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Travel on a tank of gas: Explore nature

By Cathy Willingham: Mid-Valley Publishing

Summer is rapidly coming to a close, and it's almost time to send the kids back to school. Have you been too busy or financially stressed to plan that much needed vacation?

With the excuse of writing this article, "Travel on one tank of gas," I discovered a magical place you only dream about.



At the last minute I went online and found Paradise Springs Resort. I was able to reserve the Bear Cottage for three nights and it turned out to be the most peaceful and beautiful place I have ever stayed.

Paradise Resort is a new five star resort only one and a half hours from Fowler at 5,200 elevation surrounded by majestic redwood and cedar trees.

Just up the road from Bass Lake it offers the option of Yosemite and Bass Lake as visiting points, if you can manage to pull yourself away from your cottage.

The resort was built recently, set on the site of an old 100 acre church camp.

There are four cottages, spaced widely apart, and their showcase, The Villa, is built to sleep up to 40 people. It has a large industrial kitchen, two propane barbeques, a huge deck and is perfect for a family reunion, business retreat or wedding party.

I spoke to the Martinez, Torres, Gonzalez and Cornetiuz families who were staying at the Villa while I was there.

Tony Martinez said, "All together being with the whole family was the best part. It is beautiful here and I've had a great time. I wish we could never leave."

Another family member, Paul Torres said, "The pictures and video don't do it justice. But the best part was getting the family under one roof. We had all ages here, 93 to 2 1/2 years old. The kids were having so much fun they didn't ever care that we didn't go down

to Bass Lake for the fireworks."

Paradise Springs also specializes in weddings. At the Bella Pavilion you have a large room for guests, a comfy seating area and an huge kitchen. Across the street is the outdoor pavilion, complete with wedding gazebo, sparkling lights and a large shaded area for tables and dancing.

If you are planning to say your I do's, this would be a fantastic place for a wedding. The manager, Rhonda, can set up everything for you.

Attached to the back of the Bella Pavilion is the Enchanted Cottage, a perfect honeymoon spot. It has a gorgeous deck with propane barbeque, a living room with wood burning stove, large kitchen and spacious bedroom and bathroom.

The peaceful, beautiful and majestic atmosphere is ideal for ensuring a memorable honeymoon.

While at the resort I stayed in the Bear Cottage. On the outside it's rather unassuming, but inside it was spacious, well furnished and amazing. It sleeps four, has one private bedroom and bathroom and a sleeper sofa in the living room.

When was the last time you went to the mountains to camp and didn't work yourself to death to get ready?

Well, Paradise Springs is a dream come true for those who love the mountains. All you have to bring is your food. Below the Bear Cottage was a large fire pit complete with benches and firewood. From our deck I could sit outside and see the stars and listen to the night creatures. This cottage was not only affordable but just plain perfect.

Larger cottages are available for bigger families and or friends. Available is the Lake House (my favorite), and the Hansel and Gretel Cottage.

The stony Lake House sleeps eight with its own fire pit and a covered outdoor table and chairs area.

The Hansel and Gretel sleeps nine and is just as captivating as the Lake House.

If you need to get away and be with your family I highly recommend this resort.

For more information go to: www.paradiseparkmountain.com or call Rhonda at (559) 683-7162 .