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January 2025

CALENDAR

Saturday February 15th Valentine Potluck

Bring your honey and a potluck dish to share and beverages for yourself. Hosts Bonnie & Tim Calhoon

6:30pm at the Schoolhouse

March 1st & 2nd Museum Weekend

Special Presentations on the Covered Bridge and Gold Mining in Butte Creek Canyon
10am - 4pm at the Schoolhouse & Museum

Saturday March 15th Potluck

Bring a potluck dish to share and beverages if you like!

6:30pm at the Schoolhouse



Karaoke Potluck

Discover the hidden talents of your Canyon neighbors.



You may even be inspired to become a star yourself.



After a sumptuous feast with time to catch up and enjoy the company of neighbors, Karaoke and a contest for best entertainer will top off the evening. Show off your talent and win a prize!

Bring a potluck dish to share and a beverage for yourself.

**The Colman Museum is Open
Saturdays & Sundays 1-4 pm**

Centerville
Recreation & Historical Association
13548 Centerville Road

Saturday January 18th, 6:30pm
Centerville Schoolhouse



SANTA GETS A FIRE TRUCK FOR CHRISTMAS

From now on Santa is going to be extra special good to Laura and Jerry Douglas...When Santa asked them to get the old red fire truck running cause Santa needed a ride to the Centerville Schoolhouse to get lists from all the boys and girls from the canyon, they jumped into action ...got the beautiful old truck shined up and running just in time for Santa's visit!

Santa loves his reindeer and sleigh, but the special red truck was the perfect ride for the December 8th celebration.

FIREWISE NEWS

Canyon residents can now download their Firewise certificate by going to: <https://buttefiresafe.net/firewise-usa/>. The certificate can be used with various insurance companies, including the FAIR Plan, to obtain insurance discounts. Another benefit to living in a designated Firewise community, is that insurers have stated they are re-entering the area's market-- starting with Firewise communities.

Speaking of insurance, here is the full press release from State Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara's office. Essentially, insurance companies are being incentivized to return (and already have returned!) to Butte County. They'll get to cherry-pick customers, and, you guessed it--they're starting with residents who have homes and yards in proper "fire safe" shape.

<https://www.insurance.ca.gov/0400-news/0100-press-releases/2024/release062-2024.cfm>

HOLIDAY SALE

Our annual Holiday Sale on December 8th was a huge success! Our shoppers found gifts for all of the people on their lists, and the Museum and Schoolhouse benefited by their generosity! It was a fun day with Santa, shoppers, a fire pit for smore making and warming hands, special holiday drinks by the fire pit, and an ugly sweater contest with several brave contestants! There were unique gifts for all ages, and delicious pies, cakes, cookies, and cocoa to purchase, and free drinks and chili for our shoppers.

A big thank you to all of you that contributed items for our sale and for coming to shop. It was a fun event for old and young community members!



DESSERT AUCTION

The Happy Thanksgiving Dessert Auction was very Successful! Desserts were made, Desserts were purchased..Stories were told ..some were true....some were not. At the end of the night everyone was fat and happy and ready for upcoming Christmas season. Thank you to all that participated in the fun event.

WALT'S RAIN REPORT

Walt Schafer

Rainfall in calendar year 2024 totaled 67.98 inches, the 7th most over the past 42 years I have been measuring, just above the Centerville Cemetery at 1100'. Not unusual was that only .4 inch fell, all in one day, over the 5 1/2 months between late April and mid-October. Predictably, heaviest rain months were January, November, December, topped by November with 16.77 (remember that storm?)

A GHOST STORY

Terrence Hoffman

Mel said a ghost would appear if I sat on the bed in the mayor's house. He said to wait on the old box springs until it was dark. I might also hear the sounds of a child crying out in the distance, or it could just be the wind or, more likely, a mountain lion.

The mayor's house was to be found among the remnants of old Helltown, down at the bottom of Butte Creek Canyon. The idea of descending from Paradise into Helltown stirred my imagination.

Mel had recently started working as my fellow gas station attendant. It was 1963, and Chuck's Texaco Station was at the corner of Clark and Pearson. I was seventeen.

Mel was in his mid-forties and appeared to have had a rough life. His features were weather-beaten as if sand-blasted to the sinews essential to holding his bones together. He was a stranger and strange enough for me to believe the far-fetchedness of his tale might contain a mystery worth pursuing.

It didn't take much to interest several of my Bobcat classmates. Besides sports, I think the most exciting thing we ever did back then was jumping off the high rocks at Nelson's Bar. We were late bloomers.

Soon, the four of us were navigating the cable footbridge across Butte Creek on our way to Helltown. It was getting dark. We walked through a field of dry grass, which threw off a silvery light as it shimmered with the night breeze. We joked about the foolishness of a hunt for ghosts until the moment we saw the house.

Picture a tattered, beaten down, clapboard two-story with dark, broken-out windows and enough personality left to lend credibility to the idea it might still be inhabited. After calling out our "Hello?" we swung open the rusty screen door and cautiously entered. We noted the old woodstove, peeling wallpaper, and pieces of a broken chair scattered across the floor. It wasn't lost on us that these were remnants of souls departed. With flashlights, we tiptoed through a hall to what we figured was the mayor's bedroom because there was indeed an old metal frame bed with rusted springs.



The Haunted House!

As we were deciding how to strategically sit on that skeleton of a bed, we noticed that one of our party members was missing. We laughed and called out for Dave and got no response. We eventually started yelling for him with some uncomplimentary profanities meant to convince him that his absence was not funny. My heart raced as I searched through the house and up some rickety stairs, where I finally found him crouched behind a shelf, snickering. Unfortunately, Dave lost a lot of respect that night.

As our nervous laughter subsided, we settled against the old bed and began vigil. We cracked our jokes and shushed ourselves and waited and waited. The broken window across from us framed the dark night, and nothing much was happening until... we heard twigs cracking right outside the house. We got very quiet. The silhouette of what looked like a head appeared in the window, moving very slowly, finally revealing itself to be a cow. A scream may have been heard echoing in the canyon, or maybe the sound of a child crying, or a mountain lion, or a bobcat.

Thanks to Mel and that cow, we acquired a somewhat funny true story that we could tell ad nauseam to friends and family. Concerning historical accuracy and the lives of early canyon pioneers, I learned years later that the house we entered was initially built in the mid-1850s by John Nicholl and his family. They raised fruit and vegetables on their farm, about a quarter mile from the mining community of Helltown. The house was torn down in the late 1960s, and, like Helltown, nothing of it remains.

Butte Creek Canyon



Honey Run Covered Bridge ■ Colman Museum ■ Centerville Schoolhouse



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Phone: (530) 893-9667 **Facebook:** @Centerville Schoolhouse @HRCBA