The BEAR FACTS

A publication of Mountain C.A.R.E. (http://www.mtncare.net) Winter 2026 Volume 20 Issue 4

The Dynamics of Our Forest Falls Post Office

by Katherine Valbuena

Happy Holidays, Forest Falls community! Another holiday season is upon us, and we are so honored to deliver your holiday gifts this year! We take pride in helping this community connect with family and friends in different states, countries, and military bases around the world. With the influx of new residents in town, we wanted to inform and update you all on our little Post Office here in Forest Falls. We've been operating out of this building since 1960.

Many post masters and clerks have come and gone.

Our current crew members include Francisco, who is our postmaster and has held this position since 2022. He is from Riverside and has worked for the postal service for over 20 years. He started his career as a letter carrier and advanced to supervisor. This is his first postmaster position, and he cannot be more grateful to serve this community. Speaking of serving, he is a veteran and fought in the Iraq war in 2003. He is always eager to help and solve

problems for all mountain community members.

Our previous carrier, Rob, retired in January of this year. Replacing him is the wife and husband duo, Jenn and Joe, aka Peak Dispatch. Most of the time Joe is the one delivering your mail, and he also delivers to Angelus Oaks. A retired deputy sheriff from LA County, Joe is extremely caring and attentive.

And I'm Katie, your postal clerk. I started in the postal service 12 years ago on Long Island, New York. I have lived in California and have worked at this office since 2019. I cannot believe it has been 7 years! But time sure does fly. We've been through so many difficult and trying times in this community. From the pandemic, the El Dorado fires, snowmageddon, multiple power outages, and a few mudslides… It's been an interesting few years for me as someone from the east coast. But even though we've all been through a lot, it makes us stronger in the end. We appreciate all of you in town and all the friendships that we've made. Forest Falls is truly a special hidden gem on this Earth, and it is a pleasure working here because of all of you.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Forest Falls Post Office hours

Our operating window hours are Monday thru Friday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. We are closed for lunch from 12:30 pm to1:30 pm. Our lobby is open 24/7 for P.O. Box mail pick up. We are closed Saturdays and Sundays.

What time is my mail delivered?

Our delivery time for P.O. Box mail is by 2:30 pm.

Our carriers deliver the mail to the street mailboxes anywhere from 11am to 2 pm.

When does outgoing mail go down the hill?

Our collection boxes are picked up at 2 pm, Monday thru Friday and Saturdays at 10:30 am. So, if you get it to us before then, it will go out that same day.

How can I prevent mail theft from my mailbox?

We are all aware of the continual mail theft in town. It is truly a shame that this happens in such a small community. The best advice that we can give is to pick up your mail every day. If your mailbox is empty, it will deter anyone from repeating this offense. You might also consider getting a locking mailbox. This way only you will have access to it. Lastly, you can always open a P.O. Box either here in Forest Falls, or in any of our neighboring post offices. Of course, this

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Editor's Message

by Pat Daniels

My Sappy Romance with Fall & Winter – Cheers to all!



I hope you've noticed over your short- or long-term residency here throughout Forest Falls—how beautiful our trees are and how the leaves change into fantastic and brilliant colors. Sometimes it takes my breath away—and I am in awe of my romantic connection with Mother Nature in Forest Falls. Music plays a huge part in my romantic seasonal discovery, as well—from jazz and classical to pop and rock...

When I attended Cal State University, San Marcos, I studied Romanticism. Since that time, I embrace the values of growth, change, and diversity, etc. As a hopeless romantic, which may seem kind of 'sappy,' I continue to discover things about myself and our environment in our mountain communities. Seeing the seasons change and listening to various types of music brings out the romance in me.

With that said, I enjoy and heed what our columnists share in each Bear Facts edition including the ads. I am really thrilled to see new articles debut from folks like Joe Gossett, Marco Delgado, Mrs. Rachel Lynn, et al. All of the seasonal material submitted to Bear Facts reflects growth, change, and diversity with a musical touch.

I give kudos to Veronica Hampton, the founder of Southpaw Rescue – you-go-girl!! And most of all, much appreciation to Deby Anderson, our fearless leader of Graffiti Busters, who goes far and beyond to fight the battle of covering/removing graffiti from our precious surroundings… Please join me in donating whatever you can to Graffiti Busters. To make donations, please refer to her article in this edition for information of where donations can be submitted.

Cheers to all of you who observe this holiday season! Please be safe – and I hope you attend and enjoy the holiday events in our mountain community. See you next year – until then, I might reminisce over the lyrics of "My Romance" by Ella Fitzgerald (circa 1956), Doris Day's version of "Autumn Leaves" (circa 1956), a version of "Winter Wonderland" by Sarah McLachlan (circa 2016), and another version of "Winter Wonderland" by the Eurhythmics (circa 1987).

Ciao!



Mountain C.A.R.E.

President's Message

by Debi Welch



Hello, Friends and Neighbors!

After one of the most glorious autumns I can remember in many years, I'm ready for the Holidays! I wonder if it will be a White Christmas this year.

Our first event of the season will be the Christmas Parade 2026 presented by the Forest Falls Firefighters on Saturday, December 5th starting at 6pm. In downtown Forest Falls we will be serving hot cocoa in anticipation of Santa stopping to say hello to all the parade watchers. Please join us for a little holiday cheer and support our local firefighters during this annual fun-filled and wonderful event. The parade goes through lower canyon first, and works its way up, and we will have Gillmore open and ready for Santa, his Elves, and maybe even Mrs. Claus to arrive.

Once again, the annual toy drive is going on for our mountain communities. Please do support this special event that ensures children 0-12 years old have presents. You can drop off new unwrapped toys at The Elkhorn General Store; the box is there and already has some toys in it.

If you have a little extra to give, please consider donating to the Forest Falls food pantry so that everyone can have a warm holiday meal. We're hoping for shelf stable items, canned ham, boxed mashed potatoes, cranberry relish, and other things that can be turned into a warm and hearty dinner. If you can't get to the pantry, please bring food donations to Gillmore Real Estate; we are open 7 days a week from 9 am to 5 pm. Or if you're too busy to shop, a monetary donation to the Forest Falls food pantry is always welcomed. Many families and seniors count on this program, so please give from the heart!

May the spirit of the season fill your hearts with joy!

As always, thank you for supporting MOUNTAIN C.A.R.E. We couldn't do it without you!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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comes with a fee, but it might give you peace of mind knowing your mail is locked in the post office – safe from thieves.

Books and Items in our lobby:

Our lobby counter is a mini library for our town! Please feel free to take one or leave one. If you see something you like, grab it while you can as it most likely will be gone on your next visit.

Please do not leave any clothing or food items. We all know how active the bears have been this year, and we do not want them to visit our post office lobby.

How should I address my mail?

Please address mail and packages (including Amazon) in the traditional format such as the following:

Your full name (no nick names; use first and last names only)
1234 Main St
Forest Falls, CA 92339

If you have a P.O. Box, your mailing address is your P.O. Box number, not your physical address. Your mail should be addressed to your P.O. Box – for example:

PO Box 9998
Forest Falls CA 92339

What if I have a P.O. Box and the shipper will not let me use my P.O. Box number as a mailing address?

Please address mail and packages (including Amazon) in the traditional format, for example:

Your full name (no nicknames; use first and last names only)
1234 Main St. (your street address) #9998 (your P.O. Box number)
Forest Falls CA 92339

Or you can always use address line 2 on your mail and packages:

1234 Main St.
P.O. Box 9998
Forest Falls CA 92339

This makes it a lot easier for us to deliver your mail swiftly without it being delayed, mis-delivered, or returned. Although Francisco and I are knowledgeable with most of your names and P.O. Boxes in town, there are days when we might have a substitute employee from a different office. They will be unfamiliar with the office mail and consequently, your mail could possibly be returned if not addressed correctly. So, the safest way to protect your mail is by using your mailing address on your mail and packages, not your physical home address.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us during business hours at: 909-794-2329.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience. We look forward to seeing you—and be safe!

The Attraction of Forest Falls

by Joe Gossett

Twenty-six years ago, I purchased a Van Horn log cabin at the corner of Oak and Valley of the Falls. I was attracted to Forest Falls by the scenic beauty, the majestic trees, and even the occasional bear. Over the next few years, I enjoyed my mountain home and the mountain village lifestyle. I began to realize the true attraction of Forest Falls was not limited to the creative homes of this unique community but rather to its people. Forest Falls residents were willing to help each other and build a cooperative community.

My life evolved, and a few years later, new jobs took me away from Forest Falls. But I decided to maintain my connection to this special place. I rented out my small cabin, which allowed me to return for annual visits. These brief visits confirmed my belief that the people of Forest Falls are its strongest attraction. I was reminded of this fact during a recent visit; however, it was by an unfortunate exception to this opinion.

I had parked my van RV by the side of the road next to my cabin to help prepare the cabin for a new tenant. I got as far off the road as possible, but I admit part of my van was still on the road. Several cars and trucks went by without a problem, but someone decided this parked vehicle was impeding traffic. Instead of asking me to move the van, they contacted the Highway Patrol, who arrived by motorcycle from San Bernardino. The patrolman offered a few ideas that improved the traffic flow, and we both thought the situation had been resolved. A day or two later, the patrolman returned to report that the complaint was made again. I moved the van out of the area and allowed others to complete the preparations for the new tenant without my involvement. While involving law enforcement seemed appropriate to the person making the complaint, the normal response in Forest Falls would have been to ask me to move the van. In a more urban environment where most people don't know their neighbors, involving an outside authority may be appropriate. In Forest Falls, however, involving an outside authority in this case I believe is simply not necessary.

I do not know the identity of the complainant, but I was again reminded of the true attraction of Forest Falls. This unique community consists primarily of people who are always willing to help each other. When a rare exception to this reality pops up, we are reminded of the best part of our small mountain town. In Forest Falls neighbors help each other in an open, friendly manner. Being a good neighbor is not required in Forest Falls; it is just something we do. For me, keeping a connection to Forest Falls was, and still is, a good idea.

To all residents of:
Angelus Oaks, Mountain Home Village
& Forest Falls

If you have a special event, fundraising activity, a cool mountain fact or story you'd like to share, please submit an article to the Bear Facts. We'd love to include it in an upcoming issue. We're interested in wildlife photos as well. Let us know whats going on in your neck of the woods! bfeditor2025@gmail.com

From the Chili Cookoff to the Search for Bear the Rottweiler

Rich and Enzo's connection to Forest Falls

by Veronica Hampton



At the 2025 Forest Falls Chili Cookoff, Richard "Rich" Becker came to the pet adoption event held at Suzanne Serdahely's house. Rich was looking for a very specific puppy. Among the adoptable dogs was Sargent, a young German Shepherd mix quietly waiting for someone to notice him. Rich noticed. He took the puppy out of his crate, did a quick evaluation and knew he had found the dog he was looking for. Southpaw Rescue was at the event that day. We watched Rich choose the puppy who would be named Sargent Enzo, but we had no idea we would meet them again under much different circumstances.

Recently, Southpaw Rescue was searching for Bear, a young Rottweiler abandoned near Highway 38. Dogs are being dumped far too often in or near our small mountain community, and we knew we needed help bringing this one to safety. Trappers set up a trap, but Bear the Rottweiler had disappeared. The search expanded to include a drone for tracking the dog; Rich's dog, Enzo, was in the search, too.

When I met Rich and Enzo where Bear had last been seen, Rich looked familiar. Then it clicked. This was the man we had watched adopt a puppy at the Chili Cookoff. Standing beside him now was a beautiful, focused, well-trained tracking dog.

Watching Enzo work was something to see. He picked up a scent and went to work, moving with purpose as we followed. He also showed us another part of his training. At the sound of a distinctive rattle near a rock, Enzo jumped back and rerouted us around it. His rattlesnake avoidance training was protecting him and the people walking behind him.

There is something deeply moving about seeing a dog who once waited in a crate for a home become someone's best friend. Enzo has a loving family—and work he does well. Alongside Rich, Enzo helps other animals in need. Rich, owner and operator of Alti Star LLC, loves Forest Falls. When he heard a dog needed help here, he and Enzo came without hesitation.

Sadly, Bear did not get the ending we were working so hard to give him. He was struck by a vehicle and died along Highway 38 before we could bring him to safety. Rich felt that loss as deeply as our town did.

We are working diligently to end the cruel animal dumping in our community. Until we can make that happen, knowing that Rich and Enzo are in our corner means a great deal. Forest Falls was there at the beginning of Rich and Enzo's friendship. When we needed them, they came back to help.

Rich and Enzo, thank you for showing up for Bear the Rottweiler and for caring about our community as much as we do.

To learn more about Rich and Alti Star, visit www.altistar.com.

Rich and Enzo



Some Helpful Phone Numbers

Angelus Oaks Firehouse	**909-794-3227**	**Non-Emergency, AO leave a message.**
CA Highway Patrol	**909-383-4247**	**for Road Conditions**
Code Enforcement	**909-387-4044**	**Illegal Dumping**
Building & Safety	**909-387-4244**	**Building Codes**
So Cal Edison	**800-655-4555**	**Customer Service**
FF Firehouse	**909-794-4413**	**Non-Emergency**
Fish & Wildlife	**909-484-0167**	**for Bear & Lion Issues**
Forest Service USFS	**909-382-2600**	**Forest service property**

CONSIDERING BOOKS

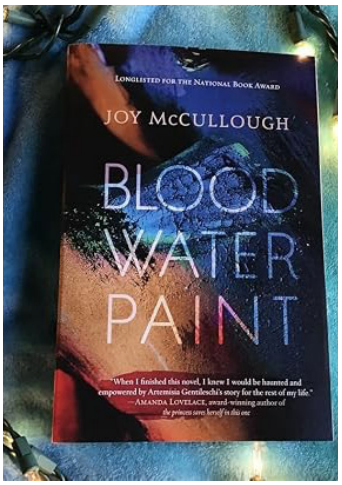
by Katherine Thomerson Bird

BLOOD WATER PAINT

by Joy McCullough

Hello, Mountain Readers!

The title *Blood Water Paint* immediately intrigued me, and I am glad to recommend this historical fiction novel. Based on real events, it introduces the reader to a remarkable artist who, though left out of history books, is found in art books and legal documents. The format of this story is in poetic style, free verse, and prose. You must read the dialogue between characters carefully to capture the depth and power of this story.



Artemisia Gentileschi was a young artist in 17th century Rome. Her life story is not well known in the U.S. though her paintings hang in many European museums. McCullough begins with her early life at 15 to 17 years old. Artemisia's mother dies when Artemisia is 12. She ponders her choices: become a nun or be given away in marriage. However, her father, a known yet unsuccessful artist, allows her instead to become his apprentice. He soon recognizes his daughter's talent and often signs his name to her paintings and sells them as his own. This is all based on historical facts.

Other facts shared in the story are of a trial that was documented but hidden for a time. I don't want to give anything away, but consider that she was beautiful, and at 16 or 17 years old, had to overcome violent trauma in 17th century Rome, where men ruled. Mountain readers, my book is so marked up with the rapture of this story. It's good Patrice has a word limit for this article!

Artemisia says about her art: "But I'm holding back/until I think/ perhaps/my skills/could match/my heart." I love this passage because writers like McCullough use heart to nudge the reader's heart the way Artemisia uses paint! Another passage I marked: "I do not paint in words/flattery/persuasion/ are not colors on my pallet." And this: "I slumbered to sleep with tear-drenched sheets/ and woke to blood streaks of muddy red/on dingy gray/remnants of a pallet/after painting battle fields." Readers will understand the horrific battle fields she fights in this well-researched story, which, unfortunately, is still relevant today.

The short prose sections of the story are the voices of Prudentia, Artemisia's mother, offering her daughter words of wisdom in retelling the apocryphal stories of two strong women, Susanna and Judith. Stories within a story; McCullough is a genius! The author dedicates this book to Cordelia, daughter of Shakespeare's King Lear. This is meaningful because Cordellia was another strong woman who fights for her rights against her father and a society that values men over women. Artemisia is surrounded by despicable villains, a sleezy con artist, her maid who betrays her, and a father who looks the other way, which is heartbreaking.

McCullough writes at the end of the book, "I'll show you what a woman can do." A powerful story about a remarkably strong young woman ignored by history, this book is harrowing, emotional and fascinating. Please read the author's note and see the painting of Artemisia's hands by another artist. For discussion, this book is considered Juvenile Fiction?

Hmmmmm…

Graffiti Busters Definitions of "Fall" (bear with me here):

by Deby Anderson



Here we are again. What will winter bring us this year? Are we faced with flooding? Or maybe record amounts of snow to shovel? All I know for sure is that the graffiti in our beautiful canyon continues to happen whether we like it or not. I can't hike ANYWHERE around here without seeing it. It's not only on rocks. It's on fallen trees, living trees, and signs. There are times when I just need to hike to get my crazy out and then BAM. I see it. And the garbage? Well, that goes without saying. Believe it or not, we have several "Busters" who quietly go out and do what they can on their own. When I'm out surveying the graffiti, I'm always surprised when I see a fresh paint over or notice there isn't much trash. Thank you!

We recently got hit hard around the waterfall. It took several of our Graffiti Busters, working quickly and relentlessly, to get the graffiti covered ASAP. Our message to the taggers is simple: "You tag it, we will paint over it. Take your tagging somewhere else." Ok, so in my mind I use a lot of foul language when thinking about these taggers, but this is a public newsletter…

The Forest Service used to provide paint and trash bags. However, they no longer provide anything. It requires more and more effort, and now it's up to us to purchase the supplies!

I understand that not everyone can physically help remove or paint over what taggers have done or to pick up trash. A lot of the graffiti is in areas very difficult to get to. I'm constantly being told to buy trail cams. Who will buy them? Who will maintain them? Who will work with the Forest Service or County to report what the webcams pick up? It's hard enough to cover over what these taggers do.

One way you can help is to donate to Graffiti Busters via MtnCare. We haven't yet set up the website to take donations, but you can drop off your donation at Gillmore Realty. Make sure to let them know it's specifically for Graffiti Busters. Or, you can text me and I will pick it up. We will take any amount. If we don't come together as a community to deal with this, we will soon look like Lytle Creek. You haven't seen Lytle Creek? Well, you are lucky. It's not pretty… PLEASE do your part and help support this effort. I haven't given up yet!

Linguistics Corner

Patois, Creole & Pidgins – Oh My!

by Jean Delgado

I was pleased to get a question about the distinctions between Patois, Creole, and Pidgins, but let's begin with the terms Language and Dialect. A quick search provides countless definitions, but I like these that I developed while teaching Linguistics at CSUSB. I'll focus on spoken language, but language can be conveyed through gestures and writing, and the definition applies to them also. Language is a system of vocal and gestural symbols through which members of a community interact, communicate, and transmit their culture, conveying thoughts, feelings, intentions, desires, relations of power, and attitudes toward the language of others.

Whew!

When I say, "I speak English," I'm referencing an abstract conception of English. A language manifests itself in spoken forms called dialects. Anyone who speaks English really speaks a dialect of English. All dialects are rule-governed systems of sounds, words, and grammar and are often considered on a scale of standard to non-standard. A standard dialect is a widely known form accepted in institutions, education, and public forums; it's considered a standard for many social and political reasons (not because its inherently "better"). A non- standard dialect is just as important, just as rule-governed, just as logical and expressive and complex as any standard form.

So, what are these other terms—Pidgins, Creoles, and Patois? Let's start with pidgins. A pidgin is a "compromise/extra" language spoken among people who do not share a common language, usually for purposes of trade or war. A pidgin is native to no one and usually dies when the contact among the people ends. For example, during the Vietnam war, an English pidgin developed among Vietnamese and English-speaking service members. They needed to communicate fast and efficiently and would insert foreign words (especially nouns and verbs) into their native language to make themselves understood. But the pidgin did not replace the languages; speakers of both retained their native language. Once the war ended, the pidgin was no longer necessary and died.

If, however, the contact between the two languages is long-lasting (as what happened in colonized countries) the pidgin can develop into a creole. Think of adults who have long-term contact with another language and speak both their native language and a pidgin. For the next generation, the pidgin becomes more important than the parents' native language(s). But the pidgin isn't complex enough for children, so they expand it into a fully systematic language called a creole. The creole is influenced by both pidgin languages, though the more powerful one comes out as dominant. Because of trade history and colonization, we have French, English, Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish creoles all over the world. In the US, we have a Louisiana Creole, which is French dominant with influences from diverse African and Indigenous languages. Like most creoles, it's not considered a dialect of French because its grammar, sound system, and vocabulary differ so much from French.

Want more complications? "Hawaiian Pidgin" is actually a creole formed from pidgins that cropped up among Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Philippines, and others who labored on the sugar cane and pineapple plantations. The initial pidgin, with Hawaiian and English as its dominant languages, expanded and solidified into a creole. But speakers and outsiders alike called it Hawaiian Pidgin, and the name is still used today, though the preferred term among linguists is Hawai'i Creole English.

What about patois? Most commonly it refers to the everyday, informal spoken form of a regional non-standard dialect, chiefly one that has pidgin or creole roots. But it is also a catch-all term for creoles and pidgins! For example, what is commonly called "Jamaican Patois" is technically Jamaican Creole. You can see where the confusions lie!

Sociologically, pidgins, creoles, patois and non-standard dialects in general have been maligned by the powerful ruling classes (who conveniently denied education and literacy to those speakers). But through social justice, education, and human decency, these non-standard forms of language are increasingly being regarded as what they really are: complex, rule- governed language systems that are essential to maintaining a culture and a people and that help linguists understand how languages are formed and how they develop.

Local Poetry

Residing Outside a Childhood

by Juan Delgado

The boy's widening house has no door,
and its floor is unfolding—an immensity
spreading, blanketing his grandparents,
then pressing his rib cage from the inside out
like hunger pangs.
Still, the widening house has no roof,
no shielding or gathering around a table.
The boy is intimate with this widening
that blurs after a lifetime of downpours,
but once entering, he recalls the embrace
of a winter coat, stranded, hanging near its door.

Check out the town & road conditions on the

Mountain C.A.R.E. Web Cams



Valley of the Falls Community Church



DARK SKY Ordinance

San Bernardino County's Dark Sky Ordinance (officially the Light Trespass Ordinance) requires unincorporated mountain and desert properties (like Forest Falls, Angelus Oaks and Mountain Home Village) to fully shield outdoor fixtures and implement an 11:00 p.m. curfew on non-essential exterior lighting.

4 ACTIONS TO TAKE

Lights Must Be Directed Downward.
Lights Out @ 11PM
Light Trespass to Neighbor's Yard @ 0.1 feet.
Motion Sensor lights - time on restricted to five minutes.

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Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus

Invite You and Your Family
To Join them at Big Falls Lodge on
Saturday December 12, 2026

For Breakfast with Santa

8 am to 11 am

Mrs. Santa will be helping children write letters to Santa!

Children can have pictures taken with **Santa Claus** next to the Christmas tree!

Children 5 and under will eat free!

We acknowledge the Fallsvale Booster Club that provided us this opportunity to serve our community with this event.

Look for more details on Facebook pages such as:
Forest Falls Community Cares / Forest Falls, California / and more



Watch Out For The Mistletoe

by Jan Horton, President FGTGC

Mistletoe, a familiar symbol of the Christmas season, is actually a parasitic plant that thrives in our mountains. It grows on a variety of trees, drawing nutrients and water from its host. While mistletoe is capable of photosynthesis, its dependence on the host varies. When the plant appears yellowish with small leaves, it relies heavily on the host for nourishment and performs little photosynthesis on its own. In contrast, mistletoe with vigorous green stems and leaves can actively photosynthesize, often overtaking the host tree. In severe cases, it can kill the tree's crown and replace it with its own growth, leading to stunted development, branch dieback, increased susceptibility to insects and disease, and ultimately, tree death.



Mistletoe spreads primarily through birds, either by direct contact or through their droppings. The seeds are coated with a sticky substance that allows them to adhere easily to rough bark, where they germinate and begin to grow.

To manage mistletoe, prune the infected branches at least 6 to 12 inches below the point of attachment. If the parasite is located on a major limb, remove the limb flush with the bark and cover the cut scar tightly with heavy black plastic to block sunlight; this method may take one to two years to be effective. In cases of light infestation within reach, simply removing the leafy portions can help prevent further spread by stopping seed production. Because mistletoe tends to thrive on weakened trees, maintaining overall tree health through proper watering and fertilization is an important preventive measure.



There are at least four types of mistletoe found in our mountain regions, including dwarf mistletoe, the most destructive variety. Unlike other species, dwarf mistletoe does not rely on birds for dispersal. Instead, it forcibly ejects its seeds, propelling them onto nearby trees and accelerating its spread. In areas with significant infestation, experts often recommend removing heavily infected trees to protect the surrounding forest. As indicated in one of Mountain C.A.R.E.'s Vice President Terry Hamilton's articles, such efforts can be both necessary and challenging.

Fortunately, trained professionals in our community are available to help manage and contain this harmful parasite. You can contact Forest Ecologist, Jocelyn Perez, who is with the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD), a public agency. Surveys, recommendations, and tree removals can be arranged with homeowner's approval.

For more information contact Jocelyn Perez at 909-654-5774, or email jperez@iercd.org



Forest Falls Mountain Jamboree a Great Success!

by Nick Shades

Fall 2026 was a wonderful time to bring back the Forest Falls Mountain Jamboree at the Big Falls Lodge! The weather on September 19 was bright and calm, the food and vendors were tremendous, the bands were hot, and the drinks were cold and plentiful!

The Valley of the Falls Community Center, Inc. (VFCCI) extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who volunteered, attended, or supported the event financially and materially. It could not have happened without you.

The Mountain Jamboree is one of many events that allows the Mill Creek Canyon community to connect while raising essential funds for the maintenance, mortgage, and management of the Big Falls Lodge. While final numbers are still being calculated, proceeds from sales and donations have already exceeded $5,000!

Beyond funding future social events, the Big Falls Lodge relies on these proceeds to cover ongoing operational costs—including utilities, insurance, taxes, and maintenance. This support ensures that local groups like Monday Music Night, the Frozen Green Thumb Garden Club, the Forest Falls Frozen Bookworms Book Club, CERT, and the Dragon's Eye Gaming Club continue to have a home.

Thank you again, Mill Creek Canyon family and friends, for your generous support! Let's Keep On Dancin'!

BTW, what activity would you like to see next at the Big Falls Lodge? I look forward to hearing your suggestions via email (nickshades@gmail.com), Facebook, or at Music Night!

To Build or Not Build? A Cautionary Tale, Part Four

by Terry Hamilton

We decided to live in our log cabin while the 800+ square-foot addition was constructed on the back. Including the mandatory carport on the ground level, the addition was three stories tall. Two parts codiverged several feet out from the first level to comply with the latest 15-foot fire set-back. It was a challenging build. Fortunately, contractor Jim Kirk was up for the challenge.

After digging the foundation, Kirk added twice the amount of rebar and twice the amount of concrete than called for by the county and engineered plan. Contractor Kirk insisted on this change of plans. Getting concrete trucks to come to the mountains at market price proved less possible. But all was completed in short order after some choice language.

Specialists were called for framing. The framing crew had a lot of excuses: they would work for a few days and make excellent progress, then start leaving early or not showing up at all, to the consternation of Contractor Kirk. (We were watching the uneven progress from our original log cabin.) Finally, Kirk had had enough. He made it plain that they had to finish. So they topped off the walls with premade trusses that accommodated the designed vaulted ceilings. The framing was completed a full month late.

Next came the roof, followed by wiring, plumbing, and HVAC venting. Kirk's secret weapons, the "BBs," Brent and Brandon (a father-and-son team) were fast with the electrical wiring and piping. Nathan did the HVAC venting and added on to our previously installed blower and propane furnace.

A staircase specialist knocked out two flights of new stairs in just one day. It was fast. We were going to do the tile and painting ourselves but decided to pay extra to get us back on schedule. We chose a durable carpet to help keep the floors warm. The addition was starting to look exactly like everything that John had planned.

Afterward, it was time to move into the new addition master suite while the original 1986 log cabin was remodeled. The first remodel step was the demolition of the upstairs bathroom starting with cutting the shower bath unit in pieces. Next came the bedroom closet, the floor, and finally the horrible staircase that had divided the whole cabin in half. Finally, the half bath and laundry room were removed from the main floor to give us a much bigger kitchen with a large island.



Imported white cabinets were assembled and installed quickly by the BBs. We got under cabinet lighting and a strip of electric outlets to keep the quartz backsplash uncluttered. John designed two appliance garages that were recessed into the back wall to keep the standing mixer and toaster oven out of sight. He also added a trash shoot hole in the top of the quartz countertop island and a trash cabinet underneath – so convenient to throughout the day.



We installed recessed lighting in the kitchen, dining area, and new vaulted living room The lighting can be adjusted to fit the mood. Skylights now open the new ceiling to the sky, and the north window gives us a peek at Big Falls from the guest loft, which has its own private bath.

All was finally completed. It took several years, but our vision finally became real.

Would we recommend that you build? Ask us one year from now.

Parts 1-3 of these Cautionary Tales are available at: www.mtncare.net (Bear Facts)

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Don't Dis Dandelions

BioBotanicals by Becky, LLC
A.k.a. Rebecca Lyons, PhD

As an herbalist, I will never understand why dandelions are so vilified. They are cute and pretty in the summer when they bloom. and they offer us not only food but potent medicine as well. Yet they are the recipient of so much ire. Maybe I can change that. You see, you can use every part of the dandelion in some capacity. We will start with the top and work our way down.

In the spring, the tight buds on the dandelion are delicious. Get them before they start to open up. Boil them for a minute or two, add a little butter and salt, and they taste amazing. They are high in fiber and offer trace minerals like zinc and copper. The leaves are both food and medicine. The taste of "bitter" is not usually acceptable to the American palette, but you may learn to love it. "Bitter" stimulates digestive enzymes and help you prepare for the main course. This is why bitter greens like arugula are so often served as a first course. But dandelion greens, especially picked early in the season, are a wonderful substitute for grocery store greens. As the leaves get older and the bitter alkaloids are more concentrated, they can be tinctured in ethanol (like vodka) and used for unsettled stomachs or poor appetites. Just a few drops of a concentrated tincture will do the trick.

And the roots? Well, I could rhapsodize about the roots. They can be toasted like chicory and brewed as a tea. For people weaning off coffee or just trying to cut back a bit, the roasty aroma can help you break free of the bean. But the real superpower here is the support that the root offers to the liver and kidneys. People ask me often about detoxing. If you want to detox, stop eating fast food and support your liver with dandelion root tea. It can be as easy as that. It is gentle enough for people with more serious kidney issues and helps the body break down and eliminate toxins. I mean, who's liver couldn't use a little love these days? Be sure to wash your dandelions well, as people have a tendency to want to spray them with poisons. And as always, this article is for entertainment and educational purposes only and should not be used as medical advice.



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The Bear Facts is sent out in Mar, Jun, Sep, & Dec. Do you have a mountain event coming up that would benefit by being included in an upcoming issue? The Mountain C.A.R.E volunteer staff gets excited every time the Bear Facts goes out to our three mountain communities, and to our canyon property owners who live elsewhere. Perhaps you would like to help with the newsletter's production. Would you like to subscribe? Our valuable subscribers are folks who support The Bear Facts with a $15.00 donation once a year. Our volunteer's names are on the front of this Bear Facts issue. We all are accessible. If you have an article or calendar entry for TheBear Facts, contact Pat Daniels bfeditor2025@gmail.com

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The Bear Facts - Release Dates

Next Submission

DEADLINE: Feb 1st

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 bfeditor2025@gmail.com on or before the submission deadline (all submissions digital and layout ready please). For questions send an email to bfeditor2025@gmail.com

Community Events & Activities Calendar

Angelus Oaks - Forest Falls - Mountain Home Village

Winter 2026 - 2027 Special Events

What	When	Where	Info
Fire Truck Christmas Parade	Saturday, December 5th at 6pm	The village of Forest Falls	Decorated local and guest Fire Trucks will be lit up and driving through town spreading joy and happiness.
Breakfast with Santa	Saturday December 12th 8:00 a.m.	Big Falls Lodge	VFCCI will host Breakfast with Santa from 8am to 11 am. Featuring a Pancake toppings bar, letters to Santa, and family photos with Mr. & Mrs. Claus.
Canyon Clean Up	Saturday, May 8th 8am to 11am	Locations are throughout Forest Falls	Old cinder pile lot aka Bighorn Flats, the Lot across from BFL, and Fallsvale School for E-Waste.

Regularly Scheduled Events

What	When	Where	Info
Angelus Oaks Fire Department	2nd & 4th Tuesday each month at 6 pm	Angelus Oaks Fire Station (98)	Meeting starts at 6:00 pm
Forest Falls Fire Department	Tuesdays at 6:30 pm	Forest Falls Fire Station (99)	Meeting starts at 6:30 pm
AO Fire Safe Council Community Meeting	4th Thursday of even months	Angelus Oaks Fire Station (98)	Meeting starts at 6:30 pm
Angelus Oaks GCERT	3rd Thursday of each month	Angelus Oaks Fire Station (98)	Meetings start at 6:00 pm
ZOOM with Angela Andiorio	Fridays 9:30-10:30 a.m.	Fallsvale School	Details TBA
Music Night in Forest Falls	Mondays at 6:30-9:30 pm	Big Falls Lodge	We're back baby!! All Musicians, all styles, all levels are welcome, and anyone can come to play or just come to listen.
Forest Falls Frozen Bookworms Book Club	3rd Sunday of each month	Big Falls Lodge	Join us for some lively discussions about books, books & books! The book club meeting starts at 2p.m.
The Needlers Knitting Group	Tuesday Mornings	7th Day Adventist Church, Forest Falls	9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Contact Denis Reid 1-909-794-5130.
Frozen Green Thumb Garden Club Meeting	3rd Monday of each month	Big Falls Lodge	11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. All are welcome.
Game Night (featuring Dungeons & Dragons)	Every other Thursday	Big Falls Lodge	Join us for loads of fun on Game Night from 6:30 to 9:30 pm

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Volume 20 Issue 4 Winter 2026



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
community areas clean and beautiful.

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-deductable as permitted by law and gratefully appreciated. Your donations keep this publication and all Mountain C.A.R.E. activities going stong. Thank you for all your support!

We have a commitment to each other and all our mountain communities.
Please join us in that commitment by sending any donations to:
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