

Napa County pumpkin patch fun

Stanly Lane Pumpkin Patch
3100 Golden Gate Drive
Napa
Open daily, 9 a.m. to dusk

Big Ranch Farms pumpkin patch
2046 Big Ranch Road
Napa
Open daily except Monday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
812-3901

Pick of the Patch Pumpkins
4225 Broadway
American Canyon
408-393-6303
Sunday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Vintage High School pumpkin patch
1185 Sierra Ave.
Napa
Open 10/16, 10/17, 10/23, 10/24 and 10/30, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St. Helena FFA pumpkin patch
1109 Silverado Trail
St. Helena
Open Saturday and Sunday in October, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Bales of hay are stacked to make a hay pyramid for climbing at the Stanly Lane Pumpkin Patch in Napa this past weekend. Local pumpkin patches are open for business as the fall holiday season is quickly approaching. *Lisa James/Register photos*

Pumpkin

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40-foot-long, corrugated black plastic culvert pipe.

Sliders climb to the top of the pyramid to slip down the ribbed chute. This is the second year he's installed the slide. "That was my dream last year to put that in there," he said.

Most sliders were pint-sized kids, but a few brave moms and dads also made the descent down the dark tube, some whooping it up for effect.

"It's cool," said Sara Hutchens of Napa. Hutchens had brought her son Barron, 6, to try out the slide and wander among the hay bales and pumpkins.

Sliding down with her son between her legs, the two landed with a bit of a bump in the dusty gravel, but Barron was game to try again.

Logan Hunter, 8, of Napa visited the Stanly Lane patch Wednesday afternoon with his grandma, Judy Reynolds of Napa. "We came to play on the giant pyramid, and I met a new friend named Ben and we had lunch here," said Logan somewhat breathlessly.

The family had picked out nine pumpkins to take home, Reynolds said. She wanted to bring Logan and his twin sister "to play outside and do something seasonal. We've been coming here since they were 9 months old. It's a tradition now," she said.

Not to mention that "my granddaughter goes wild for these animals," she said.

Reynolds was referring to the two goats, one cow

The farmer estimated he'd sell more than 900 bins of pumpkins this month. Each bin fits about 700 pounds of pumpkins in 60 different varieties.

and eight piglets that also make the farm their home for about a month.

As if picking up the energy from the visitors, the piglets began madly chasing one another in a circle.

One of the goats started nibbling at some netting over its pen while Lucky the cow rested on a pile of straw.

Sharma Galeotti of American Canyon said she's been a visitor at the patch for the past nine years. Galeotti said she likes "the fall feel" of the patch and that kids can run in between the cornstalks and sunflowers.

When asked what kind of pumpkin she would choose, daughter Megan Galeotti, 9, pointed out the wide variety and many colors, shapes and sizes of pumpkins. "They even have blue, pink and purple," she said.

"And there's warty ones," added her friend Sophia Thomas, 8.

"We love it here," said Ingrid Thomas of American Canyon. While Thomas and her family live closer to a seasonal pump-



Decorated pumpkins are stacked by the register at Stanly Lane Pumpkin Patch as families searched for their pumpkins this past weekend.

kin patch near the Walmart in American Canyon, she prefers the Stanly Lane patch. "This seems more mom-and-pop," she said.

Mom-and-pop was right on the money. Behind the cash register stood Wilcoxson's mother, Louise.

"Kids love the slide," Louise Wilcoxson said. "Lucky the cow is back," on loan from the nearby "Oreo cow" farm.

Admission to the patch is free, and pumpkin prices start at \$1. The patch sells pumpkins for eating, too, as well as gourds and squash, Louise Wilcoxson said.

Billy Wilcoxson said he chooses not to charge admission to his patch, unlike other such ventures.

"There's a lot of families that don't have money" to pay for a visit, he said. "I try to make everybody happy."

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On Wednesday, as the sun set lower on the horizon, groups of kids continued to eagerly climb and slide down the chute. Nearby, parents took photos of kids on rusty tractors, a giant anchor and on top of piles of pumpkins.

The piglets, apparently worn out from their impromptu race, all slumbered under the shade of a sun canopy.



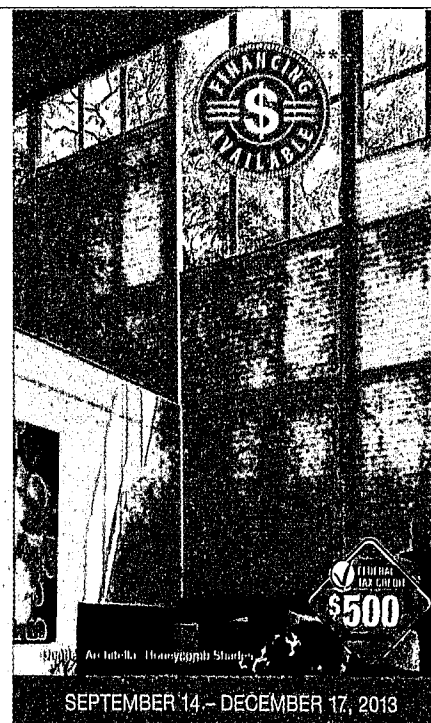
Abraham Prodivinsky climbs around giant hay bales at the base of the slide at Stanly Lane Pumpkin Patch on Saturday. *Lisa James/ Register*

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