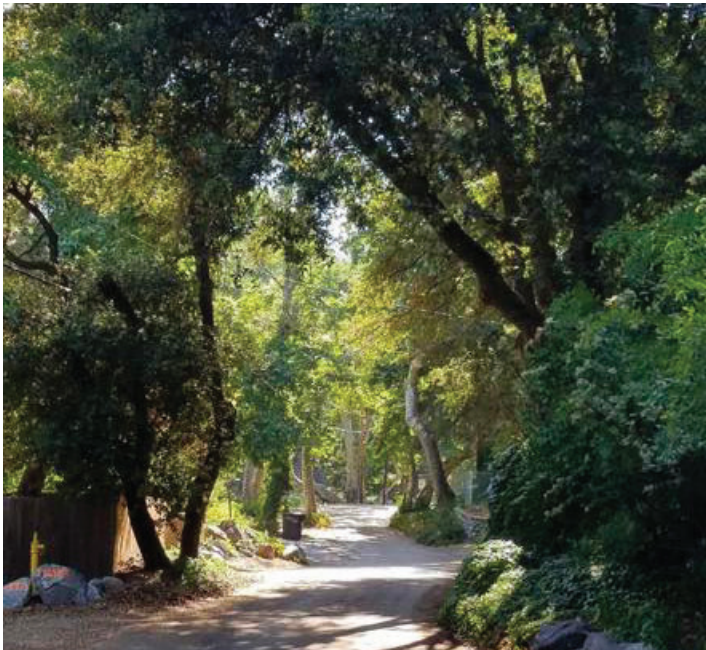
# Summers

by Charly Martin

Summers with grandparents are quintessential America but, summers spent in Mountain Home Village are magical. I had the privilege of seeing this community through the lens of ‘Carol’s Granddaughter’. My days were spent wandering the creek with evening walks through tree lined streets. The faces are friendly and there’s always a hint of recognition with an update on each other’s lives since you were last seen.

During my summers here I was carefree and barefooted. I adventured through the village grabbing berries along the roadsides and spent hours in the disconnected phone booth on the corner. During the summer of 99’, I begrudgingly left a boulder on which I had been reading due to a sudden rain. Minutes later was a flash flood that swept my boulder into oblivion.

I had always been cautioned with bear stories. They were told in larger than life, tales of the terrors that lay in wait if I wasn’t cautious. But, I had never seen a bear outside of the zoo. In the infinite wisdom I held at the tender age of 13, there were no bears in California.



On an extra hot day, after boredom had begun to set in, I decided to go to the creek. I jumped shadow to shadow along the ivy laced fencing while hearing Bruce and Judy talking in their yard. I peeked at the plants that adorned the windows of the corner house and turned onto the path where the sand was slightly cooler, but my steps could tolerate no pause. I passed the abandoned VW’s, up the walk and down the steps. Finally, sitting for a moment to look at the oddly placed teepee in the midst of the gorge and setting my gaze downward, tracing the sand by my feet.

I contemplated exploring the newly carved creek but, some falling rocks caught my attention. It was as if someone was catching their step. I thought that it had to be the Indian from the teepee at the Goodman’s house. Instead, I looked up to find the biggest brown bear in all of creation staring directly at me. He was 10 feet tall and could’ve weighed 5000 lbs. His paws shook the ground with each step and his roar blew back my hair. Only 20 paces from where I sat, I knew I could take him out with a pebble but... I ran.

Stories I’d heard flooded my mind with each sticker that pierced my feet. With a tear streamed face and trembling body, I found my grandmother and recounted the horrific moments of certain death. In her infinite wisdom she wrapped her arms around me, rubbed my back, and told me I was safe. I looked to her and said “I didn’t believe you when you said there were bears”.

That day I joined a group of privileged people who have seen a beautiful California Grizzly in their natural habitat. My eventful summer passed like falling sand and it was time for me to return to the city. A month later I received a care package with bear themed goodies. A one-eyed grizzly, of average size, had been shot. Definitely not my behemoth of nameless horror.

Years followed with creek visits that always included shoed feet. I passed along my bear story to friends, family, and eventually my kids. Our children visit Mountain Home Village through the lens of ‘Charly Ann’s kids’. They get tree lined walks and wander the creek, shoeless. I give them stark warnings of the 10-foot bear but, they’ll have their own life experiences to shape them. We meet new faces on our evening walks and share stories of the familiar ones. My daughter was privileged to get her own bear story during a winter trip. Coco (who we affectionately call all bears) came for a midnight snack in the dumpster. As Mikayla trembled, I held her, and told her she was safe. She peered out the window and whispered, “I didn’t believe you when you said there were bears”. Mountain Home Village is a magical place. Those of us who have been blessed to be part of this community know that, very much.



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Autumn 2023 Volume 17 Issue Number 3



**Mountain Citizens Acting to Restore the Earth**

Mountain C.A.R.E. is a non-profit community based organization located in Forest Falls California. We are a group of volunteers that came together in early 1990 to arrange an Earth Day activity. Our articles state that "We are to educate the general public about environmental concerns and the need to restore and preserve the environment for future generations".

Our vision is to:

Encourage the community to recycle, reduce, and re-use;  
enhance knowledge and love of the area;  
and show we care by keeping personal property and  
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Your Subscription, Contribution, or Participation with Mountain C.A.R.E. helps to support the education and environmental work we do in the communities of Forest Falls, Angelus Oaks, and Mountain Home Village. It helps to create this Bear Facts newsletter which keeps our communities up to date on local events and important issues. We are a non-profit organization working with volunteers. All donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law and gratefully appreciated. Your donations keep this publication and all Mountain C.A.R.E. activities going strong. Thank you for all your support!

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