

Willits Weekly

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Panel recommends pay boost to SEIU employees

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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A three-person panel empowered to "fact-find" in cases where state or local jurisdictions have reached a bargaining impasse with their respective labor unions has recommended the County of Mendocino agree to SEIU Local 1021's request for a 3 percent pay hike for all union employees.

That was the key point in an array of nine disputed points that have stalled progress on the next labor contract. The county declared an impasse in September 2013.

Under law, the two sides must undergo the fact-finding process before the county makes a "last, best and final offer."

The fact-finding committee noted the county has the money to fund a

Read the rest of **SEIU** | Over on Page 11

Big plans, obstacles to Van Lane improvement

Zack Cinek
Reporter
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A downtown businessman says he has plans to turn a section of Van Lane into something more than a hidden, sometimes seedy, alley.

A "Community Theater Alley" would have access to regular traffic blocked at Main Street, murals, and improved lighting.

Businessman Pete Swanton has beat the streets lately to garner support for the project.

"I am talking to a lot of people. There are a lot of people willing to go behind it," Swanton said.

Swanton said Mazahar owner Sara Mann came to him with an idea to get the project going again.

Swanton is excited. "We have got a group of six committees that will be working on this," he said. "We have big plans for the alley."

The idea for fixing up the alley has been tossed around before. "It is a great idea, but there are problems making it happen. It is already 10 years in the making," Councilman Ron Orenstein said.

Read the rest of **Van Lane** | Over on Page 11



Top: The exterior of Seabiscuit's stud barn photographed in 2013 at Ridgewood Ranch.

Above: Two of the four stalls inside the barn (Seabiscuit's on the right and Kayak II's on the left), and the grooms' quarters (center).

Photos by Maureen Moore

Below: a vintage photo of the same stud barn from around the 1940s.

Photo courtesy Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation



Seabiscuit's stud barn now an official 'Historic Place'

Seabiscuit's stud barn at the Ridgewood Ranch has been officially listed in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, the Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation announced Friday.

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
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The foundation received an email that day from state historian William Burg reporting the January 21 listing, with congratulations, and the news that an official notification letter was on its way.

"We are all happy and excited," said Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation President Jacqueline Cooper, who posted the news Friday on the foundation's Facebook page.

The Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation's board of directors has a meeting set for this weekend, said June Donaldson, media and public relations director for the

Read the rest of **Barn** | Over on Page 9

Grace Church classroom permit approved

A city use permit for Grace Community Church classrooms contained a list of do's, don'ts and a five-year-term the church's pastor said he had never seen the likes of before.

City council members unanimously approved a permit with a shortened list of requirements for the church and without the five-year limit. Permit debate included restrictions on outdoor speakers, access to Main Street, inspection at any time by the city, and the five-year term.

"I have been in church ministry for 40 years, and I have never heard of anything like this," Associate Pastor Alan Klier said. "What is going to happen in five years if someone does not like what we are doing?"

Grace Community Church's property, behind the Flyer's gas station, is just south of Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital. Its closest neighbors include doctors' offices, the Burger King, Wild West Inn, and houses.

In 2012 the church relocated two old classrooms from Willits High School, with plans to use them for Sunday school and a day school.

The church has three staff members and 10 students and plans to have up to 30 kids. A church on the type of residential zoning found at the site needs a use permit, according to city documents.

Rachael Campbell of Grace Community Church, like Klier, said she had never heard of a five-year renewal before.

City planners' choice of five years was an arbitrary decision, City Planner Alan Falleri said.

Getting a permit is a normal action for churches to take, but Klier noted there is no zoning for churches. "Churches can apply and be accepted in commercial and residential areas," said Klier. "It gives churches flexibility to be where they need to be."

In documents, city planners listed how the city's Willits General Plan and

zoning code applied to the use of the property.

Considerations made by planners in the permit for the classrooms included land use conflicts, bicycle racks, noise levels and infill-style development.

The use of an old driveway accessing Main Street concerned the city planning department and some council members. Campbell told the council that in talks with Caltrans she was given a verbal "OK" for vehicles to come and go from the driveway.

"My responsibility here tonight is to protect the City of Willits," Councilman Ron Orenstein said. "No good intention goes unpunished."

Probably the only potential target in a lawsuit would be Caltrans, owner of the highway, City Attorney Jim Lance said.

The permit limits outdoor activities at the church to daylight hours. Vacation Bible School and Christmas

Read the rest of **Grace Church** | Over on Page 11

Cost of temporary water treatment plant now \$1.4M

Zack Cinek
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The California Department of Public Health is urging the city to make its temporary water treatment plant a permanent facility.

The health department asked the city to pursue a permanent set-up to be ready if the city again needs water, City Engineer Tom Mannatt said at a city water committee meeting on Monday.

Estimated costs have increased since the last Water and Wastewater Systems Committee meeting. "A lot of this was driven by our meetings with the health department," Mannatt explained.

It is now expected to cost an estimated \$1.4 million to get a temporary plant in place.

But some projected expenditures, including a

Read the rest of **Water** | Over on Page 11

Food trucks back on Revit-ED agenda

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Food truck talks reopened at the city's Revitalization and Economic Development Committee's first meeting of the year this week.

Most recently, a Redwood Valley-based pizza truck and an interested buyer of the Vassar's Pizza building want to operate food trucks in town, city officials said.

The Willits Municipal Code bans food trucks or other peddlers from doing business on Main Street and Commercial Street and within one block of those streets.

Part-time City Planner Alan Falleri said his department did allow food trucks to have Main Street frontage in the past. "We did allow people on Main Street if they were behind the facades of surrounding buildings," he said.

Councilman Ron Orenstein has stated that one of the best things food trucks have going is that they are mobile. "Because they are mobile they have the advantage of being able to go where the workers are," he said. "These are places where brick and mortar restaurants cannot go to."

Read the rest of **Food Truck** | Over on Page 11

It's not that hard!

To the Editor:

As we're all aware, the Willits City Council passed a resolution declaring a water emergency. One aspect of the emergency order is that families of up to four people are being asked (required) to limit their daily use of water to 150 gallons. To the credit of the citizens of Willits, conservation has actually increased the available water in the reservoir – not by creating more water, if only – but by drawing less from the reservoirs than would have been expected.

So to all of you who have taken our water emergency seriously, I offer a heartfelt thanks, and Good on Ya!

As you all have done, I too took steps to curtail my use of water. But to be perfectly honest and candid, I am not taking extraordinary steps to conserve water, just what I believe are reasonable steps to take: I began taking what is referred to as Navy showers – turn on the water, get wet, turn off the water, soap up, turn on the water, rinse off, turn off the water. With my low-flow showerhead, I figured that would be something.

Using the adage: "Yellow is mellow, but if it's brown, flush it down!" I flush the toilet maybe once a day, given the appropriate color! We have a dishwasher and a clothes washer, and we only wash full loads, and whenever we use the sink to brush teeth, shave, wash pots, etc., we run the water at a trickle and shut it off during prolonged soaping activities. As I said, nothing extraordinary, but nevertheless, something!

To make it clear, the "we" I refer to is me and my wife – a two-person household.

But I'm also a guy that loves – needs – to be exact. It drives people crazy, but I need to have information and exactness, in order to understand what's happening, and more importantly to have some sort of control over my life. The one piece of information that I was missing in a timely fashion was how much water we were actually using. I really didn't want to wait until I received my water bill; I wanted to know in real time so I could do something about it, if we were still using too much water. But more to the point, I really had no idea of what 150 gallons looks like, and how much stuff can be done with this amount of water!

So I took a look at my water meter. Our local newspapers did a fine job of explaining all about the water meters that measure the water that comes into our houses. The focus of their stories was how to detect a leak. But I needed more information, so I opened up my water meter box and wrote down the numbers on the meter. I did that for three days in a row, subtracting one day's reading from the next day's reading.

This gave me a number that, unfortunately, I had no clue about what it meant. So I did some more research and asked questions, and finally found out what I was looking at. And when I did the conversion calculations I was shocked at how little water we actually used.

So here are the details of my little adventure into the Wild World of Water:

All of the water meters in the city water system are calibrated to measure the water flow in cubic feet. To convert cubic feet to gallons, simply multiply the total cubic feet by 7.48. At first, I took the meter readings on three consecutive days, just to get an idea of how much water we were using. Here are the readings, and what the meter numbers look like: January 20: 0562 52 and January 21: 0562 57 (usage: 5 cubic feet x 7.48 = 37.4 gallons), and then January 22: 0562 63 (usage: 6 cubic feet x 7.48 = 44.88 gallons)

Interesting, but not conclusive. I quickly realized that those two readings weren't representative because, during those days, there were the daily showers and toilet flushings, but only one load of dishes washed, and no loads of laundry. So I

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from readers

decided that I needed to take the next reading after one week in order to see a more representative usage. The next reading was seven days later on January 29: 0563 29 (usage: 66 cubic feet x 7.48 = 493.68 gallons). Divided by seven days, we used 70.53 gallons per day.

Obviously, the daily usage was higher than on the 21st and the 22nd, because during the seven-day period, we did about four loads of laundry and two dishwasher loads in addition to our usual showers, etc. The point is, the two of us used less than what could be considered allowable for a family of four; even though the ordinance states 150 gallons per day for up to a family of four, it's reasonable to assume that a family of two would use somewhere closer to 75 gallons per day. It's probably not an exact measurement, but it's close enough.

I'm sure there are some folks reading this who will state that they use even less water, and I congratulate them for that. I'm not writing this to brag or to compare me against them. I just wanted to clear up some of the uncertainty and confusion that many of us feel when we're asked to take steps to conserve one of our most precious resources. I also wanted to demonstrate that it's really not that difficult to use less water without making a major sacrifice. For anyone who is interested, it's a fairly simple way of knowing how well, or how poorly you're doing. And you can now take steps to do better. The mystery is gone!

There is, however, one possible glitch in this: many of the water meters in town are set up to be read by a hand-held device, so the meter reader doesn't have to actually read the numbers. Because of this, some of the meters don't have the numbers that look like a car's odometer. There isn't anything to read. Quite honestly, I don't know how you would be able to handle that. But most of us can, simply by reading our own meters.

Bottom line: as I write this, I'm looking out of the window at the beautiful raindrops falling from out of the sky. Thank you, thank you! It's very likely that the rains have not abandoned us, and we may very well get back to normal, but it's very important for all of us to realize that we may only have dodged the bullet, this time. It's clear that things are changing – long term, short term, it really doesn't matter!

Whatever the cause, and whatever the duration, we need to use this as a lesson that the spigot can be turned off at any time by the Great Plumber in the Sky, and we need to rethink just how casual we are about water. Individually, we need to do what we can to conserve, and collectively, we need to work on long-range plans to protect ourselves from future water emergencies.

Ron Orenstein, Willits

Measuring the water in your well

To the Editor:

A simple way to measure how much water is in your well is to install a ¼ inch air tube with a pressure gauge and an air valve (like the valve on a tire, called a "Schraeder valve") at the well head. The supplies can be purchased for around \$30 from a company that sells parts for beer and soda dispensers.

To install it, you must pull the pump out of your well. You want to tape the open-ended tube to your pump about 6 inches above the intake of the pump. If you ever get no pressure reading, you know your pump is about to suck air. You can calculate the number of feet below the end of the tube by knowing where your pump sets in your well if you like, but water below the intake of your pump is

pretty hard to use! Then tape the tube to the pump column about every 5 feet. Your well head must have an opening that the tube fits through. There was a threaded plug in my well head that I drilled a hole in just a tiny bit bigger than the tube and then put silicon seal around to be sure the well head still had a sanitary seal.

On top of the tube at the well head, I installed a brass T fitting. A pipe clamp and a spacer attached to the pump column will hold it solidly in place. On one leg of the T, install the pressure gauge and on the other a Schraeder valve. The range of readings the gauge can read should relate to the depth of your well. If your well is 100 feet deep with 50 feet of water in it, you want a gauge that will read 0 to 30 psi or so. If your well is 300 feet deep with 200 feet of water, you would want a gauge that reads 0 to 100 psi. There are gauges that already do the math for you and calculate the number of feet of water.

To take a reading, pump air through the Schraeder valve and watch the pressure gauge. The air will push out the water at the open end of the tube.

For every foot of water, it takes 2.31 pounds of air to do this. Typically the gauge gets a high reading, then settles down to a lower number. At this steady point, the pressure is pushing water out of the tube and you can take a reading. Divide this number by 2.31, and you have the feet of water in your well.

Keeping records of when your well starts to drop in the summer months or after pumping for so many hours is extremely useful in learning to live within your "water budget." Keep in mind that if you pump more than is recharged during the wet season, you are lowering the water table, at least in the immediate vicinity.

Rosamond Crowder, Willits

Arsenic in our water?

To the Editor:

The drought year has focused our attention and much discussion on water supply lately. Having studied the issue of water and stated my recommendations in the past, people have naturally been asking me what I think we should do. My tendency, of course, is to respond by saying, "You mean, what we should have done starting at least five years ago?" But that is not the answer people want to hear. They want a quick fix to the problem now.

Unfortunately, the few options we have available to us, if the drought continues, are not the right ones. For they will probably involve introducing arsenic into our water supply and further depleting our probably already overdrawn aquifer.

My understanding from the statements made by our city manager at the water Town Hall meeting (January 19) is that the city plans on "mixing" the highly toxic "Park" well water in with the rest of our water supply to bring the overall arsenic level to 10 parts per billion, which is the EPA and state standard.

However, this standard has been challenged by several other groups and studies (as well as by local citizens like Bear Kamoroff and David Drell, who understand the issue much better than I do). It appears that there is NO proven safe level of arsenic other than non-detectable.

Nor would the right solution have been to pursue one of Johnny Pinches' rather dubious schemes to impound more water from the Eel River system, which is already suffering enough from the various impacts we humans have had on it. Pinches' ideas all involve extensive, expensive and ecologically damaging public works of the usual mega-technological type (damming, pumping, piping).

This would have given humans more access to water, possibly, but would have only encouraged them to believe they can go on wasting it in the usual mindless manner. This approach is ultimately based on the mistaken belief that the planet has an unlimited amount of resources to exploit. And that is, of course, the same attitude that has created the problems we are facing today in the first place and, if continued, will only make matters worse.

Because of our "emergency" situation the city has implemented Stage V of its water

"conservation" ordinance (which is really a rationing ordinance – whereas *conservation* is something we should be doing as a matter of course). This means that households are requested to cut back their usage to 6 units per month, which translates to 150 gallons per day.

When we studied the water situation in Willits five years ago, the average household usage was 10 units, which generally meant that people used much more than 10 in the summer months and less in winter when not watering their gardens. At the time we were suggesting that water conservation efforts could easily reduce the average usage by 20 to 40 percent. That means that we could have brought usage down to 6 units per month average, which corresponds to what we are now considering "rationing." And we could have been doing this for years now.

To put this in perspective, my wife and I generally average only between 3 and 4 units per month. For the past several months we have been using only 2 to 3 units. And we are not making any heroic effort to save water. If everyone in Willits over that past two years had been using as little water, we would not have a shortage in our reservoirs at the moment, because we generally would not draw them down as much as we do. And there would be no emergency. That's why we tried to make the point six years ago that water conservation is the best and cheapest way to increase water supply. Unfortunately, this message fell on deaf ears.

There is also a misconception about the impact of conservation on water cost. The argument goes like this: If people conserve, the city will "sell" less water, their revenues will fall and, therefore, they will have to increase the price of water to make up the difference, which creates the perception that water will thus cost more. However, simple common sense will tell you that, if you use less water, you will not necessarily be paying more if it costs more per unit. For example, if you use 10 units and it costs \$4/unit, you pay \$40. If you use only 6 units and pay \$6.70/unit, you still only pay \$40.20. Essentially, you pay the same, but you are using less water, which is the point of a water conservation program in the first place.

This is why we argued to raise the water rates (which was obviously very unpopular). If people refuse to conserve water and insist on wasting it, then they should pay more. They are creating a problem for all of us! They should pay to fix it, not those of us who willingly do the right thing.

Which brings me back to the main point. Because we are all hooked up to the same water system and because that water system has been governed by a largely tone-deaf (and perhaps grossly negligent) council for the past five to six years, those of us who have been conserving water all along will also be subject to the same arsenic-laden water as everyone else, if we don't get more rain. In other words, we will have to suffer the poisonous "solution" to a problem we did not create. There is no need for me to emphasize the gross injustice of that situation.

David Partch, Willits

Wishing us good health

To the Editor:

If there is any constant in today's health-care landscape, it is change. As a new leader of the Adventist Health Northern California Network, a five-hospital network that includes Ukiah Valley Medical Center and Howard Memorial Hospital, I hope to bring positive changes. I feel privileged and blessed to be given a leadership role in the Mendocino County area, a place where vineyards meet the redwoods and converge along a beautiful and rugged coastline. I'm looking forward to being a part of the community, getting to know the culture, and understanding the people.

Being new to the area, I want to share with you a little bit about myself and my desire to help make a difference in the way health care is viewed and received in Mendocino County. First, I am passionate about people – in fact that is one of the reasons I chose a career in health care. Health care is all about people, relationships and respect. I believe that our administrators, physicians, caregivers, support staff, and volunteers are devoted to our mission of sharing God's love by providing physical, mental

Read the rest of Letters | Over on Page 4



Congratulations Column



Congratulations to Glen T. Minaryard and Suzanne Lyra Wagner, who were married January 18 with a beautiful ceremony at the Brookhills Lodge.



Happy birthday to two gorgeous Willits girls, Christina Bowers and her daughter, little Miss Madison Lawrence, who both celebrated their birthdays this week with a trip to Disneyland.

Talk to Me of Love

Fran Resendez Columnist

The other day I was checking out a Valentine's book display in a bookstore in Sebastopol. I had always enjoyed putting such a display together, and I wanted to see what the current offerings would be. I was pleased to see one of my favorite books on the subject of love included in the display. Even though this book was first published in 1992, its basic premise is timeless.

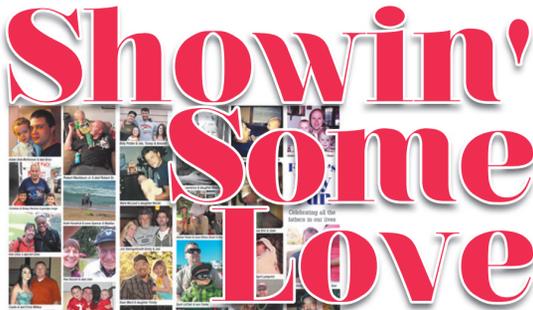
The title is "The Five Love Languages" and the author is Gary Chapman. His idea is that there are five natural ways that we express our love to others, and that everyone has a primary "love language" that makes them feel loved. If your partner, friend or even family member doesn't speak your language to you, it's pretty hard to feel loved, even when they claim that they do love you.

He lists the five languages as: Quality Time; Words of Affirmation; Gifts; Acts of Service; and Physical Touch.

Dr. Chapman gives plenty of examples of each language and helps you figure out which language fills your personal "love tank." If you take some time to observe your loved ones, you'll figure out which language they speak fluently ... and that's the language they, in turn, want to hear from you.

I believe we all have the capability of speaking all the languages, and what a useful skill to learn and apply to ourselves and to others! Reading this book could greatly affect your Valentine's Day and all the rest to come.

As ever, whether you read electronically, on



Showin' Some Love



the paper page or listen to audio books, please utilize our library system and take advantage of our county's delightful local bookstores, both new and used.

Local poet, Fran Resendez, is retired from 20 years of bookselling at the former Leaves of Grass Books in Willits. Getting her first library card was one of the happiest days in her reading life.

pho•tog•ra•phress
[fuh-tog-rub-friss]

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Happy Valentine's Day

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It's almost Valentine's Day, and Willits Weekly is once again excited to feature photos of the community's loved ones this holiday.
We will print as many photos as we can in the February 13 edition.
Please email photos to willitsweekly@gmail.com, post them to our Facebook page, or text them to 707-972-7047.
Also, please include a caption, identifying yourself, as well as those in the photo. First names only are OK.
An example:
"Happy Valentine's Day to my sweetie ___ [their name] ___!
Love, ___ [your name] ___."
All photos must be submitted by MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10 at 5 pm.

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Willits Weekly

A Village & Business Journal of Community and Life in Willits

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Figure 1: Air tube for measuring depth to water. (Pump and pump column not shown.)

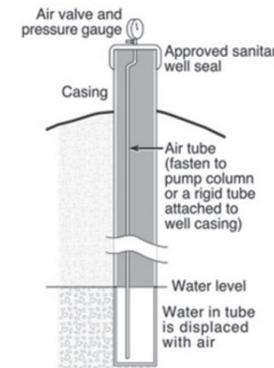


Illustration from G. Morgan Powell and Danny Rogers, "Measuring the Depth to Water in Wells," Kansas State University, July 2005.

Puzzle Page

Activities & fun for kids of all ages

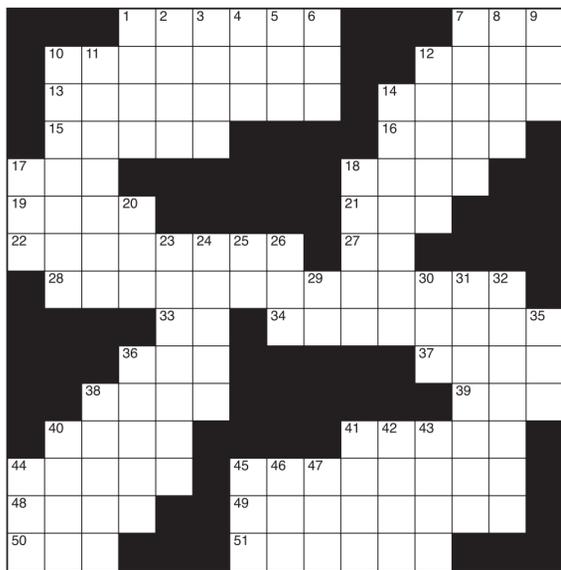
ROLLERSKATING WORD SEARCH

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

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| ADULTS | COMPETITIVE | FREE SKATE | SERPENTINE |
| APEX | COUNTERCLOCK- | NLINE | SKATING |
| AXIS | WISE | JUMP | SPIN |
| BALANCE | DANCE | LEAN | STUNTS |
| BOOT | EDGE | LINKAGE | TOES |
| BRACKET | ENTERTAINMENT | PATTERN | TRAILING |
| CHANGEDGE | FIGURES | RECREATION | TRANSITION |
| CHILDREN | FOOT | RINK | UNSTEADY |
| CIRCLE EIGHT | FOOTWORK | ROTATION | WHEELS |

Crossword Puzzle



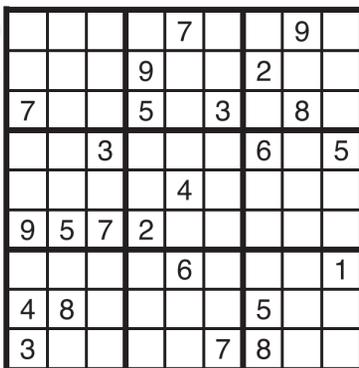
CLUES ACROSS

- Take by theft
- Cash machine
- Removed from attendance
- Old World buffalo
- Spread by dividing
- Herd of unshorn sheep
- Main arterial vessel
- Carbamide
- In the style of
- Leafstalk angle
- Physiques
- Command right
- Gratuitous
- Printed display
- Dexter inspector
- 'Hammer Time's' initials
- Making one ashamed
- Hill (Celtic)
- Expletive
- Surface
- Atomic weight

CLUES DOWN

- Russian Emperor (var. sp.)
- Take hold of
- South American Indian
- Commune in northern France
- 'Run to Him' singer Bobby
- Doctor of Education
- Celestial intermediary
- Roman garment
- More (Spanish)
- Ear shell
- Diversify
- A lofty nest
- Dinner jackets
- Swiss river
- Publicists
- Hollow cylinders
- Most hirsute
- Wading bird
- Not in residence
- Arrived extinct
- Property injury
- Blue eyed cat
- Alliance between nations
- Headquarters
- Container weight adjustments
- Chadic language Bura-_____
- Tributary of the Seine
- Length x width
- A small dent
- Distribute
- A gratuity
- Possessed
- Overgarment
- A doctrine

Sudoku



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!

Nancy Ellis-Bell COLUMN | On the Screen
Columnist

Film Review: 'Captain Phillips'

As an actor, Tom Hanks continues to take us on a roller coaster ride of roles that run the gamut from a victim of AIDS, to a mentally challenged adult with "special gifts," to a "Ladykiller," to a lovestruck geek in "Lost in Seattle," to his most current role in "Captain Phillips," based upon the true story of a Somali pirate attack where Hanks' real-life character is taken hostage. Concurrent to the release of "Captain Phillips" was Hanks' portrayal of Walt Disney in

"Mrs. Banks," but that film seems to have quickly fallen by the wayside.

I wasn't enthused about seeing either of his newest films: the Disney release because the previews seemed to indicate more of a Disney creation than an insightful portrayal of a man historically full of contradictions, and the pirate movie because I couldn't imagine two-plus hours of a man trapped in a pod with the aforementioned pirates. Then came a weekend with no other viable film options, so at the request of my husband, we jumped into those cinematic international waters. Not only was I not bored, I was riveted. The film is based on the true account by Richard Phillips and follows the first pirate capture of an American cargo ship in 2009.

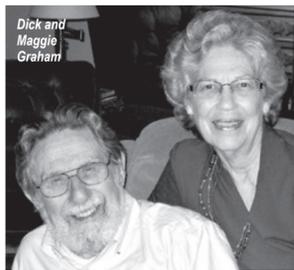
Hanks' captain persona starts off rather like the traditional, button-down seafarer, who seems to view his post as captain of an international cargo vessel as a job to be done where he is totally "by the book" and is methodical about dotting every "i" and crossing every "t." He is nearly without any visible emotion, and an awareness of pirate attacks doesn't seem to sink into his psyche. Clearly, his crew respects him, but their camaraderie is pale. However, this is a carefully structured film (directed by Paul Greengrass), full of conceits, strong contextual clues and surprises to come.

Enter a speck on the horizon which, of course, gradually morphs into a Somali attack vessel manned by a motley crew of misfits. The viewer now begins to see a different aspect of our predictable captain. Efficiency and emotion begin to reveal an evolving character bent on survival, and Hanks begins to realistically show us the surprising layers that make up his one-dimensional first impression. In many ways I began flashing back to his performance in "Philadelphia," where we watch his character deconstruct on a physical level while escalating on a heroic level. Our Captain Phillips begins to reveal a much more steely individual, whose determination to save his crew brings about his own capture as a hostage: a surprisingly wide range of emotions and strategic thinking launches the viewer into a tight, compelling battle for survival.

Nor are the Somali pirates simple stereotypes; they reveal the politics of piracy, as the ill-prepared group attempts to negotiate a hostage release deal. There are also politics on the American side, where Navy Seals are called in to handle the situation "at whatever cost," specifically with respect to Phillips. As the hours of his confinement in the tiny enclosed lifeboat bring him closer to the reality of death - whether at the hands of the pirates or of his own government - we see deeper and deeper layers of his character. I won't spoil the ending for those who have yet to see the movie, but I was surprisingly moved to tears in those short, final scenes.

Hanks may have touched a chord in me, but the film awards communities seem to be casting him adrift. I think the issue comes down to one word: subtlety. Christian Bale in "American Hustle" (which I loved) delivers an in-your-face performance, and brilliantly. Hanks' brilliance is more kaleidoscopic, and I fear that the American hunger for sometimes vulgar reality may have pushed Hanks overboard. Only the viewing public will be able to offer him a lifeline.

Nancy Ellis-Bell is a former professor and current literary agent/author who has lived in Willits for the past 20 years. Aside from her passion for the sharing of ideas, she is also addicted to parrots, koi and a garden that just won't stop growing.



potluck food bar was exceptional, accompanied by Victor's very fine home-brewed 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon.

Those in attendance included Mary Kanne, formerly of Firefly Studio in the Grange, with husband, Greg Kanne, another former Willits City Councilmember; Greg and Peggy Randrup, who we all know from the Mendocino College Willits office; Erin Carney, a former midwife who has delivered hundreds of babies, and Jane Futcher, noted local author of the book "Women Gone Wild." They are new settlers out at Cherry Creek. Other guests included John and Lena Hofmaister, longtime residents who divide their time between town, Sherwood Ranch and grandparenting; Maggie Graham with husband, Dick Graham, director of the recent play "Two Across" at the Willits Community Theater; and Ron and Dawn Jacobs, relative newcomers to Willits, who have recently studied Spanish in Norma's college classes. Ron is from England and Dawn speaks German.

Attention to the game differed widely among the guests, with some deeply into the outcome, cheering on the Denver Broncos, who lost humiliatingly to the Seattle Seahawks. Maggie, classical musician with zero interest in professional sports, surprised everyone by attending last year's Super Bowl party for her first foray into the world of football and cheering louder than anyone else. This year it was mostly the food and conversation which captured her attention.

- Submitted by a happy guest of the Super Bowl party

The rest of Letters | From Page 2

and spiritual healing.

When I first started my career with Adventist Health in 1987, the climate and landscape of health care bore some similarities to its current state. Private insurance was becoming more common; changes in how hospitals get paid and how patients were treated and cared for were becoming highly regulated. It really was not much different from our health-care landscape of today, where the Affordable Care Act is said to make a sizable impact on around 8,000 of our community members in Mendocino County alone.

As I look toward the future, I can't help but be optimistic. Despite differences over the ACA and reductions in reimbursements, I remain committed to the people that call this beautiful region home. In fact, in 2014, Frank

R. Howard Memorial Hospital, under the leadership of CEO Rick Bockmann, will be opening a brand-new facility in Willits, and Ukiah Valley Medical Center, under the leadership of CEO Gwen Matthews, will be opening a brand-new oncology suite, offering a more tranquil and healing environment, and will also be working toward expansion of the Emergency Room, Intensive Care Unit, and Trauma Center - bringing new technology, physicians, and services to our community. Together the people of Adventist Health, HHM and UVMC will provide care for generations to come.

I wish each of you good health so that you may "Live Younger Longer."

Jeff Eller, president, Northern California Network of Adventist Health

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Can you fill these shirts?

Willits Police Department looking for volunteers

Willits Police Chief Gerry Gonzalez holds shirts that will become part of the uniform of the new V.I.P.S. volunteer program.

Photo by Jennifer Poole

Willits Police Chief Gerry Gonzalez is looking for a few good men or women to become V.I.P.S. - "Volunteers in Police Services."

We all know that whether you work in a private business or in the public sector, there are many fiscal challenges right now. As times change, we all look for new, efficient and inventive ways to perform our jobs. As the economy becomes more restrictive, we look for ways to stretch our budgets. So Chief Gonzalez decided to develop a volunteer program to help maintain the coverage and protection afforded the town by the Willits Police Department, all with the lowest fiscal impact.

Including the community as part of the solution is an important part of the new "Volunteers in Police Services" (V. I. P.S.) program. While investigating the possibilities of a volunteer program, the chief found there were a few nearby police departments, including the cities of Arcata and Clearlake, which had initiated citizen volunteer programs.

Chief Gonzalez visited these departments to gain perspective for the program he wanted to bring to Willits, and discovered these programs had quickly become very successful and well-regarded within their communities. So, with that encouragement, the Willits Police Department is now actively recruiting local citizens to become part of the V.I.P.S. volunteer program.

If you are over the age of 18 (there is no maximum age) and are interested in helping to make Willits a safer, more secure and healthier community, you are encouraged to apply as a volunteer in V.I.P.S. Selected volunteers will perform a wide variety of integral operations within the WPD and throughout the Willits community. As a V.I.P.S. volunteer, you will contribute to building stronger relationships between the WPD and your community, while helping to create a safe environment and enhancing the quality of life in your town.

V.I.P.S. assignments will vary and are

tailored to the individual's interests and abilities. Volunteer assignments may include such tasks as neighborhood patrol, vacation house checks, clerical and records, traffic control and helping with walk-in inquiries. There are many jobs within the police department, Gonzalez says, that volunteers could perform so that sworn officers could spend more time on the street doing what they do best: keeping the city secure. The primary objectives for V.I.P.S. volunteers are to assist WPD personnel by performing tasks that are highly important to the operation, yet do not require a sworn officer.

Chief Gonzalez went on to explain that he is looking for citizens from all walks of life and with diverse levels of experience and backgrounds. Willits V.I.P.S. members must be of good character and carry a strong desire to support public safety, while contributing to creating a strong and healthy community.

One part of the V.I.P.S. program is to have trained volunteers contribute to preventing crime by their mere presence, being highly visible while on neighborhood patrol and identifying public hazards. Members will also act as the eyes and ears of the Willits Police Department, by identifying suspicious activities, crimes in progress, or dangerous circumstances. The volunteers will be trained to identify, not to take direct action themselves, but to notify the dispatch or their supervisor. As Chief Gonzalez puts it, "Volunteers are trained to observe and report, not take action."

All applicants will be required to complete a standard police department pre-employment application and background check before they can be considered for assignment. Volunteers must also have a good driving record.

Citizens who are interested in becoming a V.I.P.S. volunteer or who would like more information on the program, should leave a message at the Willits Police Department's V.I.P.S. line at 459-7178 for V.I.P.S. Director Ron Moorhead. Applications are also available at the WPD front desk.

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Thursday, February 6

Sewing, Knitting & Crochet Circle: 3 to 5:30 pm at the Little Lake Grange, during the Willits Farmers Market. This afternoon's session features mentor Marcia Andrews, sharing her experience in a wide variety of craftwork, including knitting, crochet, sewing, quilting, and more. Sponsored by the Little Lake Grange Women's Association. There are also sewing machines and materials available in Room 10. Info: 459-6362.

"Tea and Crumpets with the Principal": Parents, concerned citizens and community members are invited to come and speak informally with WHS Principal Jeff Ritchley, "and catch up on what is going on at the high school." from 3:30 pm "until our conversations end" at WHS, 299 North Main Street. Principal Ritchley: "I look forward to speaking with you, and celebrating Willits High School successes."



Shanachie Pub: the first night of an every-other month series of jazz with the Dorian May Trio and special guests. 8 pm. No cover. Tonight's guests are tenor sax players Sunny Cordell (Funky Dozen, Safe Sax and Samba Jamba) and Jim Leonardis (Rural Jazz Project and more) for a special night of "Tenor Madness," swinging standards, bebop and some Latin jazz. Dorian May, premier local bandleader, teacher, and keyboard artist, together with his wife Dorothea May on upright bass and Tom Rickard on drums, "form one of the area's most popular jazz trios." 50 B South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Friday, February 7

Tom Woodhouse for Supervisor Campaign HQ Grand Opening: from 4 to 7 pm today at 2 North Street. "Drop by and say hello"; drinks and snacks. More info: 367-6334.

Jessica Cox, inspirational speaker: International keynote speaker Jessica Cox visits Willits this weekend, and gives a free talk tonight at 7 pm at the Willits Community Center, 111 East Commercial Street. Sponsored by the Ministers Association of Willits. The public is invited (please arrive early as seating is limited). "Cox will be sharing her personal story of overcoming challenges and reaching her full potential, and how you can do it too.... Born without arms, Cox flies airplanes, drives cars and otherwise lives a normal life using her feet as others use their hands. Cox also holds the Guinness World Record for being the first armless person in aviation history to earn a pilot's certificate, as well as being the first armless black-belt in the American Taekwondo Association." Visit www.rightfooted.com for more info about Cox.

Shanachie Pub: the return of The Cherry Pickers, progressive bluegrass from the Bay Area, featuring Isaac Cantor on banjo, Riley Hill on guitar, Rich Kearns on mandolin, and Leo Suarez on bass, "walking the line

Ongoing events:

Willits Farmers Market: Winter market at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Winter produce, hot house tomatoes, local meats, dinner, crafts, live music (Farmers Market band this week) and more.

Willits Community Drum Circle: 7 to 10 pm at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street. Every 2nd and 4th Fridays. 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.

Big Screen video games: Fridays from 4 to 5:30 pm at the Noyo Theatre. Arcade-style games, multi-player, with both casual and cartoony fighting games. Everyone gets a chance at the controller. Moderated by assistant manager Steve Thornton: "Gamemaster Steve." Fridays afternoons to start, with hoped-for expansion to an evening tournament-like event. \$5 (no gift certificates or passes accepted). 57 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-6660.

Willits Frontier Twirlers: Beginner's classes in basic and mainstream square dance at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street, from 6:45 to 8 pm, then dancing until 9 pm, with professional caller Lawrence Johnstone, who will teach and call. Every Monday night; classes are free for beginners. Info: 459-9526.

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 7 pm; Karate: Kids aged 5 to 11 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

Work Days for Grange School of Agricultural Arts: scheduled on many Saturdays at the school site at Ridgewood Ranch, 16200 Highway 101. Skilled and unskilled help needed. Bring gloves and tools, if you have them. Follow the "Farm School" signs. Please drive slow on the ranch. Lunch available for those who RSVP by Friday each week (drop-in volunteers welcome, too). Work days (rain or shine) set for: February 8, 15 and 22. These volunteer days will focus on renovating the schoolhouse, building student housing, planting cover crop, and pruning in our well-established orchard. Custom work days or events can be scheduled by contacting director Antonia Partridge at (707) 272-1395 or farmdirector@californiagrango.org. More info at <http://californiagrango.org/agschool/mision.html>.

Shanachie Pub: Open mic every Wednesday at 8:40 pm. Sign-ups start at 3 pm. 50 B South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Just For Fun Choir: directed and accompanied by Nancy New. Meets Mondays at the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road, from 1 to 2:30 pm. Accepting new members of all ages and abilities. Info: call Nancy New at 459-1276.

Brooktrails Lodge Winter Schedule: every Thursday night at 8 pm: "Dream Capsule Entertainment," featuring local musicians and talent; Happy Hour, and Ladies' Night specials. Every Friday night: Open Mic, with drink specials and prizes. Every Saturday night: "Electro-Dance" at 7 pm. Info: Shawntee Wirth at dreamcapsuleindustries@gmail.com or 459-6792.

Laytonville Winter Farmers Market: Mondays from 2:30 to 4:30 at the Laytonville Grange, 1620 Branscomb Road. Buy local: vegetables, apples, juice, bakery, beef, lamb, pork, jewelry, aprons, children's clothing, knife sharpening and more.

What's Happening Around Town

Things to do, see and enjoy in and around Willits

between contemporary and traditional music." 8:30 pm. No cover. Visit www.thecherrypickersband.com/home for info, music and videos. 50 B South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Saturday, February 8

Fruit Tree Workshop with Richard Jeske: offered by home orchardist Richard Jeske, from 10 am to noon at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. "Learn what to grow here and how to plant and care for your fruit tree with the goal of actually getting some delicious fruit to eat." Richard has more than 30 years of experience as a pruner and fruit consultant. Sponsored by WELL (Willits Economic Localization). Suggested donation: \$5. Info: Richard at 459-5926.



Bridge Lessons: the Friends of the Willits Library is sponsoring free bridge lessons for beginners on Saturdays, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm in the conference room of the Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street, starting today. Taught by Donna Vaiano, accredited bridge teacher by the American Contract Bridge League, who will present eight lessons in basic bridge for students of all ages. Students under 13 years old must have written permission from parent or guardian to participate. Learn by playing: no experience needed! Contact Donna at donna@sonic.net or 459-9035 for additional information.

Stand for the Land! a Water Ceremony for Little Lake Valley & Warbler Tree Sit Anniversary Celebration. 12 noon at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Featuring the Round Valley Feather Dancers, music, speakers, and poetry. Sponsored by Save Our Little Lake Valley (SOLLV). More info: 707-367-5202, www.savelittlelakevalley.org and www.facebook.com/savelittlelakevalley

Dry Branch Fire Squad: The veteran bluegrass band, featuring lead vocalist Ron Thomason's storytelling as well as music, returns to Willits, for a concert presented by the Willits Rotary Club. A benefit for scholarships for Willits High School. Dry Branch Fire Squad members are: Ron Thomason (MC, lead singer, mandolin, banjo, guitar), Brian Aldridge (guitar, mandolin), Tom Boyd (banjo, resophonic guitar) and Dan Russell (bass). Ted Lehman of the Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival describes Thomason



Willits Educational Foundation's Drive-Through Tri-Tip Dinner

The annual fundraiser for music, art and library projects in the Willits schools is set for Friday, March 7 this year. "The Pinon, Cooley and Goss crew will be barbecuing the best tri-tip in the county!" Tickets are \$60 for dinner for four, including a whole tri-tip, Caesar salad, Goss Family beans, Emandal bread, cookies, and a rose from Flowers by Annette.

Dinners can be picked up between 4 and 6 pm at the Willits Rodeo Grounds on East Commercial Street. Tickets are available at Cat's Meow and the Goods' Shoppe, by calling Warren Lewis at 459-4429, or through Linda Colvig, Joan Thomas, Anne Hammond, Mike Colvig and George Husarek at the schools. Ticket deliveries happily arranged.

Last year's tri-tip fundraiser allowed the foundation to fund the following projects (all requested by teachers and schools):

Baechtel Grove received PE materials, Renaissance Fair materials, math classroom supplies, and music program supplies (\$1,750).

Blosser Lane received new social studies novels and funding for art classes (\$1,200).

Brookside School received MP3 players, art/craft supplies, young author fair book supplies, novels, and Rigby PM readers (\$1,973.50).

New Horizons received books (\$225).

Sherwood School received gardening supplies, games and PE equipment (\$324.43).

Willits High School received microscopes and supplies for the after-school cooking program (\$1,000).

Overall, in 2013, the Willits Educational Foundation was able to donate a total of \$16,152.75 to the Willits schools.



"Flaming Idiots": front row: Joey Kroh, Steve Marston and Dylan Louth. Back row: Elk McCarthy, Gloriann Lucero, Kevin Klay, R.S. Boyd, Tami Potter and Lee Stipe

as "the closest thing bluegrass has to offer to a genuine Will Rogers, Mark Twain kind of humorist" and calls the band "one of the most important and entertaining bands in bluegrass, and much deserving of wider recognition." 7:30 pm at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street. Tickets, \$20, are available at Willits Furniture, La Bodega, Willits Pet Care, Willits Redwood Company, and the Mendocino Book Company in Ukiah.

Shanachie Pub: The CruX: "an encyclopedic band of multi-instrumentalists, performing barn dance tunes, klezmer jams, pirate shanties, and bluesy dirges in a theatrical performance style. Their sound is an energetic brand of folk music enlivened with a taste of punk." This Santa Rosa band returns to the Pub after a very successful debut in October. 9 pm. \$5. 50 B South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Sunday, February 9

Sober Grad Benefit Breakfast: 8 to 11 am at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Cooked by the Grange and served by Willits High School and Willits Charter School seniors, featuring pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, orange juice, coffee and tea. \$6; \$5 seniors; \$4 kids age 10 and under. Breakfast-to-go boxes available. Raffle tickets on sale for the Sober Grad Valentine's Gift Basket: "the raffle basket is about a \$400 value; it comes with a dozen red roses from Flowers by Annette, gift items from Cat's Meow and ER Energy, a movie pass, chocolate, and more." Raffle tickets are \$1 each and 6/\$5. The Sober Grad Gift Basket will also be on display Saturday, February 8, in front of Rite Aid from 10 am to 2 pm.

Senior Center Pancake Breakfast: 8 to 11 am. Second Sundays at the Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Pancakes, eggs (any style), bacon, sausage, or ham, orange juice, coffee. \$6 members; \$7 non-members; under 12, \$5. Info: 459-6826.

Grange Farm School Pruning Workshop: the California State Grange Farm School's first workshop, on "Fruit Tree Pruning and Orchard Care," is offered today at Ridgewood Ranch, six miles south of Willits. 10:30 am to 4 pm. Information-packed lecture and guided hands-on practice, at an orchard including both small young trees and large old mature trees: apple, cherry, pear, Asian pear, and peach. Topics include how to prune correctly for different species; how to restore neglected trees, how to establish a new orchard, and disease management. Lunch included for those who pre-register: www.californiagrango.org/agschool/events.html; questions: 1-866-447-2643.

"Travels in Cuba: Lessons in Agriculture": A showing of the film "Ttrialismo," a documentary about a successful organic farm cooperative near Havana, followed by slides and discussion led by Willits Mayor Holly Madrigal, who recently spent two weeks traveling in Cuba. 4 pm at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. "Madrigal will share many

Dry Branch Fire Squad

Willits Rotary continues its annual Bluegrass Concert Series, presenting Dry Branch Fire Squad at the Willits Center for the Arts on Saturday, February 8 at 7:30 pm. The show is one of several community events that Rotary sponsors to raise funds for scholarships for Willits High School

Dry Branch Fire Squad members are: Ron Thomason (MC, lead singer, mandolin, banjo, guitar), Brian Aldridge (guitar, mandolin), Tom Boyd (banjo, resophonic guitar) and Dan Russell (bass).

Ted Lehman of the Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival says: "Social commentary coupled with song choices from the oldest traditions of music to new and catching lyrics make Dry Branch Fire Squad one of the most important and entertaining bands in bluegrass, and much deserving of wider recognition."

Tickets, \$20, are available at Willits Furniture, La Bodega, Willits Pet Care, Willits Redwood Company, and the Mendocino Book Company in Ukiah. Bring the whole family to the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street, and enjoy a special opportunity to hear a nationally recognized group perform in an intimate concert setting.

Reduced adoption fee for cats in February

During the month of February, the Ukiah Animal Shelter is offering a reduced adoption fee for cats and kittens: \$30 for one and \$50 for two (when adopted the same day). "We have cats and kittens – many colors, sizes, personalities – and this reduced adoption fee applies to our adoptable cats and kittens of all ages. Please come hang out with the cats in our cat colony room, and make a friend for life!"

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 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.pawstoadopt.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. We also have many barn cats available for free, to qualified adopters.

Info: contact Adoption Coordinator, Katherine Houghtby at 707-467-6453 or houghtbyk@co.mendocino.ca.us or come in during shelter hours.

'Flaming Idiots' at WCT

In the opening gambit for "Flaming Idiots," a new farcical play opening at the Willits Community Theatre on Friday, February 14, two guys face a serious restaurant problem. Carl and Phil have no customers, while down the street Zippy's is always mobbed because a gangster was shot there more than 20 years ago. Maybe Carl and Phil should have someone murdered in their place. But who, by whom, and how? Oh decisions, decisions.

The play, directed by Damian Sebhouian, is best described as a "rollicking comedy." Written by English playwright Tom Rooney, it was the winner of the 1992 new American Comedy Festival Award.

"Flaming Idiots" will play February 14 through March 2 at 8 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, 7 pm on Thursdays, with Sunday matinees on February 23 and March 2 at 2 pm. Tickets are available in person at Goods' Shoppe in Willits, online at brownpapertickets/events/566116, or by phone at 459-0895.

For this 2014 season opening, the theatre will offer complimentary champagne.

inspiring stories about the people, farms, and way of life in the isolated island nation. Discussion will focus on how we can bring the lessons of Cuba home to Willits." Sponsored by Willits Economic Localization (WELL). Info: 459-0447.

Laytonville Seed and Scion Exchange: 11 am to 3 pm at 375 Harwood Road, Laytonville. Hosted by the Long Valley Garden Club. Info: 984-7108.

"The Cannabis Renaissance" first of a monthly speaker series sponsored by the Long Valley Garden Club in Laytonville. Featuring Kerry Reynolds, host of KMUD's "Cannabis News Update," who will review highlights in the last two years of cannabis news, including scientific and medicinal developments, dramatic shifts in public opinion on pot, the expansion of medical marijuana laws, and the U.S. government's responses. Roberts will also examine legalization in Colorado and Washington, as well as the current efforts toward legalization in California. 4 to 6 pm, no charge. 375 Harwood Road. Info: 984-6587.

Monday, February 10

Willits Garden Club Meeting: monthly meeting, this month with John Jensen, owner of Oak Valley Nursery in Ukiah, who will speak about "Landscaping with native California plants": how to survive and thrive without water. At Golden Rule Mobile Village Clubhouse, 16100 North Highway 101, south of Willits. Presentation starts around 1 pm; social hour starts at 12:30 pm; end time 2:30 pm. Refreshments will be served. Guests are welcome and there is no charge. Info: Willits Garden Club President Gary Bodensteiner, at 459-2798.

Ice Cream Social: from 2:30 to 3:30 pm at the Willits Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Entertainment by DJ Mike Tobin playing 40s, 50s, and 60s hits. Also: "Name that Tune," games, prizes, pie, ice cream, and coffee. \$1.15 for members; \$1.50 non-members.

Tuesday, February 11

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: "Ride Along" and "August Osage County." For showtimes: www.noyotheatre.com. 57 East Commercial Street. 459-6660.

Friday, February 14

"Flaming Idiots": a new "rollicking comedy" by English playwright Tom Rooney opens the 2014 season tonight at the Willits Community Theatre Playhouse. Directed by Damian Sebhouian, the play is about two guys who "face a serious restaurant problem": they have no customers." The theatre is offering

New Grange Farm School Opens

Inspired by the historic mission of the California State Grange, the new Grange School of Agricultural Arts provides training in sustainable agriculture, for farmers, home-scale producers, and youth. Offerings include workshops, and live-work-study opportunities on holistic crop and livestock production, as well as traditional homestead skills. The school is located on the beautiful 5,000-acre Ridgewood Ranch, six miles south of Willits.

The school will open its doors this Sunday, February 9, for its first workshop, on fruit tree pruning and orchard care. Future workshops will be offered on topics such as water-efficient irrigation, grey-water use in the landscape, keeping backyard chickens, and hoop-house construction.

Applications for practicum student positions are being accepted now. These students live on-site, pay no tuition, and contribute to development of the farm through hands-on service learning. This program will only be offered in the first years of the school, 2014 and 2015.

The school will host tours and open-house work days for volunteers on three Saturdays in February: the 8th, 15th, and the 22nd. For more information, contact Director Antonia Partridge at: farmdirector@californiagrango.org or visit www.californiagrango.org/agschool.

Coming up at Shanachie Pub

Thursday, February 13: Jazz Night. 8 pm, no cover

Friday, February 14: Dysfunctional Species Valentines Party. 9 pm, \$8

Saturday, February 15: Jacob Green, one man band. 8 pm, no cover

Monday, February 17: Laura Meyer, singer/songwriter. 6 pm, no cover

Thursday, February 20: Steven Bates, coastal guitarist. 6 pm, no cover

Friday, February 21: Darius Lux, singer/songwriter. 8 pm, no cover

Saturday, February 22: House of Love. 9 pm, no cover

Thursday, February 27: Jazz Night. 8 pm, no cover

Saturday, March 1: Savannah Fuentes Flamenco. 8 pm, \$8

complimentary champagne for tonight's performance. "Flaming Idiots" plays Thursdays (7 pm), Fridays (8 pm), Saturdays (8 pm) and Sunday, February 23 and Sunday, March 2 (2 pm) through March 2. Tickets are available in person at Goods' Shoppe in Willits, online at brownpapertickets/events/566116, or by phone at 459-0895. See article elsewhere on Calendar page for more details.

Saturday, February 15

Willits Charter School's Take-Home Valentine's Dinner: 6th annual dinner benefits 6th Grade Museum Field Trip to San Jose. Dinners for two: BBQ tri-tip, \$30; grilled chicken or portobello mushroom, \$25; single-meal tickets \$20. Included in each meal: baked potato, green salad, dinner roll, dessert and votive candle. Pick up dinners from 4 to 7 pm in front of Willits Charter School, 1431 South Main Street. Tickets are available at the school, 459-5506, or at Goods' Shoppe, 56 Main Street, 459-1363.

Sip Some Soup: the annual fundraiser for Willits Daily Bread, 5 pm at the Willits Community Center. Admission is \$15 per person or \$25 per couple, which includes two ballots to vote for best-tasting soup and for favorite table decoration.

Soup makers still needed! Soup makers pay a \$25 fee, which includes two tickets and ballots. Individuals, businesses and organizations are encouraged to sign up to compete. What soup makers have to do: make about 2 gallons of soup and bring their own crock pot, serving utensils and table decorations (for half of an 8-foot table). Soups may be reheated in the Community Center kitchen, as needed, to fill and refill crock pots. No hot plates allowed, due to electrical load. The evening also features fresh-baked Emandal breads and chocolate chip cookies provided by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Last year's first-place winner – their name engraved on the perpetual trophy at City Hall – was Shanachie Pub, with Cream of Mushroom Soup with Oatmeal Stout. Second place went to a team from Howard Hospital, with Butternut Squash Curry Bisque. Mendocino County Museum won third place last year with their Fusion Pozole. To sign up, or to donate items for this year's silent auction, or to become a Sip Some Soup sponsor (\$250 tax-deductible donation) call Cindy Savage at 459-3947.

"Flaming Idiots": Willits Community Theatre, see Friday, February 14 for details.

Sunday, February 16

Patrick Ball, Celtic harp and spoken word: one show only this afternoon at 2 pm at the Willits Community Theatre Playhouse, 37 West Van Lane. "The crystalline, bell-like resonance of the legendary Celtic harp also takes Ball's listeners into deepest realms of the imagination." Tickets, \$15, are available online at brownpapertickets.com/event/537987; in person at Goods' Shoppe, 56 South Main Street, or call 459-0895 for credit card orders. V'isit: www.patrickball.com.



Promote your event!

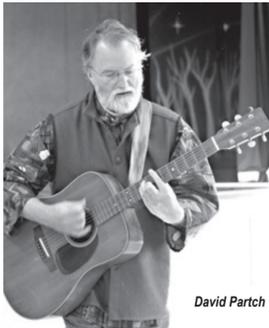
Willits Weekly wants to list your event or special meeting for free in our Calendar! Email details (date, time, location, contact info, cost if any) to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Send us your digital photos or graphics as well (higher resolution photos are best). There is no charge for promoting Willits, Laytonville or Covelo events in Willits Weekly's calendar.

Save the Date

"LocaLights" Concert Series, February 23, Willits Community Theatre
Willits Educational Foundation's annual Drive Through Tri-Tip Dinner, Friday, March 7

Music at the Farmers Market

The Winter Farmers Market continues every Thursday from 3 to 5:30 pm at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Live music schedule for February, March and April as follows: First week of every month, Farmers Market Band; second week of every month, Falco; third week of every month, David Patch; fourth week of every month, Dorian and Dorothea May.



David Patch

Foster Parent Orientation

Tapestry Family Services hosts "Foster Parent Orientations" for residents of Willits, Ukiah, Redwood Valley and Potter Valley on the first and third Thursdays of every month. In February, the orientations are set for Thursday, February 6 and Thursday, February 20, from 5:30 to 6 pm. 290 East Gobbi Street, in Ukiah. Come learn what it takes to become a successful foster parent. Info: call Kippy Burns at 707-463-3300 extension 115, or go to www.tapestryfs.org.

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15 Willits singers: back row, left to right: Wendy Wilmes, John Wagenet, David Knudsen, Allen Garcia, Tim Rice, Anita Elliott, Diane Smalley, and Heidi Gundlach; front row, left to right: Kitty Norris, Susana Wilson, Nancy New, Tom DeMarchi, Madge Strong, Jeri Hulse-Stephens, and Jacki Palmer-Frankle.

Choral group thrills audience

Vocalist and choir director Ann MacDonald – and her choral group – thrilled those assembled at the Willits Methodist Church Sunday morning and again at the Willits Community Theatre Sunday afternoon with their performances of five powerful choral compositions. These two concerts were the culmination of the week-long choral intensive taught by MacDonald every winter in Willits (there's a summer workshop, too). The 15 participants formed the well-rounded four parts that MacDonald looks for in a choir.

The afternoon concert at WCT was complemented by music from The Jand Band, The New Blu Trio, and The Chanterelles, as well as David Partch, reading poetry and singing, Ursula Partch, giving a demonstration of her textile work, Diana Levy-Pert, belly dancing, and Ann MacDonald reading her own collection of poetry.

The WCT concert was attended by more than 50 music and art lovers. The donation jar benefited the ongoing WCT efforts to keep the community well-supplied with live entertainment.

Watch for another performance by the choral workshop this summer. For information on upcoming events at WCT check the theatre website at www.willitstheatre.org; look for "Willits Community Theatre" on Facebook; check Willits Weekly's Calendar page, or call the theatre office at 459-0895.

Photo by Ann MacDonald

– John Wagenet

Sip Some Soup Contest Entry Form February 15, 2014

Name of Competitor, Group, Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone/Fax/Email: _____

Address of Contact Person: _____

Please enclose \$25 entry fee per soup entered (includes 2 "taster" tickets and ballots).

Send to: "Soup" c/o Cindy Savage P.O. Box 1826, Willits, CA 95490 For more information, call Cindy at 459-3947

Classifieds

Algebra, Geometry

College Preparatory Mathematics, Individual Instruction. Mac Smith 459-MATH

Body Life Studio

Jenna Byrne teaches concepts and practices in movement function and expression to activate and utilize your movement and life potential. Private session \$50-\$60. www.bodylifestudio.com.

Community Hu Song

In our fast-paced world, are you looking to find more inner peace? Join us for a Community HU Song Thursday, February 27, at 6 pm at Willits City Hall, 111 E. Commercial Street. HU (pronounced hue) is a simple, uplifting prayer or mantra and 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.

Computer Help

Need help with your computer? I will come to your home or business. PC and Macintosh. Repairs and configuration \$35/hr. Tutoring \$15/hr. Call Liam 459-2470 or email macamerin@yahoo.com.

Dog Training

Dog Training Classes - Puppy and Beginning level. March 4 to April 8. Willits Community Center. Must Pre-register no later than Feb. 25. Info: Sallie at 707-463-3647 or wellmanneredmutts@gmail.com or www.wellmanneredmutts.com.

For Rent

Office/message or art studio for rent. Centrally located. 1 room, with shared reception/waiting room. Off-street parking. Utilities included. \$250/month. Available now. 707-621-3900.

For Rent

1 bedroom, 1 bath downtown apartment for rent in Willits. \$600/month plus \$1,000 security deposit. Water and garbage paid. Available February 15. call 459-4599 for info.

For Rent

2 bedroom, 1.5 bath townhouse. Close to shopping. Garbage paid. Laundry facility on hand. Small backyard. \$795/month. Call Armo: 459-9601.

Gardener Wanted

Weekly watering and outside plant maintenance needed for Willits Pet Care Center. No experience needed. Come by for application and information. 90 South Street in Willits. Available immediately.

Help Wanted

Position available for person who loves to work with people and pets. Experience preferred but not required. Please bring resume to Willits Pet Care Center.

Help Wanted

U.S. Post Office, City Carrier Assistant 1, Willits. City Carrier Assistants hold temporary appointments for periods not to exceed 360 days. Applicants must have a valid state driver's license, a safe driving record, and at least two years of driving experience. Applicants must live within 50 miles of the facility address, 315 South Main Street, Willits, California, to be eligible. \$15.30/hour, paid bi-weekly. Veterans who are entitled to veterans' preference and/or covered by the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act may apply. This job has an exam requirement: applicants who do not have an exam score are being invited to take the exam. Contact: grace.b.zipagan@usps.gov.

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Rummage Sale

Every Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm at 1st Baptist Church, 145 Wood Street. Rain or shine. We accept rummage donations, and have an ever-changing selection of goods!

Get Willits Weekly at home

Help support your locally owned community newspaper with a mail subscription: Willits Weekly is delivered in Friday's first-class mail to Willits addresses: \$75/year or \$40/6 months. Send check and mailing address to: P.O. Box 1698, Willits 95490 or pay using our PayPal account at www.willitsweekly.com.

CLASSIFIEDS!
 \$10 | 30 words | 2 weeks!

Death Notice | Jack Sanders

Jack Sanders of Willits passed away on February 2, 2014, at the age of 63.

Submitted by Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency Public Health

Mendocino County Public Health has confirmed that three deaths have now occurred in Mendocino County related to the H1N1 flu.

Many California counties, and other states, are reporting patients who are critically ill with influenza, including healthy young adults.

The H1N1 strain appears to be the predominant strain circulating in California and the rest of the United States this flu season. The H1N1 virus, which emerged during the 2009 pandemic, causes more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults. It causes severe illness in all age groups, including those younger than 65 years of age.

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults. If you think you have the flu, please contact your physician or clinic.

The flu vaccine – for adults, 19 years

and older, as well as for children and young people – is still available from local primary health care providers and pharmacies. In Willits, both the Safeway and Rite Aid pharmacies have flu shots available to walk-in customers, with no appointment needed. Safeway has shots for age 5 and up, available anytime except when the pharmacist is at lunch on weekends. Rite Aid has shots for age 4 and up, available anytime, although the number of children's vaccinations remaining are limited.

Once vaccinated, it takes approximately two weeks before you are fully protected against the flu. An influenza vaccination is especially important for pregnant women and other people at higher risk for the flu.

At this time Mendocino HHS Public Health has flu vaccinations available for children and young people, age 6 months

through 18 years, who have MediCal or have no insurance. Please call Karen Broderick, LVN, at 472-2681 for details regarding Public Health clinic's schedules.

In addition to flu vaccinations, it's necessary to practice good health habits. If you become ill, you should take actions to stop the spread of germs, including: 1) Stay home when you are sick; 2) Cover your coughs and sneezes; 3) Wash your hands with soap and water; 4) Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; 5) Do not return to work or school until you have been without a fever for 24 hours.

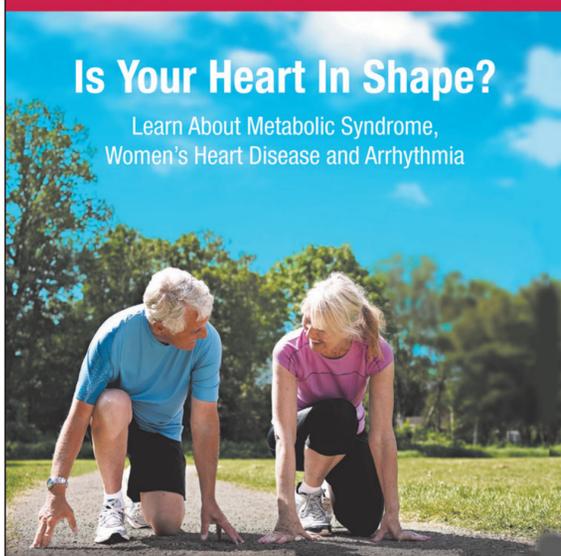
Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency Public Health urges everyone to consider getting vaccinated for protection against influenza.

3 flu deaths in Mendocino County

DESSERT WITH A DOC

Is Your Heart In Shape?

Learn About Metabolic Syndrome, Women's Heart Disease and Arrhythmia



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The Adventist Heart Institute is a leader in the field of cardiology. We unite specially trained, expert physicians with the most advanced technology and innovative treatment options to provide comprehensive, award winning care, right here in your local community.

Join us for a special event dedicated to your heart. Learn about:

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 Find out what it is, if you have it and what you can do to improve.

Heart Disease: Men vs. Women
 Presented by: Interventional Cardiologist Dr. Monica S. Divakaruni
 Women's hearts are different from men's. Learn how risk assessment, diagnosis and interventional options differ for women.

Arrhythmia: What Can You Do About It?
 Presented by: Cardiologist & Cardiac Electrophysiologist Dr. David R. Ploss
 Learn about diagnosis, non-interventional and minimally invasive treatment options available for heart arrhythmias.

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You can also watch the event live at uvmc.org/live.

Furry Friends

Royal Torties

Meet Duchess and Queenie, two female 9-month-old tortoiseshell-colored domestic shorthair kittens! They are affectionate, and they love to play and cuddle, and they can be adopted together or separately. They are currently housed in our lobby, waiting to meet their new families. During the month of February, the county has approved a reduced adoption fee for cats and kittens: \$30 for one and \$50 for two (adopted the same day). We have cats and kittens – many colors, sizes, and personalities – and this reduced adoption fee applies to our adoptable cats and kittens of all ages. Please come hang out with the cats in our cat colony room, and make a friend for life!

The Ukiah Animal Shelter, 298 Plant Road, is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. We have many other wonderful dogs and cats, awaiting their forever homes here as well. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.pawstoadopt.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. We also have many barn cats available, for free, to qualified adopters. More info: contact Adoption Coordinator Katherine Houghtby at 707-467-6453 or houghtbyk@co.mendocino.ca.us.



Photo by Bob Gardner

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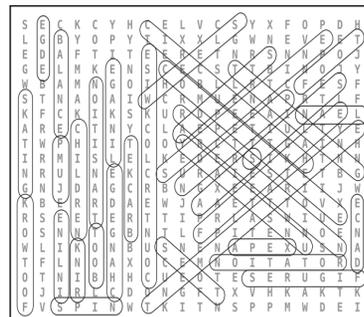
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See full schedule at: www.studiojoywillits.com
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Puzzle Answers From Page 4

THIEVE AT M
 ABSENTEDE ANO A
 BRANCH E D TEGGS
 AORTA UREA
 ALA AXIL
 BONES GEE
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 MC ABASHING
 TOR A T H
 PAVE M E Q
 ARE ADMEN
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Times for 2/17/14 - 2/13/14 This Week's Tightwad Tuesday Titles are in RED - All tickets: \$5

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Boy Scouts in Willits

King holiday. In fact, it was members of Willits Boy Scout Troop 88, their Scoutmaster Matt Anderson, and other adult volunteers who did that task for the January holiday.

Willits Troop 42 has been putting up flags up in Willits on national holidays ever since they were "gifted" flag duty by the American Legion. This year is the first year Troop 88 has been invited, by Troop 42, to share in that task, alternating the 11 national holidays between troops. Troop 42 will be doing flag duty for the next national holiday, President's Day, on Monday, February 17.

Willits Boy Scout Troop 42 meets on Wednesdays at 6 pm at the Scout Hut in the Recreation Grove on East

Willits Weekly reported incorrectly in the January 23 issue that it was members of Willits Boy Scout Troop 212 who put the flags out along Highway 101 on the Martin Luther King holiday.

Commercial Street. Those interested in finding out more about joining Troop 42, can call Scoutmaster Verd VanBezooyen at 489-5364, or stop by any Wednesday meeting.

Willits Boy Scout Troop 88 meets on Wednesdays at 7 pm at the LDS Church, 265 Margie Drive. Those interested in finding out more, can call Scoutmaster Matt Anderson at 367-6537, or stop by any Wednesday meeting.

Willits Boy Scout Troop 212 meets on Tuesdays at 7:30 pm at the First Baptist Church, 145 Wood Street. Those interested in finding out more about joining Troop 212 can call Scoutmaster Ken Pedersen at 459-2138, or stop by any Tuesday meeting.

For more information about Boy Scouting, check the Redwood Empire Council Boy Scouts of America website at www.redwoodbsa.org or the national Boy Scouts of America site at www.scouting.org.

Members of Willits Boy Scout Troop 88, with Scoutmaster Matt Anderson (back row, middle), former Scoutmaster Leon Anderson (back row, next to his son, Matt) and other adult volunteers.

Phoenix Hospice needs fundraising event volunteers

Phoenix Hospice of Willits is looking for volunteers to help with fundraising events this year. Volunteers are needed for a myriad of tasks, from helping with mailings to working at events, creating or posting flyers, or even making a batch of cookies. One important task is to help solicit prizes for benefit drawings or silent auctions from businesses, craftspeople, artists or anyone who might have an interesting item or service they are willing to donate.

Just an hour here and there would help. "It doesn't have to be something you sign up for a schedule, you're a volunteer. You pick your hours. We appreciate anything," said Hospice's Linda Beebe.

"We'd love to do our Spring Fling Drawing this year," Beebe said, "but we need help to organize it, because we've had cuts in the office staff, we don't have as much time to put into fundraising as we used to."

One hundred percent of the monies from all local fundraising – including the Spring Fling Drawing, the annual Golf Tournament hosted by the Willits Rotary Club, and the Light Up a Life event – goes directly back to the community, to families that need help, said Tammy Long, community liaison to Adventist Health Home Care and Phoenix Hospice. Even families with private insurance or Medicaid have hospice expenses that their insurance may not cover, like certain medications or leasing "durable hospital equipment" (hospital beds and walkers, for example) for use at home.

Long hopes to do a Spring Fling Drawing sometime in April; the golf tournament is scheduled for the end of May; and Light Up a Life is in December.

Helping in any capacity with fundraising means helping Phoenix Hospice "connect with the community to try to find resources that people are willing to use to benefit Hospice which, indirectly, benefits all of us in the community," Long said. "Almost everyone here has been touched by Hospice in one way or another.



"The goal of our fundraising is to not turn away any family or patient who needs to have our services. Not everyone has insurance; not everyone qualifies for whatever reason. We want to be able to accept everyone in our program, that's the goal of the fundraising, so we can service everyone who comes to us."

Volunteers are already a crucial part of Hospice. "We do have lots of great patient care volunteers," Beebe said. "We really value our volunteers, and we couldn't survive without them." But there is plenty of help community volunteers could offer, even if they might be intimidated by the thought of doing end-of-life patient care. "We have one volunteer, now in her 80s, who has been working in the office for 14 years," Beebe said. "She comes in twice a week, just for a couple hours."

"We have something for everybody who wants to help out. To have extra help makes any task so much easier," Beebe said. "We need you!"

To find out more about helping with fundraising events for Phoenix Hospice, call 459-1818 and ask for Tammy Long.

Linda Beebe, left, and Tammy Long, enjoying last year's very successful Rotary Golf Tournament, a benefit for Phoenix Hospice. Photo by Jennifer Poole

The rest of Debt | From Page 9

association, the Mendocino County Employees Retirement Association, or MCERA.

The \$220 million retirement debt includes some \$131 million of unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL) and about \$90 million of debt associated with the pension obligation bonds the county offered in 2002 to pay down the retirement debt.

Dickerson said given MCERA's plan to pay off its UAAL and fully fund its obligations by 2037, and the expected costs of paying off its pension obligation bond debt, the county will actually have to pay some \$650 million over the next 26 years, according to Dickerson. That's almost two-thirds of a billion dollars.

He said that debt will be passed on to our children.

"Our county has to pay nearly two-thirds of a billion dollars to eliminate unfunded pension debt created to date," Dickerson said. "[These payments] won't produce one minute of county services or patch one pothole in county roads. Kids not even born yet will be paying this debt. They won't get a thing for it."

He noted "many good things have happened [in the county], and several officials know these dangers must be confronted. But unlike the Titanic, which could have been saved by its captain, our county has 10 captains. Almost all have to agree to change course. A few want to, but they are outnumbered. The inertia is too great."

The rest of Water | From Page 1

new pump and drilling a new well, are no longer part of that estimate, City Manager Adrienne Moore noted.

City council members will decide at a Thursday meeting if they want to spend about \$280,000 to rent a treatment plant for six months.

Willits reservoirs hold steady at about a 100-day-supply of water. The city hopes it can win grant money or use low-interest loans to help pay for the new system.

The firm Water Works Engineers has helped the city to chart projected expenses. An engineer from the firm told Willits officials Monday the city should order its treatment plant six or eight weeks early.

Councilman Larry Stranske is concerned about how ratepayers will be affected during a time when the town is buying less water. "There is definitely going to be a drop in revenue, there is no doubt about it," Stranske said.

The city's current water policy cuts water use by 35 percent for businesses while limiting homes to 150 gallons per day.

"There are some who will do it, and some who will not. We need to jack the heavy-users," Stranske said.

Council members could take action on the city's two-part plan at a special city council meeting expected today.

Councilman Bruce Burton said he would like to see analysis from city bookkeepers on a "benchmark" price for the costs of the treatment plant. He also would like to validate numbers in the city's budget that show a water fund reserve of about \$1.5 million.

Water Plant Operator Steve Anderson said the cost of water treatment chemicals and equipment would increase for the water department.

"I think we are going to have to look at raising the rates, regardless," Anderson said.

The rest of Van Lane | From Page 1

One community success, the dog park near the skate park on Commercial Street, shows some projects can be finished.

"It was made to work because citizens figured out a way to make it work," Orenstein said.

Realtor Bill Barksdale said the alley was unsafe and a magnet for drug activity. "It is disgusting and it is in the middle of town," he noted.

Over the years, Barksdale said he has cleaned up paint buckets full of defecation, vomit and "various things like that" around the alley.

It is not known to Van Lane supporters how the alley fix-up will be paid for.

"It should never ever be the buzz-kill," Swanton said. "That will be our number one challenge."

The rest of Grace Church | From Page 1

caroling during the holidays have occurred there already.

"We have not got any complaints – it is not like we are using a huge amount of noise," Campbell said.

Councilman Bruce Burton moved to vote on the shortened version of the use permit, without the five-year limit, that passed unanimously.

Burton described the church's efforts as trying to improve the community.

Council members also dropped restrictions on extra parking space.

The use permit for the classrooms restrains outdoor amplified music from 6 am to 10 pm. The property can be inspected by appointment.

The use permit ensures fire safety and that access for disabled persons is provided. The church also will complete an adjustment of the boundaries of its parcels so they can be merged.

The rest of Food Truck | From Page 1

Committee member Denny Sha said he thought that on Main Street any trucks should stay mobile. "Mobile vendors should be mobile and not stay in one place," he said.

A key detail the committee discusses when it meets is where food trucks can be allowed.

"I love the idea of turning it to where people can be because that is much more positive," Committee member Tom Woodhouse said.

Committee members and others have wondered if allowing trucks onto Commercial Street is a good idea.

Chamber of Commerce President Ron Moorhead said the chamber is "strongly against" removing restrictions from Main Street and Commercial Street.

El Mexicano restaurant owner Tony Madrigal said the group needs to think about what it wants the town to look like.

Madrigal says he does not object to food vendors at the weekly Farmer's Market. "I think that is great," he said. "Having something like that is a good idea."

Associate City Planner Karen Gauss said she knows of other cities that require a permit for food trucks.

The chamber's Moorhead asked if food trucks or mobile vendors are in the town's identity. "Do we want a park surrounded by vendors, like Portland, which has turned into a lot of blight?"

When the committee reaches consensus concerning new food truck policy, a draft ordinance will then go to the city council for approval or further changes.

Mayor Holly Madrigal said the city's policy needs to be clear so entrepreneurs can get a clear answer. "We still need to update that and pin it down," she said.

Taqueria Ramirez remains the only food truck in Willits serving up food to its loyal customers Monday through Friday on Blosser Lane opposite the Willits Redwood Company sawmill.

The Revit-Ed Committee meets bi-monthly at City Hall. The committee's five members include Mayor Madrigal, Orenstein, Woodhouse, Sha and Tim King.

The rest of SEIU | From Page 1

pay hike over the near term.

In the current budget, the county has a general fund reserve of \$8.9 million and a contingency fund of \$650,000.

The panel rejected the county's argument that the contingency fund is only for emergencies. It did find the contingency fund could not be used to expand programs or to leverage funding that could support an expansion of programs, but: "the panel sees no compelling reason why the Appropriations for Contingency line in the existing budget cannot be utilized to fund support of existing programs, i.e., salary increases for existing employees."

The county could do so "without violating its reserves policy," according to the panel.

According to SEIU representative Jason Klumb, a 3 percent pay increase for all SEIU employees would cost the county about \$510,000, or \$250,000 in the first year.

In a press release on the outcome of the fact-finding process, County Assistant CEO Kyle Knopp criticized the panel's finding on the salary question, stating "the panel was unable to identify a sustainable source of funding to finance the enhancement."

County officials, including Knopp and County CEO Carmel Angelo, have maintained that the influx of money into the county's coffers which allowed it to sock away nearly \$9 million in reserves was due to receipt of one-time money. County officials have repeatedly stated that this inflow of money is not expected to happen next year.

SEIU's Klumb argued it is a matter of priorities. "Their fiscal policy is overly conservative," Klumb said. "So we are asking them to change their priorities. Instead of putting in \$4 million into the county reserves, you put in \$3.7 million. There has to be a balance. It's about how you find that source of funding."

"Look, they can figure it out," Klumb said. "They figured out how to fund a five-year capital improvement plan. They

figured out how to put money into the contingency fund. They can figure out this.

"Kyle Knopp says we want to fund this pay increase by taking from the reserve fund," Klumb added. "No we don't. What we are saying is, first you do your budget, and then you figure out what you put in reserves. It's a matter of priorities."

Apart from the salary question and one other point, the panel agreed with the county's position on seven of nine points, including the board of supervisors' recent decision to increase employees' contribution to healthcare premiums by 3 percent.

While the SEIU had requested the increase be annulled, the panel found the increase was "reasonable and moderate."

A press release signed by Angelo cited the many benefits county employees receive. "SEIU employees receive 30 hours of personal leave annually, three days of bereavement leave with options to extend, 40 hours of vacation accrual cash-out, 24 hours of banked compensatory time off, a \$20,000 life insurance policy, clothing allowance for certain classifications, access to approved bilingual pay, a defined benefit pension plan, 75 percent cost coverage for health insurance, regularly scheduled merit pay increases of 5 percent, access to three deferred compensation plans, 11 paid holidays, up to 25 days of paid vacation annually with an option to bank an additional 25 days in a year, 15 sick days annually, family sick leave, eight hours of wellness leave, and jury duty pay."

However, according to background information in the panel's fact-finding report, SEIU employees have not had a raise since 2010. With the inclusion of a 10 percent pay cut implemented in February 2012, SEIU employees are now working for the same salaries they received in 2007.



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Kassy Aldaco

crowned 'Miss Mendocino'

Willits resident Kassy Aldaco, 20, was named Miss Mendocino County Saturday night at the 2014 pageant ceremonies at Ukiah High School.

Aldaco is a full-time student at Mendocino College; she works at the Loose Caboose Cafe; and she also works as a "home nanny" for a Willits family.

Aldaco is thrilled about winning the crown. "I feel like I'm living in a dream," Aldaco told Willits Weekly. "I wake up in the morning, and I remember I'm not just Kassy Aldaco anymore."

As winner, Aldaco was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship Saturday night, as well as a \$1,253 bonus, based on the personal fundraising she did for the scholarship program, and \$550 in additional awards. She will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship when she competes in the Miss California pageant in Fresno in June.

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
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There were three young women from Willits among the five competitors for the "Miss Mendocino" title this year – Devina Cash and Aiko Tso, as well as Aldaco – and the pageant ceremony at Ukiah High School Saturday night had an enthusiastic contingent from Willits.

After winning, Aldaco got so many bouquets of flowers she couldn't begin to hold them all. The flowers – and the kids she looks after – remind her each day about her achievement. "The flowers are in so many vases, all over my room, in the bathroom, too," she said. "And the kids talk about it every day: the girls all want to run for 'Miss Mendocino' someday."

Aldaco performed a bilingual vocal of "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" before the audience Saturday night, where contestants were also judged in categories of talent, evening wear, on-stage questions, and physical fitness. Each candidate had a personal interview with the judges that afternoon. Aldaco was also voted "Miss Congeniality" by her fellow contestants.

Aldaco says just competing in the pageant and scholarship program at all was "a huge accomplishment" for her: "totally outside my box."

"I was very insecure and had no confidence," Aldaco said, when she started the process. But now she is proud of herself, "inside and out," and she is looking forward to publicly representing Mendocino County and promoting her platform: "Diabetes Awareness for Kids, K-12."



Kassy Aldaco holds some of the many bouquets she received after winning the "Miss Mendocino" title Saturday night.

"I want to help make a positive change in our community and contribute to decreasing the rate of diabetes in our youth," Aldaco said. "Awareness and action are essential in the fight against diabetes." She has personal experience of the difficulties friends and family have had with the disease. "Diabetes has increased so much in California. I just really want to change that. I love kids, and to make a change, you have to start in your youth. When you're older, it's harder, because you're so set in your ways."

"Kassy was very well educated in the Willits schools," said Verna Jacobs, who's been director of the Miss Mendocino County Pageant for the last 18 years. "She will be working hard throughout the school system, speaking to kids in the Willits and Ukiah schools about her platform."

Other duties for Aldaco – "to thank the community for what they've given her," Jacobs said – will include riding in the Willits 4th of July parade, speaking in front of service clubs and civic organizations around the county, a special appearance at the Yountville veterans home, where she'll sing the National Anthem, and working with the Mendocino County Public Health Department, and probably Adventist Health, on educational programs about diabetes.

Aldaco plans to graduate with an AA degree from Mendocino College in the spring of 2017, then go on to the University of California system. She hopes and dreams to become a pediatrician.

"Kassy has wonderful qualifications to become a very successful young woman," Jacobs said.

Willits Furniture gives \$620 to Willits Educational Foundation



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Mike Smith of Willits Furniture presents a check for \$620 to board members of the Willits Educational Foundation at their monthly meeting last week. From left to right: Annette Pinon, Mike Smith, Joan Thomas and Susan Bertsch.

The funds were the result of the 2013 Christmas season's charity fundraising at the store: customers were asked to give a \$50 donation to the Educational Foundation, and in turn received a \$200 discount on the purchase of an Ekornes Stressless recliner.

Since its beginning in 1968, Willits Furniture has consistently supported local charities and nonprofit organizations. In past years, the Willits Community Health Care Foundation was the recipient of the store's Christmas fundraising. Other groups benefitting from gifts over the years include: Willits Rotary Club (Mike Smith has been a member for 20 years), Hoedown for Hope, Willits Community Theatre, Saint Anthony's Catholic Church, Willits Otters, Little League, local soccer and softball, local schools, Ridgewood T.R.A.I.L. program, the Boosters Club, Willits Senior Center, and many more.

Mike and Margie Smith are committed to their community: "We want to thank and express appreciation to the many families and individuals who have faithfully supported their local furniture store over the years."

Willits Educational Foundation is gearing up for its annual Drive-Through Tri-Tip Dinner, set for Friday, March 7 this year. Tickets for dinner for four (whole tri-tip, Caesar salad, Goss Family beans, Emandal bread, cookies and a rose from Flowers By Annette) are \$60, and are available at Cat's Meow and Goods' Shoppe, or by calling Warren Lewis at 459-4429. See Calendar page for more info on this year's dinner and the projects made possible with funds from last year's event.

Girl Scout Cookie Time!



It's already that time again and, starting February 9, Girl Scouts will be out in full force selling the famous flavors. Boxes are now \$5 each and come in a variety of flavors.

Troops will be stationed in front of Old Mission Pizza, Main Street Music, Safeway and the Willits Library, as well as going door to door though March 16, when the sale ends.

For more information: www.girlscoutcookies.org. To get signed up with a local troop or to become more involved, contact 463-2888.

Sierra Mayfield, 10, is an independent, or "Juliet," Junior Girl Scout. Her goal is to sell 2,000 boxes this year, surpassing her last year's total of 1,500. She is photographed here holding one of the Girl Scouts' most popular cookies: the Thin Mint.

Photo by Maureen Moore