

Willits Weekly

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Council supports letter changing pot regs deadline

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The Willits City Council voted 5-0 to sign on to a letter supporting Jim Wood's Assembly Bill 21, which will remove the March 1 deadline from last year's Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act.

The act states that unless cities or counties have local regulations "regulating or prohibiting the cultivation of marijuana" in place by March 1, the new state Division of Medical Cannabis Regulation will become the default regulatory agency.

Assemblymember Wood has described the March 1 deadline as "an inadvertent drafting error" left in the bill by mistake.

Read more of **Deadline**
Over on Page 2

Filing opens February 16 for office seekers

The filing period for candidates wishing to run for state and county offices in the June 7 presidential primary election opens February 16, according to Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder Susan Ranochak.

Three seats on the county board of supervisors are up for election: District 1, 2 and 5. Those seats are currently held by supervisors Carre Brown, John McCowen and Dan Hamburg.

Voters also will select three superior court judges to fill the benches in Departments 1, 5 and 8. Currently, those positions are held by Judge Ann Moorman, retiring Judge David Nelson, and longtime Judge Cindee Mayfield.

County voters also will choose members to both

Read the rest of **Filing**
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Construction valuations up bigtime this fiscal year

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The City of Willits' Building Inspection Activity Report for December 2015 showed a slight drop in construction valuations over December 2014. Nonetheless, total valuations so far this fiscal year have more than doubled over the 2014/15 fiscal year, as did the fees the city collected.

Total construction valuation for 2015/16, as of December 31, 2015 was \$4,855,743, with \$53,198.51 in fees collected for 80 permits.

Read the rest of **Valuations**
Over on Page 2

WHS on the Court



Photos by Maureen Moore

Lady Wolverines battle Lower Lake for basketball victory

It was green and gold versus blue and white Tuesday night when the Willits High School Lady Wolverines took on the Lower Lake Lady Trojans on their home basketball court at the WHS gym.

Varsity, coached by Jody Ward, ended the match with a winning Wolverine score of 43-36.

"Lower Lake was reported to be a great shooting team and was capable of scoring lots of points. Our plan was to try to slow the game down after our full court press proved to not be effective, to limit their opportunities to score, and basically be disciplined," explained coach Ward. "We have a tendency to not share the ball when we're on offense, and I was preaching

Read the rest of **Basketball**
Over on Page 3

Clockwise from top: Wolverine Macy Hendry, #22, makes a free throw. Hendry tries to get the ball past Lower Lake's #11. Haily Findley, #3, looks for a teammate to pass the ball. Chanel Alexander, #4, jumps with ball in hand, hoping to make a basket. Wolverines and Trojans battle for the ball. Kelsey Butler, #20, passes the ball to a teammate. Alexander, surrounded by Lower Lake players, reaches for the ball.

See more photos online: <http://photographress.zenfolio.com/whsgirlsbb>



County pension meeting draws a crowd

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Redwood Valley economist and fiduciary critic John Dickerson dominated a joint meeting of the board of supervisors and the Mendocino County Employees Retirement Association Board of Directors on Tuesday in Ukiah.

Dickerson dominated the meeting by "framing" how many of the 150 people in the room think about the county's pension problem.

For 10 years, Dickerson has analyzed the policies of the county and its retirement board and, either like the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah or, if you prefer, like the children's fairy tale character Chicken Little, he has told whoever listens that the county's retirement system is in a bad way. A very bad way. It's a time bomb, a financial tornado that will destroy the county and suck every available dollar into an ever-expanding black hole of political incompetence, fiscal mismanagement and outright deceit.

The day before the meeting, Dickerson fired off another salvo in his campaign. "The County of Mendocino just released its 2015 audit," he wrote to his email list. "It was forced by major reforms in government accounting to

Read the rest of **Pension**
Over on Page 13

Consultant firm selected for Main Street Corridor plan

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As promised by the Main Street Corridor Project Advisory Group, a consulting firm was selected last week and announced by City Manager Adrienne Moore to the Willits City Council during its January 13 meeting.

Of the five consulting firms that submitted proposals to help Willits plan for a "new" Main Street, the selection committee chose the San Francisco office of Wallace Roberts & Todd to head up the process.

Earlier this year Caltrans awarded the City of Willits a grant in the amount of \$170,670, designated for the Main Street Enhancement planning process. Caltrans will be setting the foundation for the improvements as part of the agency's relinquishment agreement with the City of Willits. The agreement requires Caltrans to provide: pavement rehabilitation treatment, assessment of drainage facilities,

Read the rest of **Corridor**
Over on Page 13

Flood plain map meeting packs council chambers

A packed house of concerned Willits property owners and other community members attended a FEMA Flood Maps Public Outreach Meeting Tuesday night in Willits City Council chambers.

The primary concern voiced by longtime Willits citizens focused on the increase in the flood plain elevation around Mill Creek on the north side of town. Mill Creek runs down into town on the south side of

Mill Creek Drive, jags a bit northeast behind Commercial and North streets, and crosses under the highway at Bittenbender Lane and just south of the Veterans Hall, to continue running northeast just south of the high school football field.

The newly revised Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps show a significant increase in the Willits floodplain area near Mill Creek and other in-town areas from previous maps, to the extent that John Sherman, flood plain administrator, has sent out letters of notification to approximately 600 property owners in or around the high-risk flood areas designated by the new maps.

On hand to answer questions and quell concerns were representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Department of Water Resources, as well as Sherman.

One Willits local whose house on

Read the rest of **FEMA**
Over on Page 3



At left, above: Eric Simmons, FEMA's regional representative for Northern California, led Tuesday night's meeting at Willits City Hall to answer questions from the community over the recently revised Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps.

At left: John Sherman, left, the flood plain administrator for the City of Willits, discusses one of the new Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps with Marilyn Townsend, who's concerned about its impact on West Mendocino Avenue.

Photos by Rashad Sisemore

Total construction valuation for 2014/15, as of December 31, 2014, was \$2,403,765, with \$24,402.35 in fees collected for 66 permits.

For single-family dwellings, one permit was issued with a valuation of \$288,750.

For heating and air-conditioning, two permits were issued with a valuation of \$6,000.

For electric, mechanical and plumbing, five permits were issued with a valuation of \$74,000.

For foundations, one permit was issued with a valuation of \$20,000.

The total valuation of all issued permits in December: \$388,750.

The valuation of issued permits in December 2014: \$392,000.

Nine permits were issued in December; compared to six permits issued in December 2014.

According to the disbursement journal, the total paid out by the City of Willits in December 2015 was \$234,174.27.

The following projects were issued permits:

A rooftop solar array on South Main Street, valued at \$40,000.

An in-ground swimming pool on Grove Street, valued at \$20,000.

An HVAC system replacement on Pine Street, valued at \$3,000.

An HVAC system replacement on Camp Lane, valued at \$3,000.

A rooftop solar array on Pearl Street, valued at \$10,000.

An electric sign on South Main Street, valued at \$1,500.

A rooftop solar array on Coast Street, valued at \$18,000.

Construction of a 2,046 square foot single-family dwelling on Grove Street, valued at \$288,750.

Under-floor plumbing replacement on South Main Street, valued at \$4,500.

The following projects were completed:

A rooftop solar array on South Main Street, valued at \$40,000.

Interior tenant improvements on South Main Street, valued at \$12,000.

Business licenses

The following business licenses were granted in December:

7 Strickland Fleet; owned by LLC Peter Strickland (Willits); wholesale auto dealer.

PureHM US, Inc.; owned by Mike Higgins (Houston TX); specialized technical services.

Aaron Luedemann Construction; owned by Aaron Luedemann (Willits); construction.

The letter, penned by the League of California Cities and supported by the California State Association of Counties and the Rural County Representatives of California groups, requests all California cities sign the letter as a show of support for the date "fix."

"Without this legislation removing the pre-emption provision," the letter reads, "a number of cities throughout California will suffer harm through the loss of their local regulatory authority after March 1.

"Many of [the cities] are now working to craft regulatory ordinances pertaining to medical marijuana cultivation, but need more time than that allotted by the March 1 deadline,"

Remco site ready to move forward

The final hurdle in reestablishing the former Remco facility into a viable industrial/work space has been cleared, due to actions taken by Willits City Council at last week's meeting.

The city council voted unanimously to approve two important items at the January 13 meeting, effectively closing the book on a contentious 19-year saga, and opening the first page of what many hope will lead to a profitable venture.

The City of Willits agreed to dismiss its claims in the Remco insurance coverage action and also approved a funding and financial mechanism designed to finish remediation of the site. Mayor Bruce Burton recused himself from the proceedings because of his potential financial interest in the property.

The action ends well over a decade of insurance litigation in the case of "The People of the State of California and the City of Willits v. Certain Underwriters at Lloyd's, London, et al."

Before the vote was taken, councilmembers heard from outside environmental counsel Stuart Block of Stice & Block, LLP, who summarized the lengthy agreement.

"There were disputes of what the obligation was for the insurers, and that has taken 15 years to resolve," said Block. "A portion of the insurers settled out in 2013, and there was no action required by the city."

Recently, through the Willits Environmental Remediation Trust, a confidential insurance settlement was reached between current owners of the facility, Pepsi-Cola Metropolitan Bottling Company, Inc., and all the remaining insurers.

In order for the settlement to be finalized, however, the City of Willits was required to dismiss all its insurance claims, something the city was unwilling to do without conditions of its own, made during a city council meeting in July.

The most significant condition for the city was for a funding and financial assurance mechanism to be put in place towards finishing the Remco site cleanup.

According to Block's report to the City of Willits: "The settlement would, among other things, require the trust to perform all activities necessary to complete the cleanup of the Remco facility."

So far, since 1997, approximately \$65 million dollars has been spent, much of that money going towards attorney fees and settlements, as well as cleanup efforts.

The cleanup, estimated by the trust to take up to five more years, will be deemed complete only upon approval by U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City of Willits.

An initial amount of approximately \$4.3 million dollars has been set aside from what is being called the "Stanray Qualified Settlement Fund" or QSF, for the specific purpose of completing the remediation.

Block explained that the QSF "is a part of tax structure that protects the settlement balance from taxes as long as they're used for a specific purpose, the primary purpose [in this case] being the cleanup of the Remco facility."

Block added that the \$4.3 million "is substantially more than what the trust thinks is needed to close out the work required," said Block.

In the unlikely instance that more money is needed, Block assured council members that there were other financial mechanisms backing up all necessary cleanup expenses.

"Pepsi is standing behind all this," Block said. "If the QSF runs out of money, and the additional funds that have been allocated to the settlement to pay for the cleanup are used up, Pepsi has to come in and spend additional dollars to do the work."

The nearly 10-acre Main Street property has recently become a hot commodity with two separate parties vying for ownership.

Skunk Train General Manager Robert Pinoli wants to buy the space for a new railroad depot, souvenir shop, train maintenance area and possibly a restaurant.

A business group that includes developer Ed Mitchell and Mayor Burton have designs of their own that could include a brewery, a redwood furniture manufacturing facility, a training facility for law enforcement and – possibly – a new firehouse.

Before either bids could be approved, however, the city required and has now received assurances from Pepsi that the trust would have adequate financial backing in the cleanup's final stages despite any change of ownership.

"There has been a lot of work done, as you know," said Block. "The site can be used and occupied, but there is residual contamination in some of the groundwater that's continuing to be treated to get it back to the cleanup standards that were set up by the court and the water quality control board."

The buildings on the Remco site are required to be demolished, according to Willits City Manager Adrienne Moore, "unless the city approves a development that utilizes the existing buildings, and so far both interested parties have expressed interest in doing so."

While it's up to the City of Willits to approve the redevelopment, based on the most appropriate use of the buildings, Moore said: "the sale is going to be between the trust and whoever is selected."

"The trust is the gatekeeper. They're the ones making the request to the city, not the individual developers. Even though it looks like the city council will be choosing one or the other, they could potentially find that both parties have an acceptable plan to reuse the facilities."

In such an event, it would be the trust's choice of which development group to go with and to proceed with the sale of the property.

WCS Winter 2015 Fund Drive Update

Please help Willits Community Services to provide essential human services to our greater Willits and north Mendocino County communities. Our economy continues to make it difficult for so many people just to survive.

The availability of financial resources from outside of our community continues to diminish, and this has made it very challenging for WCS and organizations like Willits Community Services to continue to provide essential human services.

At left: Roberta Powell, volunteer at Willits Community Services and Food Bank, prepares some of the paper bags that are filled with food and distributed to those in need.

Photo by Maureen Moore



WCS has been serving the greater Willits and North County communities since 1981. For over 34 years WCS has provided a safety-net of human services that help cushion the effects of short- and long-term unemployment, poverty and crisis by providing temporary assistance programs and services to people in need.

WCS manages to provide these programs and services through a combination of funding sources, including local contributions. Especially now, the local donations of our community are the most important, because it is those dollars, more than any other resource, that keep the doors open, the lights on and the services and programs operating.

Please help us continue to serve our community by helping us reach our Winter Fund Drive financial

goal of \$32,000 this winter season. Donations (checks made out to "Willits Community Services") can be mailed to WCS, 229 East San Francisco Avenue, Willits, CA 95490, or dropped off during office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from noon to 5 pm. All contributions are very much appreciated.

Your support will go a long way to help people in crisis in our community.

Thank you to this group of donors who have brought our total raised to \$23,860: Lillian Chevalier, Morgaine Colston, Dean & Geraldine Durbin, John Ford Ranch, Beth Foster, Robert Fry, Allen and Marna Garcia, Patricia Glinski, Henry Hanson, Christopher Hardaker, Mary Lou Leonard & Andrew Stein, David Leverett, Gary & Diana Mann, Mills & Suzanne Matheson, Diane Monteleone, Charlie Palmer, Arpad & Cindy Peter, Kris & Rick Pierce, Linda Posner, Iona & Leigh Robinson, Al & Beth Rosen, Keith Rutledge & Nancy Simpson, Shuster's Transportation, Inc., Dobbe Wattenberg & Don Willis, and Patricia & Bruce Yoxall.

the letter continues. "Other cities are in the process of researching the issue to determine whether there is sufficient support locally for some form of local regulation of medical marijuana.

"Finally, this legislation will remove the motivation many jurisdictions have had in recent weeks to rush to enact cultivation bans as a means of preserving their local regulatory authority.

"Regardless of cities' reaction to this change in the law, the City of Willits strongly desires to retain the ability to decide the rules within its own borders."

Addressing the idea of some cities enacting cultivation

bans, Councilwoman Holly Madrigal said, during the city council meeting: "Our local ordinances are still in place, until otherwise changed."

City Manager Adrienne Moore confirmed Madrigal's statement, adding: "The city does not need to take action. What this letter is about is retaining local control. This is just a way of supporting cities throughout the state for their local control efforts."

The date Assemblymember Wood and the co-authors of last year's bill are seeking to remove is in Section

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Movie Times for 1/22 thru 1/28 This Week's Tightwad Tuesday Titles are in RED - All tickets: \$5

that all game. It was one of our better examples of being selfless on the court."

Ward noted that he also intently studies the stats after every game.

"In all of our games we've won, we've had over 10 offensive rebounds," Ward continued. "So our goal and focus was offensive rebounds and getting more second chances to score. We had a season best of 14 tonight!"

"The girls played tremendous defense and were making it very challenging for Lower Lake to find any rhythm. It was a great team effort and a much deserved win! I'm proud of my team. We work very hard every day, and it's nice when you're rewarded with a victory," said Ward.

There are still several home games scheduled for both girls and boys basketball, as well as wrestling, all in WHS's Steve Short Memorial Gymnasium. The public is welcome to come and attend. Tickets for adults are \$6, students and senior citizens are \$3, and anyone with a current Willits High School student body card can attend for free. Concessions are available additionally.

"It's fun to come watch the young adults participate in athletics," said WHS Athletic Director Cari Stiles. "Sports are a very important part of the high school environment, and we hope to see the community come cheer on the athletes."

Girls Basketball Home Games
Tuesday, February 2 against Fort Bragg. JV at 5:30 pm, Varsity at 7 pm.

Thursday, February 4 against Kelseyville. JV at 5:30 pm, Varsity at 7 pm.

Thursday, February 11 against Clear Lake. JV at 6 pm, Varsity at 7:30 pm.

Tuesday, February 16 against Middletown. JV at 5:30 pm, Varsity at 7 pm.

Wrestling Home Matches
Saturday, January 30 at 9 am – JV tournament.

Wednesday, February 3 at 5:30 pm – CMC Dual Meet against Point Arena and Lower Lake.
Saturday, February 20 at 9 am – CMC League Championships.

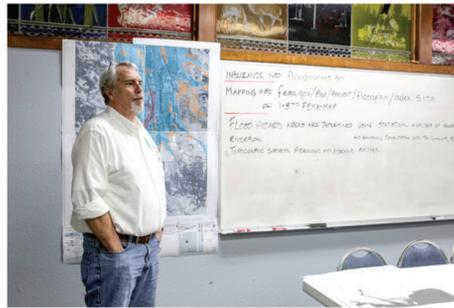
Boys Basketball Home Games
Friday, January 22 against Clear Lake. JV at 6 pm, Varsity at 7:30 pm.

Tuesday, January 26 against Middletown. JV at 5:30 pm, Varsity at 7 pm.

Friday, January 29 against St. Helena. JV at 6 pm, Varsity at 7:30 pm.

Saturday, February 6 against Cloverdale. JV at 6 pm, Varsity at 7:30 pm.

Tuesday, February 9 against Lower Lake. JV at 5:30 pm, Varsity at 7 pm.



Commercial Street is over 100 years old and who lived in Willits through the 1955 and 1964 floods (termed 100-year floods), voiced his skepticism about the accuracy of the new maps, which show Main Street and Commercial Street in the high-risk zone.

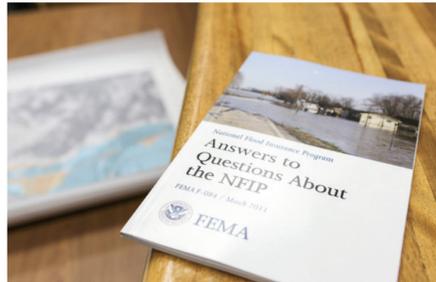
"There are people here who remember those floods, and never once has the corner of Commercial and Main Street flooded," he said. "History bears out that the areas that you now say are going to be underwater have never in recorded history even gotten more than wet."

This viewpoint was echoed by several others in the audience.

FEMA representative Eric Simmons replied to the skepticism by explaining: "While it's true we use the past to help determine the future, we also have to look at conditions the way they are today, conditions in the streams and the channels and the flood plains themselves.

"The conditions the way they were in 1964 aren't the same as they are today. We've had more sedimentation and vegetation changes. Those conditions are different and have made the flood risk worse."

Sherman explained how changes that have occurred over the years are more complicated than simple sediment buildup. "The vegetation buildup, too, has had a significant effect around those bridges," he said. "If you look at the preliminary maps really closely, you'll see there's actually a hump in the surface of the water in the upstream side of the Mill Creek



bridge. We haven't gotten the permit to clean out under it yet, but it is planned for after April 15."

How the new flood plain maps will affect those in the high-risk zones is of concern mostly because property owners with mortgages will be required to purchase flood insurance. Those who own their properties outright will not be required to take any action.

Additionally, even if the first floor of your property is at or above the flood plain level, and you are in the high-risk zone, you will still be required to purchase flood insurance, though the premium will be much lower than those whose properties' first floors are below that level.

"If you want to get out of the flood insurance requirement, you have to show that where the ground touches your elevation – that ground level – is above the base flood elevation," said FEMA representative Patricia Reppe. "No part of your structure can get wet [from flooding]."

Sherman emphasized that no property owner will be required to make elevation changes to their properties unless they plan significant rebuilding worth up to 50 percent or more of the value of that structure.

In such a case Sherman said: "To issue a building permit, I'm required to make sure the new construction is elevated at or above the base flood elevation. That's only if you're doing extensive remodeling or if your house burns down and you have to replace it, or if you are doing any new construction" for new structures on the lot.



Above, left: John Sherman, the flood plain administrator for the City of Willits, was in attendance at Tuesday night's meeting with FEMA representatives to answer questions from the Willits community about the recently revised Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps.

Above, right: Eric Simmons, FEMA's regional representative for Northern California, talks with Willits community members leaning over one of the Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps.

Below, left: Members of the Willits community came out Tuesday night for a Q&A with FEMA representatives.

At bottom, left: Booklets and informational pamphlets about flood insurance and the Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps were available at Tuesday night's meeting.

At bottom, right: Adam Lizarraga, center left, a flood insurance specialist with FEMA, speaks with Willits community members about their questions and concerns.

Photos by Rashad Sisemore

There is still a long process before FEMA's flood plain maps go from "preliminary" to "official," giving property owners in the high-risk zone time to appeal if they care to do so. This would most likely involve hiring a surveyor to come to their property and produce what Simmons called an "elevation certificate," which would then be sent to FEMA.

The booklets, as well as additional information about the flood plain maps, can be downloaded from www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/272.

FEMA can be reached by phone at: 1-877-FEMA-MAP.

John Sherman can be reached at 459-4601.



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**Basketball |
Chanel Alexander,
age 16, Junior**

Position: Point Guard
Breakfast of Champions: Cereal
Love for the Sport: "The intensity."
Years Playing the Sport: Since fourth grade: Nine years.

My Amazing Athlete for this week is Chanel Alexander. Chanel is a junior on the Willits High School varsity girls basketball team. Chanel is our team's point guard. Chanel is always working hard to improve as our team's leader and as a basketball player.

Chanel's ability to handle the ball and her confidence to shoot the ball was critical in our game Friday night vs. Cloverdale. Chanel's basketball skills allow me to focus on more important aspects of the game while coaching. Chanel scored 24 points Friday night vs Cloverdale, who has one of the best defenses in our league.

— Coach Jody Ward



Photo by Jody Ward

Friday's Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly at Blosser Lane Elementary School.

**Martin Luther
King assembly**

**Kids perform skits, sing songs
in honor of civil rights leader**

On Friday morning, students at Blosser Lane Elementary School were treated to an assembly about the meaning of the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students sat on the cafeteria floor and watched, as kids from John Haschak's and Emelia Moore's fifth-grade classes performed skits about King's life and sang songs from the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

One of the skits portrayed how racial bigotry prevented young Martin, who as a boy wanted nothing more glorious when he grew up than to be a shortstop for a professional baseball club, from playing sandlot baseball with his white friends.

Another skit portrayed Rosa Parks' famous refusal to move to the back of the bus, which started the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of 1954 and 1955, which, in turn, started the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s.

The children sang the old folk classic "Brand New World" as well as the 1988 hit "Talkin' 'bout a Revolution" by Tracy Chapman. They heard a recording of Sam Cooke singing "A Change is Gonna Come" and held a mock demonstration while the 2014 hip-hop hit "Glory" by Common and John Legend played in the background. Several of the students came forward individually to read quotations from Dr. King to the assembly.

In dismissing the students, teacher Moore told the assembly: "Let's do what Dr. King would want us to do. Remember that our differences, whether they be black or white, different classes, different grades, languages: These differences make us awesome and unique, but are not as important as who we are inside."

"So as we leave, let's say hi to somebody who might be in another class, speak another language, or look different from you. Try it and see how it feels."

The same message was delivered to the kids in Spanish by teacher Haschak.



Photo by Mike A'Dair



Lisa Shore at the Willits Charter School library, where she works as a substitute librarian. Below: Shore helps Willits Charter School student Makonnen Blessed at the WCS library. Photos by Damian Sebouhian

On My Way to Somewhere Else |

**New resident Lisa Shore
is 'sold' on Willits**

"How did you ever come to live in Willits?" If you're a Willits transplant, you've more than likely heard this question, usually in a surprised tone. Especially if you hail from anywhere outside of California's borders. It's the question I get whenever I tell people I'm from Buffalo, New York. It's the question I ask

when I discover a recent transplant is from, say, Detroit, or Senegal.

It's the answers I've received, that led me to want to begin a series I'm calling "On My Way to Somewhere Else."

"Living in Willits was never on my bucket list," joked recent transplant Lisa Shore. Lisa, prior to moving to Willits in April of 2015, had been, since 1976, spending most of her time in Virginia.

As with many people who had never even heard of Willits, but now call it home, a twist of fate brought Shore to this rural Mendocino community.

An old friend of hers from high school in New Port News, Virginia, who was also her next-door neighbor during that time, had reconnected with her via Facebook. His name is Steven DiFazio, and he's been living in Willits for the past two decades, mostly working as an independent contractor. While Lisa and he had stayed in touch off and on over the years, through marriages, divorces and raising kids, this time, the connection was something new.

They found themselves communicating more than ever, back and forth, through several months, until DiFazio made it his mission to get his childhood friend to come for a visit.

"He sent me a plane ticket on Valentine's Day," Shore said. "Then I came out and he showed me the coast and the redwoods, and I met a couple of the locals."

Shore was amazed by the beauty of the landscape, and by the friendliness of the people. Although her children were now adults with kids of their own, Shore still had difficulty imagining ever leaving Virginia.

But the more she connected with DiFazio, and the more she saw of Mendocino County – especially Willits – the easier imagining became.

"Steven said he was going to sweep me off my feet, and he did, and so did the west coast," Shore admitted. "He took me to Mendocino, and we were walking the coast and an elephant seal came swimming by, and that's when I said 'OK, I'm sold.' When I went back home [to Virginia], I put in my notice to work."

Since her move in April, Shore has quickly adopted to her new Willits home. With years of experience as a youth counselor, she is currently in her final year of earning a BA in science with an emphasis in substance abuse counseling. She hopes to work with veterans and adolescents.

She met and became quick friends with Eric Champion and Janette Iverson (of Hidden Pearl and Unique Boutique, respectively). They helped her make connections, and

she soon got a job substituting for the librarian at the Willits Charter School. She has taken full advantage of the opportunity, doing more than the position requires.

"I just coordinated the Christmas Craft Fair, and I'm in charge of the country music festival to be performed at the Grange in March," Shore said.

The headliner for the event – a fundraiser for the Willits Charter School – will be McKenna Faith. Shore is currently looking for local musicians to open for the show.

"My favorite thing about Willits so far is the people," she said. "They're welcoming. They're always kind. Coming from New York and living in Virginia, the east coast is a lot more fast-paced."

In Virginia, Shore was working two-and-a-half jobs. She's relieved that she can now work part-time while she finishes her schooling and involve herself more with the community.

Shore's latest mission: to get her family on the Willits bandwagon.

"My son came out for two weeks during Thanksgiving, and he actually contacted me this morning about moving out here," she said. "I'm hoping they'll all move out here eventually."

Lisa Shore came to Willits for a new life with an old friend. It's a place she never thought she'd be. Now that she's here, she can't imagine leaving.



At top: The check presenters and happy recipients, including from left, front row: Rotary Club President Tom Herman, left, and Little Lake Firefighter Association President Kevin Reedy (holding the \$20,000 check at left), and Fire Chief Carl Magann, left, and Winter Wonderland Gala organizer Linda Buletti (holding the \$31,000 check at right). Back row, from left: Marilyn Harden, Gail Richards, "Firefighter Colter," Donna Strapes, and Brad Walton.

At left: Chief Magann, left and firefighter Reedy flank "Firefighter Colter" in his safety gear.

Photos by Jennifer Poole



Funds for Willits Fire

Rotary Club's gala raised \$31,000 for new firehouse fund, \$20,000 for safety gear

The latest fruits of the Willits Rotary Club's team of fundraisers – \$51,000 raised at the sold-out Winter Wonderland Gala to benefit the Little Lake Fire Protection District's firehouse building fund – were presented Friday to Fire Chief Carl Magann and Firefighters Association President Kevin Reedy.

A check for \$31,000 went to the firehouse building fund, and a check for \$20,000 went to the "Fund A Need" campaign for two complete sets of firefighter safety gear including a self-contained breathing apparatus/SCBA backpack (\$4,441), hood (\$38), coat (\$1,075), pants (\$820), gloves (\$69), and boots (\$175) for a total of \$9,047 for each ensemble.

The total raised for a new firehouse by three Rotary Club events over the past four years has been \$103,500, said organizer Linda Buletti. "I'm just happy with the

continued support from the businesses and sponsors, all these people that step up," she said.

The "Fund A Need" monies were raised at the gala with the help of "Colter," a tall and thin plastic guy wearing a full safety ensemble, with price tags showing the cost of each element.

Tom Herman, member of the Rotary Club and the fire district board of directors, started off donation pledges with \$5,000 from Mike Griggs, Sr., then \$2,000 pledges, then \$1,000 and on down to \$50. "Everybody was able to participate that way in outfitting the firefighters," Herman said. The final "Fund A Need" pledge was from Pat Allen of Northern Aggregates who rounded up the \$16,000 total to \$20,000.

Chief Magann said the next big firehouse fundraiser will be a BBQ on June 25 at the Rec Grove, as part of Willits Frontier Days, in conjunction with the usual June raffle put on by the fire association.

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Thursday, January 21

'The Greater Good': Now & Then Films presents "The Greater Good," families forever changed by vaccination, screening Thursday, January 21 (corrected date) at 7 pm at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. "The Greater Good" weaves together the rarely heard stories of three families adversely impacted by vaccination. This important perspective on the issue of vaccine safety has been left out of the mainstream media debate for too long. These courageous families show us that it is time to Think Again about this issue." More info: www.greatergoodmovie.org/about-the-film. Suggested donation \$5 to \$10. "Serving heirloom organic popcorn with real organic butter and Fair Trade chocolate refreshments." Info: 459-6362.

Shanachie Pub: Mitchell Holman Revue. 8 pm. No cover. 50 South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Friday, January 22

Hazmobile in Willits: The HazMobile household hazardous waste collection team will be at the Willits Corporation Yard, 380 East Commercial Street, on Friday, January 22 and Saturday, January 23, from 9 am to 1 pm. HazMobile accepts toxic materials like paint, antifreeze, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals, gasoline, solvents, acids, bases, toxic cleaners, auto and household batteries, mercury and fluorescent light tubes, that can't go in the trash, or recycling or special disposal. Free to household. 15 gallon limit/per day. Larger amounts from households as well as small



business waste is also welcome at the collection, but an appointment must be made and a fee will be applied per gallon of waste. When bringing materials to the HazMobile, the public should be careful that items are kept in their original containers (except motor oil which can be consolidated), that nothing is leaking, and that all containers are tied down. Info and schedule, call the Recycling Hotline, 468-9704, or visit www.mendoRecycle.org

Tea at the Willits Library: "The Willits Library is celebrating tea! Come see our beautiful tea displays and join us for a cup of locally blended black tea on Friday, January 22, between 2 and 4 pm. Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-5908.

Shanachie Pub: Them Travelin' Birds. 9 pm. No cover. Visit <http://themtravelinbirds.com>. 50 South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Saturday, January 23

Hazmobile in Willits: at the Willits Corporation Yard, 380 East Commercial Street, on Friday, January 22 and Saturday, January 23, from 9 am to 1 pm. See Friday, January 22 listing for more details.

Willits Amateur Radio Society Breakfast: Join the society to celebrate their 1,200th (wow!) consecutive coffee klatch/breakfast on Saturday, January 23, at Lumberjacks, 1700 South Main Street, starting at 10 am. The breakfast group originally started March 7, 1993 and met at Perko's. "Through the years, members have moved and new ones joined, but the group—with some of the original members—still meets weekly to discuss radio and other topics. It is a great group activity to attend if you are someone interested in HAM radio and/or want to become licensed."



Meeting for KLLG Radio Willits: a meeting for those interested in a low-power local radio station in Willits, KLLG, "of, by, and for our local citizens!" No radio experience necessary. "Imagine that Willits had its own radio station—one whose focus and signal were only for Willits, the greater Little Lake Valley, and parts of Brooktrails and Pine Mountain. Come and learn how much time, resources and money are needed to make this happen." Second meeting: (if you didn't make the January 20 meeting), Sunday January 24 at 4:30 pm, both meetings at in Room 10 of the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Hosted by Little Lake Grange and Lanny Cotler, exec. dir. For more info: 707-367-1812 or lanny@kllg.org.

Lisa Tremont Ota

COLUMN | At the Movies

'The Big Short'

The Story: Nothing went wrong with the stock market in 2008, that is, nothing an honest broker couldn't see coming. Some folks in the Wall Street gambling halls of financial products did see. And see clearly enough to bet the United States housing mortgage market would collapse because of rampant fraud. Those folks made a killing. This is their story. It's true, suspenseful, engaging, and a little bit funny.

Of course, their gain was a loss for the U.S. economy as the stock market tanked. Folks went broke, lost their homes, lost their jobs, and lost their retirement savings.

Still, the movie has its funny moments. **My Thoughts:** This flick absolutely deserves its Oscar nomination for "Best Picture." Fast-paced, entertaining movies that are also Not Stupid; well, they are rare. This one was directed by Adam McKay, he directed "Talladega Nights." He's got a handle on pacing and funny and, unsurprisingly considering "Talladega Nights," he knows The Stupid!

Parents: A movie for adults and intelligent teens. **Note:** Great acting from Christian Bale, Steve Carrell, Brad Pitt, Ryan Gosling and a ton of others. **Notelet:** Adam McKay's first movie without Will Ferrell. I hope neither of them felt lonely.

Willislan Daniel Essman prefers his reality attenuated by the wisdom of the imagination.

Senior Center Lunch

Week of January 25 through January 29
Monday: Meatloaf
Tuesday: Hamburger/Bun
Wednesday: Baked Chicken
Thursday: Spaghetti
Friday: Turkey with Gravy and Mashed Potatoes (Birthday Lunch)
 Harrah Senior Center serves lunch five days per week from 11:45 am to 1 pm. \$5 and older: \$5.50 per meal; under 55: \$7 per meal. Includes soup, entrée, vegetable, bread, dessert, and drink. 1501 Baechtel Road. Info: 459-6826.



Billy Riggs

"A Positively Magical Evening"

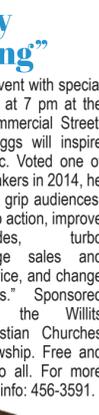
"A Positively Magical Evening": a free event with special guest Billy Riggs, Thursday, February 4, at 7 pm at the Willits Community Center, 111 East Commercial Street. "Motivational speaker and magician, Riggs will inspire and amaze with his message and magic. Voted one of America's Top Five Most Entertaining speakers in 2014, he uses illusions and comedy to grip audiences, them to action, improve attitudes, turbo charge sales and service, and change lives." Sponsored by the Willits Christian Churches Fellowship. Free and open to all. For more info: 456-3591.

Save the Date:

Sip Some Soup, Saturday, February 6, Willits Community Center
Sober Grad annual Pancake Breakfast, Sunday, February 7, Little Lake Grange
36th Willits Classic footrace (walkers welcome), Sunday, February 14
Would you like to get the word out to the community about an upcoming community event? Email us the details! Send a photo, poster or information to willitsweekly@gmail.com

Send a Valentine to Yourself

Tuesday, Feb. 2 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
 Willits Senior Center
 1501 Baechtel Road, Willits in the Lakeside Room
FREE to public, donations appreciated. Refreshments will be served. Call 459-2777 for information.
 www.avenuestowellness.org
 otaforhealth@gmail.com
 See www.avenuestowellness.org for Speaker Series Topics



Diane Smalley, L.Ac.

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 Diane Smalley has been practicing acupuncture for 30 years - half her life. Diane also has extensive experience in Western medicine, including nutrition, laboratory diagnosis and hormone health. Her greatest joy is seeing the light of self-knowledge show in your eyes.
 Please join us for a delightfully vibrant evening.

What's Happening Around Town

Sunday, January 24

Grange Pancake Breakfast: Little Lake Grange hosts a Pancake Breakfast every fourth Sunday at the Little Lake Grange #670, 8 to 11 am. Choose Sourdough Wholegrain or Hank's Famous Buttermilk Pancakes, Beeler's Quality Bacon, organic local farm fresh eggs made to order, real butter, juice, organic coffee or tea. \$8; \$7 seniors; \$5 under 10. Extra sides of organic fruit in season (\$3) or Amish maple syrup (\$1). 291 School Street (two blocks south of Commercial, 1 block west of 101). Info: willitsgrange@gmail.com or 459-9716.

Meeting for KLLG Radio Willits: a meeting for those interested in a low-power local radio station in Willits, KLLG, "of, by, and for our local citizens!" No radio experience necessary. "Imagine that Willits had its own radio station—one whose focus and signal were only for Willits, the greater Little Lake Valley, and parts of Brooktrails and Pine Mountain. Come and learn how much time, resources and money are needed to make this happen." Second meeting: (if you didn't make the January 20 meeting), Sunday January 24 at 4:30 pm, both meetings at in Room 10 of the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Hosted by Little Lake Grange and Lanny Cotler, exec. dir. For more info: 707-367-1812 or lanny@kllg.org.

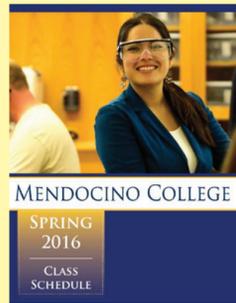
WELL Local Investing Event: "Last chance to find out: Should you make this investment in our local economy? What do you need to know to make your decision?" Sunday, January 24, at 4 pm at the Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Featuring John Kuhry of the Economic Development and Financing Corporation, the agency working on establishing this first Direct Public Offering for \$250,000 (\$1,000 minimum investment) and Matt Gilbert of Mendocino Wool & Fiber, whose plans for a wool processing plant in Ukiah (already with building permit) would be the DPO's investment project. Update: \$215,000 has already been raised; 86 percent of the goal. Further info is available at www.edfc.org or contact John Kuhry at 467-5953.



Monday, January 25
Mendocino College Spring Semester starts today: Mendocino College has a full selection of community college classes set for the spring semester, beginning on Monday, January 25, 2016. Registration is happening online at Mendocino.edu or by visiting any one of the college's four locations, including the North County Center in Willits at 372 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-6224.

Friday, January 29

Fruit Tree Pruning Slideshow: Nurseryman Dave Watts of Sanhedrin Nursery presents this free slideshow on Friday, January 29 from 6 to 9 pm at the Willits United Methodist Church, located at School and Pine Street in Willits. No registration needed. Questions? Call 459-9009. See Sunday, January 31 listing for information about a free pruning workshop at Sanhedrin Nursery.



Tuesday, January 26

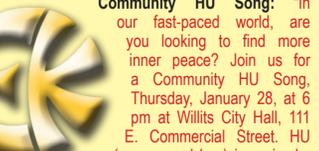
Tightwad Tuesdays at the Noyo Theatre: All 2D movies that are in their second week are \$5 on Tuesdays at the Noyo Theatre for all ages, all showings. This week's Tightwad movies: "The Revenant," "Sisters," and "Joy." For showtimes: www.noyotheatre.com. 57 East Commercial Street. 459-6696.

Thursday, January 28

Community HU Song: "In our fast-paced world, are you looking to find more inner peace? Join us for a Community HU Song, Thursday, January 28, at 6 pm at Willits City Hall, 111 E. Commercial Street. HU (pronounced hue) is a simple, uplifting prayer or mantra that can help you experience divine love and an inner calm. All faiths are welcome." Sponsored by Eckankar: Experience the Light & Sound of God. Information? Please call 972-2475 or visit miraclesinyourlife.org.

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Saturday, January 30

WCT auditions for "Witness For The Prosecution": The Willits Community Theatre will be holding auditions for the classic courtroom drama, "Witness for the Prosecution," by Agatha Christie, on Saturday, January 30 at noon and Wednesday, February 3, at 7 pm. Auditions will be held at the WCT Playhouse, 37 West Van Lane, just behind Shanachie Pub in downtown Willits. For more info, call director Joe Dowling at 459-1200 or see article elsewhere on Calendar page.

The Edgar Loudermilk Band: featuring Jeff Autry. This bluegrass concert will benefit the Willits Rotary Club's scholarship fund. Also features farm-to-table food by Black Dog Farms. Saturday, January 30 at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Doors open / dinner at 6 pm; music 7 to 11 pm. Tickets \$20; no-host dinner: \$10 to \$15. Children welcome: \$2 for children under 12 at the door. Tickets available in Willits at Willits Furniture and JD Redhouse, and at Ukiah Natural Foods Co-Op and DIG Music in Ukiah.



Sunday, January 31

Free Fruit Tree and Grape Pruning Workshop: Dave Watts, nurseryman, of Sanhedrin Nursery, and Richard Jeske, orchardist, present this free workshop on Sunday, January 31 from 10 am to 3 pm, rain or shine. Meet at Sanhedrin Nursery, 1094 Locust Street, and bring a lunch. See Friday, January 29 listing for information about a free Fruit Tree Pruning Slideshow. Questions? Call Sanhedrin Nursery at 459-9009.



A True Blues Valentine

Tommy Castro on February 14
 Fearless blues legends Tommy Castro and the Painkillers are coming to Willits on Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14 to celebrate the gritty, pared-down sound of their new release "Method to My Madness." Doors open at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street at 6 pm with Mendocino County farm-to-table food by Black Dog Farm (no host dinner \$12-\$25) and the hard-driving blues kicks off at 7:30 pm. Get your tickets, \$20, in advance (expected to sell out) at Willits Furniture and JD Redhouse in Willits and online at Eventbrite. Children welcome: \$2 at the door. A benefit for the county's mobile spay clinic "Care-A-Van" and the Willits Elementary Charter School.

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The Willits Community Theatre will be holding auditions for the classic courtroom drama, "Witness for the Prosecution," by Agatha Christie, on Saturday, January 30 at noon and Wednesday, February 3, at 7 pm. Auditions will be held at the WCT Playhouse, 37 West Van Lane, just behind Shanachie Pub in downtown Willits.

According to Wikipedia, Agatha Christie is tied with William Shakespeare for being the best-selling author of all time. She has published 85 titles and is estimated to have sold between 2 and 4 billion books.

"Witness for the Prosecution" is a taut, tight courtroom drama complete with a despicable protagonist, an imperturbable barrister, and an inscrutable femme fatale.

Director Joe Dowling is seeking four women and 10 men between the ages of 25 and 80. Among the women, Dowling wants two between 25 and 35, one between 35 and 45, and one between 40 and 60. For the men, he'll take four in their 50s to 70s, three in their 40s or 50s, and three between 25 and 40.

Scripts are available at the front desk of the Willits Library. For more information call the director, Joe Dowling, at 459-1200.

Ongoing Events

Willits Winter Farmers Market: from 3 to 5:30 pm every Thursday at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Winter produce, local meats and local grains, dinner, baked goods, gift items, chocolates, crafts, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. Music this week, January 21, by Richard Jeske, guitar, accompanied by Loren Herz-O'Brien on the flute. Next week, January 28: Dorian May plays solo jazz piano.

The Emandal Choral: ongoing rehearsals on Wednesdays, 5 to 6:30 pm, for the Choral's 21st season, at the Little Lake Grange great hall, 291 School Street. No auditions: Open to all who love to sing.

'Pigments of Our Imagination': January show at the Willits Center for the Arts, featuring Diza Hope, Judy Chance Hope, Laura Corben, Laurel Miller, Robert Permenter, and Margaret Piourette. 711 East Commercial Street. Show runs through January 31. Gallery hours are Thursday and Friday from 4 to 7 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 2 pm.

Inner Resources Institute: three free programs at the new Inner Resource Institute, 1500 Hearst Road (at Hearst and Valley roads in the old Grace Baptist Church building). • Morning Meditation: Every morning at 6 am. • Kirtan: Every Thursday at 7:30 pm. Devotional singing and chanting led by Chinmayan. • Sunday Morning Service: 10:30 am. Satsang and fellowship consisting of a short talk on practical spirituality; meditation; Kiran and worship; and a prayer service in which we pray for individual, family and humanity's needs. Info: 707-357-4676 or innerresourcesinstitute@yahoo.com.

Vintage Toy Display: Inspired by the theme, "Let's Pretend," Mendocino County Museum presents an exhibit of vintage toys, including dolls dating back to 1903, vintage Barbies and accessories from 1968, as well as a fully furnished Victorian-style doll house. Paper gingerbread men will be available to decorate. 400 East Commercial Street. Exhibit displayed through January. Museum hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am to 4:30 pm. \$5 adults; \$1 ages 6-18; children 5 & under are free. Free first Wednesday of each month. Visit www.MendocinoMuseum.org

The Mentoring Program: Free classes for girls in grades 6 through 10 in the Willits school system. Friday afternoons from 4 to 5 pm. Class subjects rotate: Herbs, Crafts, Yoga & Movement, Life Skills, and Cooking and Home Arts. Room 4 in the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street, the Cultivate Wellness Studio. Call Michelle Cummins for info: 972-1601.

Tuesday Wii Bowling: Every Tuesday at the Harrah Senior Center Dining Room, 1501 Baechtel Road. 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Info: 459-6826.

Tuesday Night Potluck Bingo: Potluck dinner and bingo every Tuesday at the Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Be sure to bring a dish to share! 5 to 7 pm; \$5 buy-in; 50 cents per card. Info: 459-6826.

Willits Frontier Twirlers Square Dance Club: Monday night workshops at the Willits Center for the Arts, upstairs in the great room. Newer dancers from 7 to 8 pm; just dancing from 8 to 9 pm. Lawrence Johnstone, caller. Guests always welcome! Info: Jenny Watts, 459-9526.

AI-Anon Meeting: Thursday nights from 5:30 to 6:30 pm, at the Baechtel Creek Village Community Room (behind Rite-Aid at the Evergreen Shopping Center. Saturdays at 10 am at St. Francis Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, 66 East Commercial Street. "AI-Anon Family groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience strength and hope to solve their common problems. We believe that alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery."

Drop-in Knitting Circle: Due to popular demand, the Willits Library is holding the drop-in knitting circle every Saturday of the month, from 3 to 4:30 pm at the Willits Branch Library, 390 East Commercial Street. "Bring your projects to share and show off! We will have expert knitters on board who can solve any problems and teach everyone to knit! Bring your own projects—we'll supply the coffee! Sign-ups are not necessary—everyone is welcome to drop in."

Willits Library Public Events: "Pajama Story Time" for families, Tuesdays at 7 pm. "Stories for Crawlers and Walkers," Thursdays at 11 am. Technology group for help with hand-held devices, Fridays at 1 pm. Youth Game Night, ages 10-14, Fridays from 5 to 7:30 pm. Drop-in Knitting Circle, Saturdays from 3 to 4:30 pm. 390 East Commercial Street. More info: 459-5908.

Soroptimists International of Willits: Women's service club aimed at the betterment of girls and women. Meets second and third Tuesdays of every month, noon to 1 pm, at Old Mission Pizza, 1708 South Main Street, in the back room. Women interested in community service are welcome; new members are encouraged to join at any time.

Life Changes: Discussion and support group with Linda Posner, Wednesdays from 10 to 11 am. Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road.

Volleyball Open Gym: at Baechtel Grove gym; Sundays and Tuesdays at 7 pm. Some experience desired not required. \$5 per night; first night free. Info: Jeff at 354-1850.

Willits Community Drum Circle: 7 to 10 pm at the Saint Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, 66 East Commercial Street. Every 2nd and 4th Friday. Free. Everyone is welcome. Info: 459-4932.

Smoking Cessation Program: Free "Freedom from Smoking" class sponsored by the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital. Every Wednesday at the HMH Conference Room, 1 Madrone Street, 6 to 7 pm. RSVP to Jennifer Barrett at 707-540-4208. Walk-ins are always welcome.

Free Sheriff's Activity League programs: at Body Works Gym, 1511 South Main Street. Teen gym: Monday to Friday from 2:30 to 5:30 pm; Boxing: Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 pm; Karate: Kids aged 5 to 10 from 6 to 7 pm, Tweens, Teens and Adults at 7 pm. All SAL programs free to the public. Info: www.facebook.com/MendocinoCountySheriffsYouthActivitiesLeague or Mike Tobin: 354-0565.

Shanachie Pub: World Music Mondays: Sign ups start at 7:30 pm sharp. Music starts at 8 pm.

Jazz Night every second and fourth Thursday: 8 pm. No cover. "Local musicians... take jazz standards and infuse them with funk, hip hop, world, and free form jamming. The outcome is unexplainable." Open Mic every Wednesday. 8 pm. Sign-ups start at 7 pm. Movie Night every Tuesday. 50 South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Karaoke Night at AI's Redwood Room: Every Wednesday night, starting at 9 pm. 207 South Main Street. Info: 459-2444.

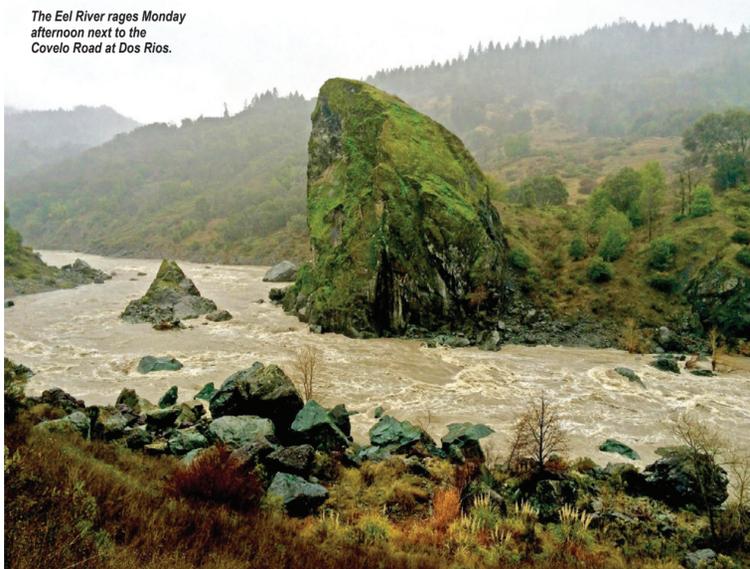
Laytonville Winter Farmers Market: Mondays, November to May, from 2:30 to 4:30 pm at Harwood Hall, 44400 Willis Avenue, Laytonville.



Reynolds Highway at the northern edge of Little Lake Valley.

The return of the "lake" in Little Lake Valley

The Eel River rages Monday afternoon next to the Covelo Road at Dos Rios.



Little Lake Valley from Reynolds Highway, just east of Highway 101.



These beautiful photos of Little Lake Valley and of the Eel River at Dos Rios were taken by photographer Zohar Zaid Monday afternoon.

Zaid grew up in Willits and first studied photography at "The Darkroom" with Larry and Amy Melious. His love for the natural beauty of Mendocino County prompted him to start a Facebook page called "Beautiful Mendocino County" where he posts his own and other local photographers' shots. To contact Zaid, email zohar@pacific.net.

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- Aggressive shoulder provides additional surface area to grip the road.
- Open tread blocks and more channels to evacuate snow and water.
- Waved siping for better traction.
- Wear-resistant tread compound, provides increased durability and superior traction.
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COYOTE VALLEY CASINO

Crossword Puzzle & Sudoku

PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE 10

			7		8				
9	8	1							
		4		1					
5									
		9	3	7					
	2		8	3					
	3			2	6				
		9	5						
1	5	8	4						

Level: Intermediate

How To Sudoku:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a Sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

INNOVATION WORD SEARCH

T U D F R Q U P R E N G I S E D N O A H
A E A I G V I E V U R O S B C O W I R A E
L P U I G V I I V U R O S B C O W I R A E
S A T S H I I Q I N F V E C W F H A R D
S C H C E I T T C E G I E W Q Y S N T O
N S O I N D A A C C E W Y D M I A A S I M
O D R H Q O P M L E U H M I E N F P S A
Y N B P C R I H A N P L B V C N G A T S
A A W A C R I T O N O S I E Q T R A T
R L L R M M E S C T I R N A L M E N E
C Q W G A E T A T E O P T E A U F N D R
Q I B G B N D C T P R G U A P R T C E P
C Q I T I Y E I D I V I R L R T Y M I
M N R A N T Y P U R V N D A A I F P Y E
E B P O I A P Q Y M A E P G P T P I C C
M C F H L M Y M Q F N W T F U H I S L E
C C C P Q O R G N I T L I U Q H Y O N M
M R S E C G S T N E M E G N A R R A N I
A I W G M T N E M N G I L A G Y A L C R
D V V H G N I T I R W Q C R O L O C D G

ALIGNMENT	DIGITAL	MEDIUM
ARCHITECT	DIRECTION	MODEL
ARRANGEMENT	DISPLAY	MOVEMENT
ARTIST	DRAWING	PAINTS
AUTHOR	FASHION	PERSPECTIVE
BEAUTY	FILM	PHOTOGRAPHY
CLAY	GRAPHICS	QUILTING
COLOR	IMAGINE	SEWING
CRAYONS	INSPIRATION	STONE
CREATIVE	LANDSCAPE	TRANSPARENCY
CULINARY	MANIPULATION	VIEW
DESIGNER	MASTERPIECE	WRITING

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10		
11				12		13			14				
15						16			17				
	18				19	20			21				
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						43			44				
						45	46						
47	48				49				50	51	52	53	54
55					56					57			58
59					60					61			
62					63					64			

CLUES ACROSS

- Women (French)
- Hyrax
- Distress signal
- Trade
- Large northern deer
- The 3 Wise Men
- Marten of N Asian forests
- Hoover's agency
- Received an A
- 2nd Islamic month
- Light brown
- Clarified butter used in Indian cookery
- Frankness
- Argentina's capital
- Citizen of Kenya or Zimbabwe
- Noah's boat
- Family of languages in So. Africa
- Inappropriate
- Scientific workplace
- Hungriness
- Say to talk about an annoying topic
- Sing and play for somebody
- Strike buster

CLUES DOWN

- Manuscripts (abbr.)
- Netherlands river
- Italian island
- One's own being
- More adroit
- Balkan country
- Psychologist B.F. Goldman
- Investment group
- Double curve
- The plane of a figure
- Ocean
- Public presses
- Civil Rights activist

- Parks
- Cooking container
- Arctic native
- Founder of Babism
- Bashkortostan capital
- Bulky grayish-brown eagle
- Louse egg
- About sight
- ___/Tuck: TV drama
- Black tropical
- American cuckoo
- Chest muscle (slang)
- Expression of disappointment
- One who assists
- Antilles island
- Served food
- Egyptian Sun god
- Performed successfully
- Cavalry-sword
- Abba __, Israeli politician
- Jonas __, cured polio
- The Muse of history
- Express pleasure
- Turkish leader titles
- Castro country
- Nobleman
- ___ Lanka

WPD Activity Report

January 10 to January 16

Prepared by WPD Sgt. Jake Donahue

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 185 incidents this week.

During this seven-day reporting period, WPD police officers were assigned 16 criminal investigation reports, made 6 arrests, issued 9 citations, and investigated 3 traffic collisions.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

January 10

9:30 am: Officers responded to a reported trespassing situation at an abandoned property in the 200 block of South Humboldt Street. When the officers arrived, they located SHIVELY, Tyler, 30, Willits inside the fenced area of the location. When officers requested Shively leave the property, he aggressively advanced toward them, demanding they shoot him. Officers were initially able to subdue Shively, but he continued to fight them until he was in full restraints. Shively, who is on active Mendocino County

probation, was arrested in accordance with 602 PC (Trespassing), 148(a)(1) PC (Resisting Arrest), and 1203.2(a) PC (Violation of Probation).

1 pm: Officers contacted TAYLOR, Carla, 51, Willits in the 200 block of Holly Street after receiving a report of a suspicious person in the area. During that contact, Taylor was determined to be under the influence of a controlled substance. She was placed under arrest for 11550(a) HS (Under the Influence of a Controlled Substance).

4:30 pm: Officers investigated a vehicle stolen from the 10 block of East Oak Street.

8 pm: Officers were summoned to assist a robbery victim at a residence in the 300 block of Creekside Drive. According to the victim, her ex-boyfriend BAIK, Mark, 39, Ukiah arrived at her residence following an argument they'd had during an earlier phone conversation, which prompted further confrontation. During the confrontation, Baik grabbed her phone from her hand and returned to his vehicle with it.

She followed to get her phone back, but when he demanded she get into his vehicle, she refused. At that point he threatened to kill her and her family, so she quickly retreated to her residence. Baik fled the parking lot before officers arrived; however officers located Baik, parked near the victim's residence, on East Valley Street at the intersection of Creekside Drive. Baik was placed under arrest for 211 PC (Robbery) and 422 PC (Criminal Threats). Baik is also on active California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation parole, for which a parole hold was placed pursuant to 3056 PC.

January 11

3 am: Officers issued a citation for camping at the rear of a business in the 700 block of South Main Street.

10:15 am: Officers investigated a traffic collision in the 200 block of Pine Street.

January 12

8 am: Officers investigated multiple

Read the rest of WPD | Over on Page 10

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**Body Balance
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Learn how to: Apply basic massage techniques, utilize yoga and stretching moves, improve posture, and find the power of your breath in this workshop. Explore tools to increase your health, achieve inner harmony, & keep stress-related diseases at bay, Saturday, January 23, 1-3 pm, Willits, \$35. 707-292-4397.

Community HU Song
In our fast-paced world, are you looking to find more inner peace? Join us for a Community HU Song, Thursday, January 28, at 6 pm at Willits City Hall, 111 E Commercial Street. HU (pronounced hue) is a simple, uplifting prayer or mantra that can help you experience divine love and an inner calm. All faiths are welcome. Sponsored by Eckankar: Experience the Light & Sound of God. Information? Please call 972-2475 or visit miraclesinyourlife.org.

Computer Help
Need help with your computer? I will come to your home or business. PC and Macintosh. Repairs and configuration \$40/hr. Tutoring \$20/hr. Call Liam 459-2470 or email macamergin@yahoo.com.

Duplex for Rent
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Massage studio or office, \$175 includes utilities. Also looking to share art studio with other artists. Rent \$175-\$250 depending on space needed. Access to kiln, wheel, slab roller. Utilities included. 707-354-2473.

For Rent
Small, private cottage, west side, suitable for 1 person. Wood heat only. Nice yard with fruit trees and small storage shed. No pets. \$785/month. References. 459-5030.

Help Wanted
Manager, Willits Center for the Arts: Part-time contract position, 64 hours a month, managing the Willits Center for the Arts. Send your resume and salary requirements to WCA, PO Box 503, Willits, CA 95490. For more information call June @ 456-1203.

Help Wanted
Willits Charter School seeks a Part-Time Instructional Math/Science Aide. Job includes yard supervision. Skilled in working with middle/high school students a must. \$10 per hour. Contact Jennifer Lockwood at lockwood@willitscharter.net or 707-459-5506.

Help Wanted
The City of Willits is accepting applications for Water Operators I, II, III, and IV (placement and compensation DOE/Q). Open recruitment until all positions filled. Full-time w/benefits. Filing deadline is 5 pm, Friday, January 22, 2016. Please contact hr@willitscity.com for further information, job descriptions, and applications, which are also available at Willits City Hall, 111 E Commercial St. The City of Willits is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Help Wanted
Adventist Health-Homecare & Hospice Services Mendocino County. FIT - PIT - Per Diem positions: RN, Home Health Aide, Physical & Occupational Therapist. Great Team & Great Benefits. Call Trudy-H/R #456-3230.

House for Rent
3 bedroom, 2 bath house in Willits, west side, available February 1. \$1,200/month, plus \$1,600 security deposit. No pets, no 215. Call Don, 367-1573, for application.

**RV/Trailer
Space for Rent**
Space for RV's and Trailers \$390 per month, includes water & garbage. Close to Safeway in Willits. Call Rhonda (707) 367-6178. See at <http://www.oakrivine.net/>

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City of Willits.....\$2.00 Each Way
Punch Pass (20 rides for \$30.00).....\$1.50 Each Way
In the Valley.....\$2.50 Each Way
Punch Pass (20 rides for \$40.00).....\$2.00 Each Way
Brooktrails and Pine Mountain.....\$4.00 Each Way
Punch Pass (20 rides for \$70.00).....\$3.50 Each Way

— Call for more information —
459-5556 • 1501 Baechtel Road

The rest of
WPD
From Page 9

thefts and vandalisms to vehicles at a business in the 20 block of Robert Drive.

7 pm: Officers responded to a reported domestic altercation in the parking lot of a business in the 700 block of South Main Street.

January 13

1:45 pm: Investigation of a hit-and-run collision in the 10 block of Northbrook Way.

6 pm: Officers initiated a mental health commitment in the 1600 block of South Main Street.

January 14

5 am: Officer's received a report that BAIK, Mark, 39, Ukiah had been attempting to contact the victim from the Mendocino County Jail in violation of an Emergency Protective Order issued against him. Baik was further booked on 273.6 PC (Violation of a Restraining Order).

2 pm: The Willits Police Department provided support to officers from the lone Police Department with an investigation.

11 pm: Upon receiving information of a firearm abandoned in the 200 block of South Main Street, officers canvassed the area and located a loaded .40 caliber handgun hidden behind the businesses in that location. Investigation into the circumstances surrounding the location of the handgun is ongoing.

January 15

2 pm: Reported hit-and-run collision against a pedestrian in the 100 block of East Commercial Street.

3:30 pm: Reported burglary to a residence in the 10 block of Franklin Avenue.

January 16

3 am: BAUMEISTER, Ronald, 57, Ukiah was arrested in the 1700 block of South Main Street pursuant to an active Mendocino County warrant.

3:50 am: Officers responded to a business in the 700 block of South Main Street upon receiving a report that a group of subjects was yelling at customers and punching vehicles. Officers located the group nearby and attempted to detain them. All but one complied. MOORE, Andrew, 21, of Daingerfield, Texas refused to comply with orders and attempted to leave the area. Moore was ultimately detained and arrested pursuant to 148(a) PC (Resisting Arrest).

3 pm: Officers investigated a vehicle stolen from the 300 block of Maple Street.

M	M	E	S		D	A	S		S	O	S				
S	A	L	E	S		E	L	K		M	A	G	I		
S	A	B	L	E		F	B	I		A	C	E	D		
S	A	F	A	R		T	A	N		G	H	E	E		
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B	U	E	N	O	S	A	R	I	E	S					
A	F	R	I	C	A	N			A	R	K				
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S	C	A	B		T	A	I		N	A	A	C	P		
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K	O	R			R	E	D		S	A	R	I			

COLUMN | Relationship Ins and Outs
Siblings
Dear Doris:
A month ago, my younger brother (who always had a sarcastic streak), my sister and I had a conference call about our aging mom, and during the call they kept addressing me by my old nickname, which I let go of a year ago. After the call, I texted them requesting to please call me by my full name. I was shocked by my brother's reply, which felt like a punch in the gut.

I called him in order to resolve it, but he was even ruder to me. I had to hang up because of the language he was using and was in tears, because it felt like I lost my brother. I tried to send him a thoughtful email letting him know that I love him but also about the difficulties I'm having with his language. I mentioned that unless he is able to speak to me with respect, all I can do is be a fellow sibling taking care of our mother.

I apologized if I did or said anything to hurt him and to please not respond to my email unless he is able to own his own part in what is going on. Since then emails have gone back and forth about mom but no acknowledgement of my email. I do not even know if he received it (emails do get lost sometimes), and am wondering if you have any advice as to how to move forward – or how to negotiate this relationship that sadly seems to be falling apart.

S.

Dear S.:

I can feel how much your brother's words hurt you and how much you would love to have a good relationship with him.

Be aware that issues among siblings most often stem from old, unresolved childhood dynamics and are very common. There are families in which those kinds of dynamics have gone unresolved for generations. You might be dealing with an issue that has been passed down to you from a parent or grandparent because they were not able to resolve it with their siblings or other family members in their lives.

Who knows how your brother experienced you as his older sister in his childhood? Who knows what myths he made up about you back then? As his older sister, try to remember any negative or burdening messages coming from your parents about him that may have taken root.

Back to now. You are wondering why your brother has not acknowledged your email. Perhaps your email got lost as you said, or maybe he took you at your word and does not feel ready to fulfill your conditions for a response, nor does he know how to respond without getting deeper into trouble, or...?

I recommend you learn to accept how things are between you at the moment and look for emotional support and understanding among your friends or your partner, if you are married or in a committed partnership. Try to collaborate as best you can with your siblings while keeping your mom's best interests in mind as a team. This way, you may be able to experience each other in new ways. It is important to avoid any form of self-righteousness, which always promotes disconnection in relationships.

Acknowledge the feelings that get triggered in you by your brother, and find the emotional support you need elsewhere. This may be enough to start your own healing, which can help you experience your siblings, especially your brother, in a more mature manner. Envision how you would like things to be between you and him. Keep yourself open to this vision, but do not insist on when and how this needs to manifest. Keep it as a wish that may be fulfilled someday or not. You only have control over your own feelings, actions and inner attitudes.

It might also be helpful, to not take things your brother says too personally. Usually, when people are nasty to others, they aren't feeling very secure about themselves. Focusing on being a good team player, trying to understand your siblings' perspectives, and appreciating what everyone is doing to help, including yourself, will make the task of caring for your mother much easier for you all. Also notice and praise what is going particularly well among you three. If things become more difficult, and communication becomes harder between you and your brother, the two of you may want/need to seek help from a relationship coach.

Wishing you all the best!
Doris

If you have any relationship questions, please send them to dorisw@embracetheconflicts.com or to WW directly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490. She will answer them anonymously on the third Thursday of the month.

Doris Wier is a certified relationship and life coach who works and lives in Willits. She coaches individuals, couples, families and professionals. In addition she offers Explore-Shops on conflict resolution and deepening intimacy and connection through cultivating positivity in your partnership. For more information on the process call 707-456-9246 www.embracetheconflicts.com and www.facebook.com/dorisw

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Each day in the United States, more than nine people are killed and more than 1,153 people are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver. Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes your attention away from driving. Distracted driving can increase the chance of a motor vehicle crash.

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Above from left: Chia flowers, Magic Manna Flour Corn, Red Valerian and Rowan berries. At left: Amish Butter-Flavored Popcorn. Below: A swallowtail butterfly sips nectar from a colorful zinnia. (Photo by Jamie Chevalier). Below center: Grandpa Admire's Lettuce. At bottom: Matt's Wild Cherry Tomato. Below, left: The 2016 Bountiful Gardens catalogue cover.



**Dreaming of a
summer garden?**

2016 Bountiful Gardens catalogue offers seeds to suit your fancy

There's nothing like a rainy January to get a Willits gardener dreaming of summer bounty – especially after years of drought.

Yes, we need more than one rainy winter to get us back to normal, but compared to the last couple of winters, this year's rainy season is looking hopeful for some productive summer gardening.

The new catalogue from Willits' Bountiful Gardens is a great resource for gardening dreams – and turning those dreams into beautiful reality.

The 80-page catalogue is full of heirloom, untreated, open-pollinated seeds for hundreds of vegetables and flowers, compost crops, greens and grains for animals, trees and shrubs, herbs and even mushroom spawn. The catalogue also sells books and other information resources, along with fine gardening tools and other gardening supplies, including nifty wooden seed flat kits made by a local carpenter out of rot-resistant redwood.

"We've got more seeds than ever this year," said catalogue editor Jamie Chevalier. "We keep cramming them in."

"We've been putting a lot of effort over the last several

years into providing seeds for plants that are beneficial to insects and bees," Chevalier said, "and this year we added butterflies. That's big, and we've been hearing a lot of appreciation from customers about that."

The new Butterfly Garden Collection includes several packets of seeds for plants with nectar that butterflies love to sip as well as for good host plants, along with an info sheet on how to turn your garden into a butterfly refuge. The "Easy Heirloom Collection" includes the most popular, easy-to-grow heirloom vegetable seeds, making it a good choice for beginners, with 10 packets of seeds for string beans, broccoli, carrot, corn, kale, lettuce, peas, summer squash, winter squash and tomatoes.

Another interesting herb collection is the "Breathe Deep Collection," consisting of "rare and hard to find" herbs that have been used historically for allergies, bronchitis and asthma, including solidago, grindelia, elecampane, mullein, and yerba mansa.

How about a "Tasty Tea Collection" to plant in containers on the porch, with one packet each of mint, cinnamon basil, lemon balm, clover, licorice mint and chamomile?

One new veggie offering is "Matt's Wild Cherry Tomato" – "Early very sweet, intensely flavored, tiny half-inch fruit on huge healthy vines. Harvest whole bunches with scissors, like grapes – a bowl on the table will draw a crowd." Then there's "Grandpa Admire's Lettuce," with "large red/green heads that hold their sweet flavor even in extreme heat." This seed was given to The Seed Saver's Exchange back in 1977 by 90-year-old Chloe Lowry, who'd gotten the heirloom from her grandfather, George Admire, a Civil War veteran.

Chevalier said she was excited about offering the new "Beefy Resilient Bean," a "phenomenally productive bean" that "people in Willits will be particularly excited about," she said, as it does well with water heavy in boron, which most beans don't like. "I know when I first started my garden here," Chevalier said, "the water in my well was full of boron, and my beans did terribly. I see that happening with a lot of people's beans in Willits, as beans are very boron-sensitive. It's not because the nights are cold, it's because of the water."

Four types of corn are featured on the "New for 2016" Gardening Over on Page 12

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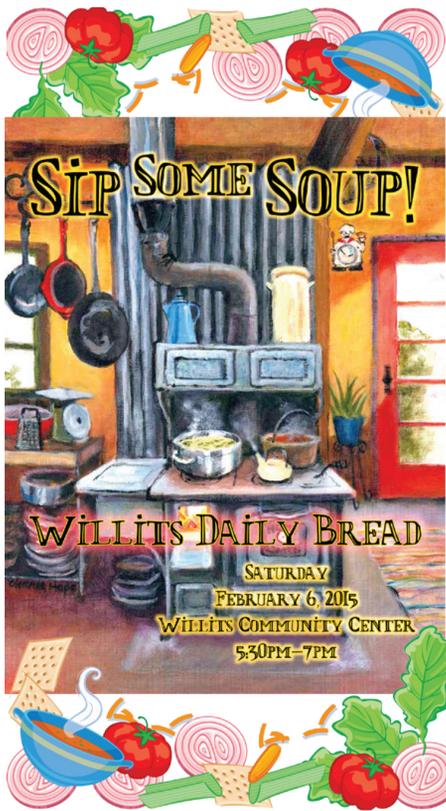
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The rest of **Gardening** | From Page 11

list, including "Cascade Ruby-Gold Corn" in glowing shades of red and gold, "Amish Butter-Flavored Popcorn" (a Pennsylvania Dutch heirloom from 1885), "Little Giant Corn" (super-early corn on stalks only 3 to 4 feet high), and "Magic Manna Flour Corn," which makes corn flour that can be used just like wheat flour in anything but yeast bread: "Solid colored ears in three basic colors make great cornbread and outstanding pancakes."

If it's a new, decorative and useful tree for your yard you're after, consider planting seeds for a rowan tree, also called "mountain ash." About the size of an apple tree, this tree will bear "big clusters of honey-scented, bee-and butterfly-friendly flowers" followed by huge crops of red berries that can be used for jam, tea, fruit leathers, wine or brandy: "Lights up a dark corner of the yard."

Another pretty and edible seed offering that's new this year is Red Valerian, also known as "Jupiter's Beard" or "Kiss Me Quick": "Butterflies love it, and so do bees, hummingbird hawk moths, and all kinds of beneficials." This drought-tolerant perennial is seen all around westside Willits, growing in the edges between yards and sidewalks, and blooming throughout much of the year.

And that's just a tiny sampling of all the seeds and information available in the new, free 2016 Bountiful Gardens catalogue. You can get a copy by requesting it on the website, www.bountifulgardens.org (click "2016 Catalogue Request"), calling 459-6410, emailing bountiful@sonic.net, or dropping by the Bountiful Gardens Willits storefront at 1712-D South Main Street in the Evergreen Shopping Center.



Sip Some Soup

Join veteran soup-maker Shirley Schott at the February fundraiser

Do you have your secret soup recipe in place? It's time, once again, to find that winning soup recipe, dig out your three-gallon crock pot, and get ready for the annual Sip Some Soup contest! This main fundraiser for Willits Daily Bread will be on Saturday, February 6 at the Willits Community Center, from 5:30 to 7 pm.

I caught up with Shirley Schott immediately after she entered the contest as the chief soup-maker for St. Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church. Schott is a veteran soup-maker and recommends that entrants keep it simple and only enter one type of soup. Schott said she looks forward to Sip Some Soup because it is a great way to have some fun and visit with so many people. She recommends that you have at least two soup servers on hand during the event, or it "gets crazy."

Schott is a member of St. Francis in the Redwoods, the current home of Willits Daily Bread, and is an active volunteer for the food program. As the liaison between the church and Willits Daily Bread, she helps prepare the sack meals at the church parish hall most afternoons. Schott shared that the church members all agree that sharing their space for such a worthy project is necessary, and they will be very generous with their time and support until a more suitable site with a commercial kitchen is found.

Emandal Farms will once again supply their delicious breads and jams to round out the Sip Some Soup menu. Cindy Savage, director of Willits Daily Bread, thanks Emandal and Tam Adams for their continued support, which this year includes creating and mailing postcard reminders.

Donations are also being accepted for the silent auction at the event. If you have questions about the Sip Some Soup event, have a silent auction item you want picked up, or want to sign up to make a (hopefully!) prize-winning soup, contact Savage at 459-2579 or 707-367-5669.

Above: Shirley Schott and Cindy Savage, director of Willits Daily Bread, confer on soup-making techniques.

At right: Soup-maker extraordinaire Schott is ready to make some soup!

Photos by Jenny Senter



The rest of **Pension** | From Page 1

write off a worthless \$30 million asset and to list its unfunded pension as a real debt for the first time – \$105 million. County officials reported that it had \$80 million more assets than debt as of June 2014. Last week county officials told us that as of June 2015 we were \$50 million in the red – more debt than assets. And – they were forced to tell the people our county really and truly incurred \$135 million of pension expenses in the past that created this debt that they never told us about – until last week.

"Our county twice before borrowed a total of \$110 million by selling 'Pension Obligation Bonds' to shore up the pension fund. We still owe \$70 million on those bonds on top of today's \$130 million pension fund deficit. That means Mendocino County's pension debt is \$200 million today. The county has \$200 million in assets. Unfunded pension debt alone makes our county's net worth equal to zero.

"Every pension funding plan adopted by this county's retirement board said this debt wouldn't exist. But officials plan to extract two-thirds of a billion dollars from our weak local economy through 2040 to pay this irresponsible and unnecessary pension debt created to date. That money won't directly pay for one minute of services – it won't fill one pothole. Kids not even born yet will be expected to pay this debt created on our watch. They will get nothing in return," Dickerson wrote.

As Dickerson predicted in his broadside, financial analysts from the county's actuary, Segal Consulting, succeeded in reassuring supervisors and the MCERA board – if not the public – that things aren't so bad.

The credit or blame for that goes to Paul Angelo, senior vice president for Segal, who talked for two hours in what he described at the outset as a brief, superficial review of his company's actuarial reports for MCERA in fiscal 2014-2015.

He noted the Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability on the county's retirement books grew again last year, moving from \$178 million to \$182 million. The MCERA investment pool had a poor year in 2014-15, returning profits at a rate of only 3 percent, as compared to the 2013-14 rate of 18.1 percent.

Angelo noted the county has lowered its expected rate of return from its investments twice in the past 10 years, moving from 8

percent to 7.75 percent in 2011 and down again from 7.75 percent to 7.25 percent in 2014. Both times, this downward move on the ERR resulted in an upward surge in the UAAL.

In 2011, the UAAL increased by \$24 million; in 2014, by \$50 million.

In a separate phone conversation, Andy Yeung, vice president with Segal Consulting, stressed that changing the EER was not the only factor – although a big factor – in why the UAALs increased so significantly in both those years.

After Angelo concluded his presentation, MCERA board members and members of the board of supervisors were invited to ask questions.

Echoing Dickerson, MCERA board member Ted Stephens declared the county was bankrupt. "I don't see how we are going to be able to pay the benefits that we promised to our participants," he said. "We have this kind of rate discrepancy."

Stephens was apparently referring to the discrepancy between the MCERA ERR of 7.25 percent and the "real" rate of return of 6.5 percent. Stephens said a market analyst recently told the MCERA board the expected rate of return on investment for the U.S. stock market over the next few years is 6.5 percent.

"This board lacks the courage to address it," Stephens said. "It increases the cost for the county. And, I rest my case. We're bankrupt. We're technically insolvent. We're technically bankrupt. It happened 100 percent by the funding policy of this board."

"I think it's time to roll up our sleeves and address this problem. What's the definition of insanity? It's continuing to do the exact same thing and expecting a different result. We're digging a hole. And rather than stop digging, we're continuing to dig," Stephens said.

Stephens' plea was answered by Supervisor John McCowen. "There is no one in this room drawing a pension from the County of Mendocino who needs to worry that you are not going to continue to be paid your pension, in full, for life," McCowen said. "This county is not bankrupt. It is not in danger of going bankrupt. This board is not going to vote to declare bankruptcy. That's all irresponsible."

That also would seem to be the opinion of Fitch Ratings, who on December 30 gave Mendocino County an "A" rating on its 2002 Pension Obligation Bond, worth \$64.15 million. According to the press release from

Fitch, the county's financial outlook is stable.

"The county's financial position continues to improve," Fitch wrote, "following a period of substantial expenditure reductions and management reforms.... The operating surplus after transfers for 2014 equaled 6.2 percent of general fund spending, raising the unrestricted fund balance to 19.6 percent of spending (\$27.3 million). This is a notable improvement from just 3.6 percent (\$5.4 million) in fiscal 2011 and a negative fund balance in 2010.

"Year-end cash balances also rose substantially for the fourth consecutive year," the Fitch report continued, "from just \$14,000 in 2010 to \$30.8 million in 2014. As such, the ratio of cash to liabilities, less deferred revenues, stood at over 3.0x."

Longtime county employee Leif Farr sided with McCowen and Fitch. "To say all debt is the same is obviously not true," Farr said. "I think the true level of whether or not the county is bankrupt is if it can pay its debt in the time frames it has agreed to pay it in. So if I have, the example that has been often used today, the example of a home mortgage. I know it's not an exact example, but it's the same principle. It's that, if I take a mortgage out for 30 years, my bank isn't expecting me to pay it off in the next month. If I go to the doctor, and he bills me for that, he expects me to pay it all.

"It's all debt," Farr continued, "but not all debt is the same. I'm a little concerned that some people are trying to lump all debt into one, as if there is not a difference."

Ukiah attorney Jared Carter urged supervisors to declare bankruptcy. "My personal recommendation to you is, go through bankruptcy, you declare bankruptcy, and you stiff the bond holders. You might sue, in the bankruptcy, you might sue the people who advised you and got us in this position. They're big companies. They've got insurance. You could pick up another \$20 or \$30 million bucks off of them. And then stiff the bond holders.

"But if you don't want to do that," Carter continued, "do something. This idea of stretching it out there, forever, hiring these guys, paying them a big bunch of money so that they can advise you to extend it – that's insanity."

One of the more extreme comments of the afternoon was made by Segal's Angelo: "One is not going to run out of money, because you're amortizing your unfunded [UAAL] over 25 years, instead of 10 years. It's more of a policy theory of, 'we should be

doing this faster.' But that always comes at an opportunity cost.

Paying off the unfunded does increase the system's security. But I do want to ask, if paying off the unfunded faster means that those dollars are not going to be used for something else, what is the clear policy advantage of accelerating paying off the unfunded, compared to, whatever else can we do with those dollars?

"That's not an actuarial question," Angelo said. "That a fiscal-finance policy question. The idea that paying off the unfunded is always the best thing to do with your money.... You could talk to the people who could find something else to do with that money and have that conversation."

Supervisor Dan Hamburg may have summed up the dilemma best: "Depending on a stable stock market to come up with a yearly payment, those tens of millions of dollars every year, is a very tough proposition. I do feel though, that we are doing the best we can to provide services to people, while we are meeting all of our obligations to our retirees."

"Supervisor McCowen said the solution to this problem, unfortunately, is not around this table. It's with the state government, maybe to some extent with the federal government, and then the courts. And most judges do not want to do away with retirement systems, because judges, last time I looked, have pretty generous retirement packages.

"So trying to get substantive change – that will really turn this around – is not easy. I keep saying we need Perestroika, right here in the United States. We need a whole restructuring of how this economy works, so that it works for normal, retired people who are getting \$30,000 or \$40,000 dollars a year. And what do they do with that money? They're spending it. That money is going back into our economy."

Hamburg added he thought the board of supervisors and MCERA had done a good job managing the retirement system and local government, which has resulted in the county getting good ratings from Fitch and from Standard and Poor. But at the same time, he agreed with a lot of people in the room, who said the rating companies were stupid and their ratings either wrong or incorrect.

"It's a mixed bag," Hamburg said. "But I think we go forward and provide the services we can to our taxpayers in this county and continue to make good on the people who worked for us for so many years."

The rest of **Filing** | From Page 1

Democratic and Republican county central committees.

Regionally, both Second District Assembly and Senate seats currently held by Assemblymember Jim Wood and state Senator Mike McGuire are up for reelection, while statewide the Second District's seat in Congress (held by U.S. Representative Jared Huffman) and one of California's two United States senators (Sen. Barbara Boxer) face reelection.

State voters also will vote for their party favorite for president.

Candidate information for individuals wishing to file for federal, state or local offices is available at the county clerk's office, room 1020, at the Elections Office,

The rest of **Corridor** | From Page 1

sidewalks and curbs for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, updates to Commercial Street and Sherwood Road traffic signals, and repair of two bridges, based on inspection reports. This construction is due to start in the fall of 2017.

With this planning process, Willits is getting a jump on creating a practical and ideal vision of what Main Street will look like in the not-too-distant future, and the Project Advisory Group sounds confident they chose the right firm to help them along that route.

WRT "brings extensive experience in main street planning, complete streets, and green streets," Moore told city council members. "The consultant team has worked on main street projects in communities such as Cloverdale, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Hopland, as well as conducting traffic studies in Willits."

Community input will have a major role in the planning process, and so a multi-day charrette has been scheduled for the week of April 18

"A charrette basically is a community workshop process," Moore said. Although a location has yet to be chosen for the charrette, Moore said: "We want to pick a place that is very visible downtown."

Councilwoman Holly Madrigal stressed the importance of public input. "We haven't secretly decided what we want Main Street to look like," she said. "This is going to be a very open and long process, with the community assisting in making the design,

501 Low Gap Road in Ukiah, or call (707) 234-6819 for more information.

Those considering seeking office should visit www.co.mendocino.ca.us/acrcandidateinfo.htm and read the candidate packet to find the qualifications required to become a candidate for local races, Ranochak said.

To find the qualifications required to run for state and federal offices, potential candidates may visit the California Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/upcomingelections/june-7-2016-presidential-primary-election/qualifications-running-office/.

The last day for candidates to file is Friday, March 11, at 5 pm.

to see what we want for the relinquished section of Main Street."

The Main Street Enhancement plan will include all three miles of Main Street located within city limits.

Towards that goal, an "enhancement plan team" will be creating an online survey "to define community priorities," said Moore. "Results of the survey will be shared with city staff, designers and engineers to help illuminate the most important issues on Main Street.

The survey is due to be up at www.willitsmainstreetplan.com by the end of this week. Alison Pernell of the nonprofit Local Government Commission, which helped write the relinquishment grant, has been assigned as project manager for the Main Street planning process.

"We're very appreciative of having LGC as a partner," said Moore. "Pernell has really taken the lead on this," adding that "whatever plan is developed, it comes back to the city for final approval."

In the meantime, and ahead of the April charrette, Willits residents are being asked to pay attention to traffic and pedestrian problems they feel could use some improvement.

"This is the perfect time for people in the public to voice their opinions," Madrigal said. "If you have a concern or a safety issue that you have seen on Main Street that you want to be addressed, this charrette process is going to be the way to ring in on that."

The rest of **Deadline** | From Page 2

11362.777(c)(4), which states:

"If a city, county, or city and county does not have land use regulations or ordinances regulating or prohibiting the cultivation of marijuana, either expressly or otherwise under principles of permissive zoning, or chooses not to administer a conditional permit program pursuant to this section, then commencing March 1, 2016, the [State Division of Medical Cannabis Regulation] shall be the sole licensing authority for medical marijuana cultivation applicants in that city, county, or city and county."

AB 21 unanimously passed the Senate Health Committee Wednesday, according to a January 20 press release from Assemblymember Wood's office, and will be heard on the Senate floor on Monday.

According to the press release, an agreement has also been reached to "clean

up" another drafting error in the legislation that passed, that gave cities and counties the authority to prevent medical cannabis patients from growing cannabis for their personal use.

"Over the long weekend," the press release states, "stakeholders came together and struck a compromise agreement that both sides agree protects patients' access to medicine and local control for cities and counties. The compromise agreement honors the commitment made by Assemblyman Wood to provide a pathway for medical marijuana businesses to comply with state laws as well as to provide patients with proper consumer protections."

To read the full letter of support approved by the Willits City Council, go to [www.cacities.org/Policy-Advocacy/Action-Center/AB-21-\(Bonta,-Cooley,-Jones-Sawyer,-Lackey,-and-Wo](http://www.cacities.org/Policy-Advocacy/Action-Center/AB-21-(Bonta,-Cooley,-Jones-Sawyer,-Lackey,-and-Wo)

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT |

Waylon Duane Miner

On January 6, 2016, Mathew and Brandi Miner were blessed with their bouncing baby boy, Waylon Duane Miner. Waylon came into this world at 11:45 am weighing in at 6 pounds, 14 ounces and 20.5 inches long. He is welcomed by his grandparents Gary Miner, Vicki Miner, Cherri Mavis and Dave Lawrason, Sr.

Did you get engaged? Married? Promoted? Have a baby? Celebrate a milestone birthday? Send in a congratulations announcement today! Email a photo and few sentences to willitsweekly@gmail.com.

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Playful Cupid

Cupid is a 1-year-old male mixed-breed dog who currently weighs 43 pounds. Cupid is such a goofball! When he came in for his evaluation, he immediately found a toy which he kept in his mouth the whole time! He loves to play fetch and tug of war, and once he's good and worn out, he's very happy to cuddle on the couch. Cupid needs an active home where he gets lots of exercise and play time. He'd do fine with another playful dog or kids.

The Ukiah Animal Shelter is located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, and our adoption hours are Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6 pm. We have



Photo by Rod Coots

many wonderful dogs and cats, awaiting their forever homes here. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.mendoshelterpets.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. More info about adoptions: 467-6453.

Friendly Birch

Birch is a 3-year-old spayed female mixed-breed dog who currently weighs 56 pounds. Although Birch came to us as a stray, it's obvious that she was someone's pet. Her previous owner did a great job socializing her, and Birch is very friendly and affectionate with everyone. With her great personality, Birch will be a wonderful addition to any loving home, including one with other dogs or kids!

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Photo by Rod Coots

homes here. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.mendoshelterpets.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. More info about adoptions: 467-6453.

Tiny Boo Boo



Boo Boo is a tiny 5-year-old little guy with a lot of attitude! He's as cute as can be and full of life. He gets along well with his kennel mates and likes to play. If you want a little friend to walk with, he's your man. Come visit soon - he's waiting! The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County, where you can come visit, play with and/or adopt dogs and cats, is open to prospective adopters from 1 to 5 pm, Wednesday through Friday, and from 11 am to 3 pm, on Saturday and Sunday. 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley (right down the street from the Broiler). Info: 707-485-0123 or hsmc@pacific.net or visit www.mendohumanesociety.com.

OBITUARY |

James Miller

James "Jimmy" Tod Miller of Willits, aged 64, passed away at his home on January 13, 2016, surrounded by his loving family. A native of Willits, he was born December 4, 1951 to Charles Warren Miller and Mary Frances Bowen Miller. Jimmy and his wife, Trudy Lamb-Gribaldo, were married in Reno, Nevada on December 20, 2003.

Jimmy was a heavy equipment operator for 34 years, especially known by many as the best excavator operator around. He was a kind and gracious man who loved his family, his ranch and all animals. He enjoyed woodworking, talking to everyone, current events, word search puzzles, ranch work, the History Channel, and eating.

Jimmy was preceded in death by his parents and two sisters: Frances and Karen. He is survived by his devoted wife, Trudy Delynn Miller; son, Raymond Chase Gribaldo-Miller; mother-in-law, Arlene Terry; father-in-law, David (Judy) Newton; sister-in-law, Jennifer Huddle; brother-in-law, Gary Huddle; brother-in-law Bill (Keri) Lamb; nieces and nephews: Brian & Macie Huddle, Greg Lamb; and Mary, Nancy, Theresa, Margaret, Fred & Mark; and many friends, some that have known him all his life.

Trudy and Raymond wish to thank all of their friends and neighbors for their outpouring of love and caring during Jimmy's long illness. Your support has been greatly appreciated!

A Celebration of Life will be honoring Jimmy on Saturday, January 23, 2016 from 2 to 4 pm at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church).

Those wishing to contribute to his final expenses may do so at the Savings Bank of Mendocino County.

Arrangements under the care and direction of Anker-Lucier Mortuary.



OBITUARY |

Rose Marie Malmstrom Johnson

Rose Marie Malmstrom Johnson passed away suddenly January 10, 2016 in St. Helena, California. Rose, as she was known to friends and family, was a native of Pawpaw, Michigan and raised in Chicago, Illinois where she graduated high school. She was married to her high school sweetheart, Raymond Malmstrom, for 62 years. They moved to Orange County, California in 1951 where they lived until Ray retired in 1988.

Widowed in 2014, she and Richard Johnson (also widowed in 2014) began a late-life romance and were married

September 29, 2015. Richard became Rose's main focus in life as their love blossomed. They had found in each other a rare and delightfully perfect union that was ended much too soon.

Rose is survived by her loving husband, Richard Johnson; son, John Malmstrom; three nieces and a nephew: Marlene, Christine, Susan and Frank.

Memorial services for Rose will be at 2 pm on January 25, 2016 at Anker-Lucier Mortuary Chapel. Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, California will be her final resting place.

Arrangements under the care and direction of Anker-Lucier Mortuary.



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