

Donations Accepted Edition No. 439

## Thursday, February 17, 2022

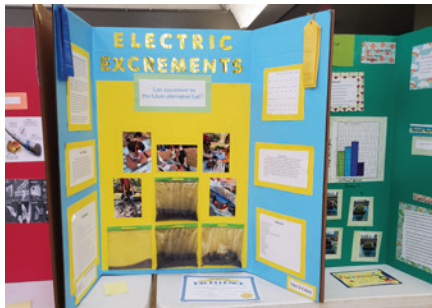
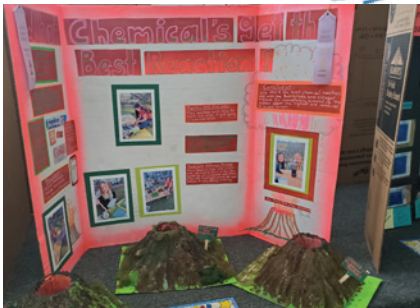
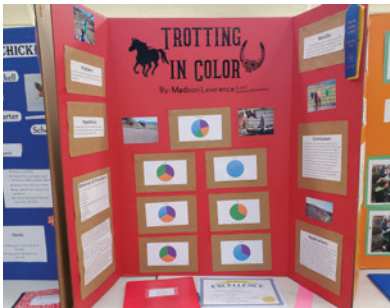
**Joanne Moore**  
Reporter  
joanne@willitsweekly.com

Read the rest of  
**Schools**  
*Over on Page 11*

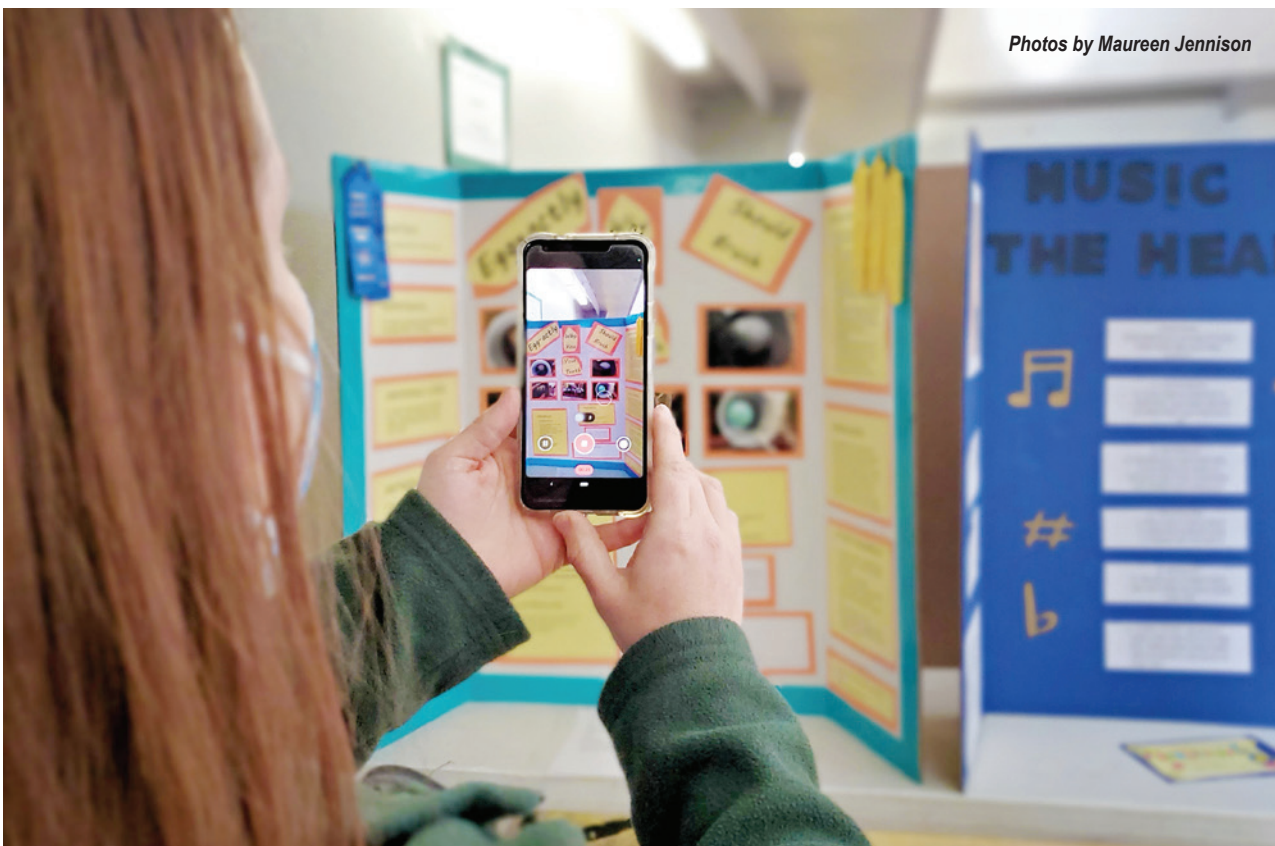
**Barbara O'Reardon**  
Reporter  
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Keith Michalak of Ridgewood Ranch's Golden Rule Gardens Community Supported Agriculture endeavor appeared before the board to promote the crop-sharing plan they are offering. The group, which has been successful in growing 10,000 pounds of organic vegetables, is offering a broad range of

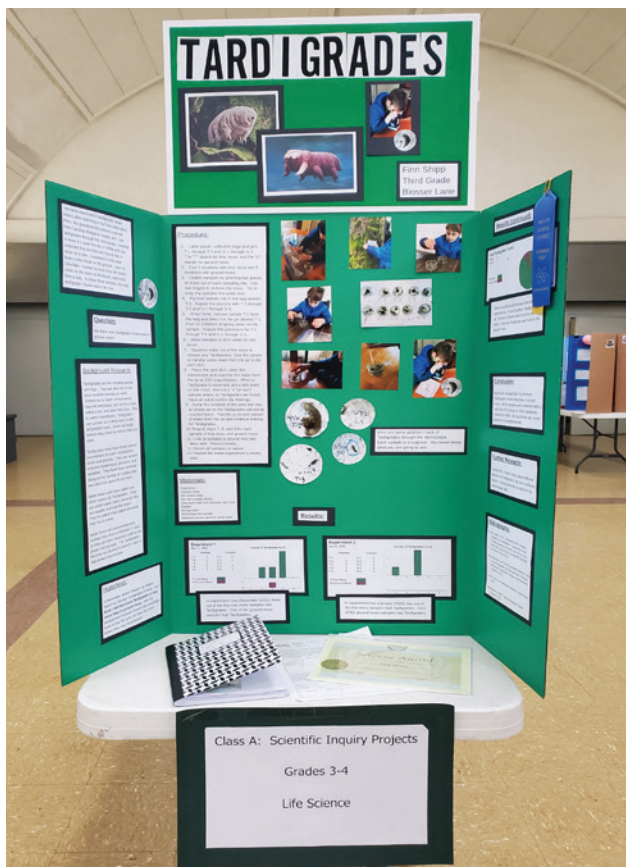
Read the rest of  
**Brooktrails**  
*Over on Page 11*



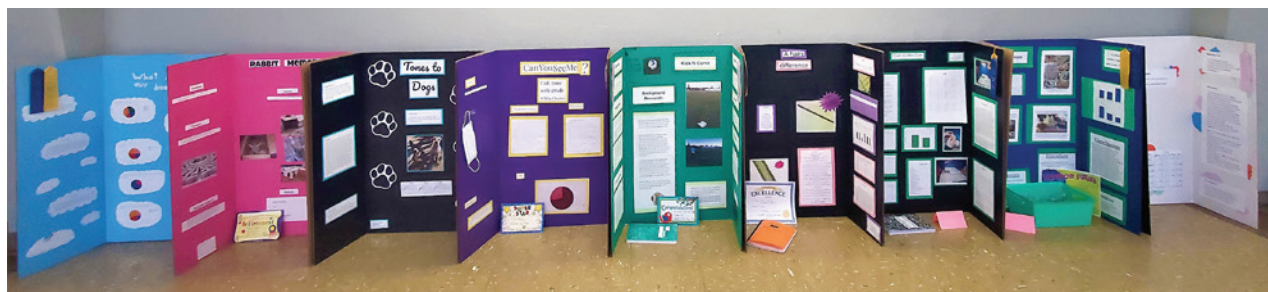
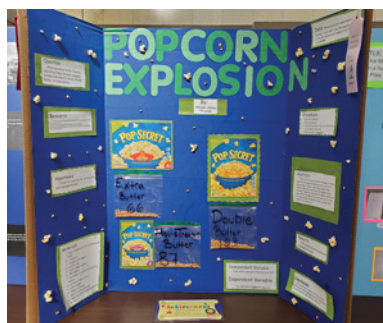
Above, from left: "Trotting in Color" by Madison Lawrence, student at Sherwood School. This project investigated horses' preference for a variety of colors. "What chemicals get the best reaction?" by Tessa Klee and Arya Allendbrand, students at Blosser Lane Elementary, built several volcano models and examined which combinations of substances would produce the most realistic reaction. "Electric Excrements" by Ember Hetherington and K'Allana Arnold, students at Willits Charter School. This project compared a variety of animal manures to see which would be the best alternative fuel source. Below: Willits Science Fair's Erin Vaccaro holds virtual visits through her phone for students and the public to see the 2022 exhibits.



***For a list of county qualifiers, see page 4.***



**Above: "Tardigrades" by Finn Ship, student at Blosser Lane Elementary School. Amazing microscopic creatures called tardigrades can be found here in Willits! Finn's project shows that more tardigrades can be found living in moss growing on trees, rather than moss growing on the ground. At right: Finn also received a special award recognizing his project focusing on environmental science. Far right: "Popcorn Explosion" by Adriana Alvarez, student at Baechtel Grove Middle School. This project studies the effect of the amount of butter on the number of unpopped popcorn kernels.**



Above: High School students at Willits Charter School investigated a wide array of topics, ranging from plant communication to the affect of face masks on someone's ability to identify emotions. Below, left: "The Biggest Bubble" by Jace DeLang, student at Willits Elementary Charter School. Jace demonstrated that Hubba Bubba creates the largest bubbles! Below right: "Can lava be blue?" Macy Davidson, student at Blosser Lane Elementary School. Davidson constructed a model and an informative display about a unique and beautiful volcano in Indonesia. "The Incredible Egg" by Tinley Logan, student at Willits Elementary Charter School. This project demonstrates what happens when eggshells are dissolved by vinegar.



**B.B. Kamoroff**  
Reporter  
bb@willitsweekly.com

In December, the city prepared the first version of its Groundwater Resiliency Improvement Project, which called for the addition of a new well, the Long 20 well, that is contaminated with arsenic. That project was strongly opposed by a diverse group of local people, including 10 doctors who warned about the health dangers of arsenic. The project was withdrawn and revised to exclude the arsenic-laced well, and presented once again for the council's approval at

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

**Jennifer Poole**  
Editor & Reporter  
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The February 10 press

Read the rest of  
**Mandate**  
*Over on Page 11*



# What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

## Willits Frontier Days gives back to community

To the Editor:

Willits Frontier Days held their annual Community Give Back event on Wednesday, February 9 and were proud to give donations back to organizations in the community in the amount of \$11,000 this year.

The breakdown for 2022 donations was as follows:

Little Lake Fire received \$1,000 for their smoke detector program and for items to give out to the kids, like the hats and other items they hand out when giving tours.

Willits Youth Football received \$2,000 to help replace the stolen gear.

Willits Swim Team received \$1,000 for swimming equipment, including flags, suits, goggles and more.

The Boy Scouts Troop #42 received \$500 to help with flag replacements.

The Willits Lions Club received \$3,000 to help pay for work being done to the Scout Hut.

Seabiscuit Therapeutic Riding Program received \$1,000 to go to one person's yearly fee.

The Willits Frontier Days Juniors Club received \$2,500 for their new barrel and poles series and also to put some seed money into their Christmas stocking program.

Also, \$2,000 was given out in scholarships to graduating seniors.

Thank you to all who support Willits Frontier Days so we can give support back to the community.

**Marcy Barry, vice president, Willits Frontier Days**

## Harrah Center offers Apple tablets, training to seniors

**Submitted by Outreach Department, Willits Senior Center**

Willits Harrah Senior Center, through sponsorship by the Mendocino Community Foundation, has acquired a grant to provide lonely and isolated seniors Apple tablets to connect with family, friends and the center itself.

The senior center Outreach Department will take applications and provide tablet training for those seniors that have internet connections and would like to participate in their new program called "J.O.Y Social Club" (Just Older Youth).

In a world of social distancing, seniors are particularly vulnerable. Children and grandchildren can't visit them for fear of coronavirus infection, but connection is critical for happiness – and even sanity. Willits Senior Center is hoping to bring people

together, connecting seniors with common interests, while enabling them to share conversations, experiences, learning, and fun with each other, caregivers, and family members.

Another component of the program is Zoom events with outreach worker Serena Alexi Castro. Castro will lead recipients on various topics that pertain to the concerns of older adults, and hopes new lasting friendships are forged through participation in these events.

Seniors that are interested should inquire with the Willits Harrah Senior Center Outreach Department to obtain an application. Call 707-459-6826 or email outreachone@willits-seniors.org

## Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center's indoor dining room is open, and the Senior Center continues to serv drive-through and walk-up lunches, too. Lunch is available Monday through Friday, from 12 to 12:45 pm, inside and outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Price is \$5 through March 31, 2022

**Thursday, February 17:** Chicken Parmesan, Garlic Bread, Green Salad

**Friday, February 18:** Ground Sirloin, Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy, Veggie, Roll

**Monday, February 21:** Chicken & Dumplings, Veggie, Roll

**Tuesday, February 22:** Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce, Garlic Bread, Green Salad

**Wednesday, February 23:** Fish Tacos, Rice, Beans

**Thursday, February 24:** Stuffed Peppers, Roll, Green Salad

**Friday, February 25:** Turkey and Dressing w/Gravy, Veggie, Roll

**Meals on Wheels:** The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday. To sign up call Deb at 459-6826, who can help fill out the application form. Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery. Delivered throughout Willits.

**Transportation for seniors:** Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors' appointments. Senior Center Thrift Shop: 459-2176

The Senior Center is in need of volunteers to help with the many activities here at the center, including volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers. "Volunteers are one-third of our workforce, which allows us to offer many services to our members and community." To learn more about volunteering: 459-6826

## Hospitals announce new visitor guidelines

February 14 – As omicron cases continue to decline throughout the county, Adventist Health announces new visitation guidelines at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley, Adventist Health Howard Memorial Hospital, and Adventist Health Mendocino Coast.

Visitors are now allowed one visitor at a time, per patient, in the Medical-Surgical and Intensive Care Units. The emergency department and all other outpatient services such as lab services, imaging (X-Ray, CT Scans), clinics and medical offices will maintain limited access for visitors, with special circumstances only. We encourage all visitors to wait outside.

Visitors must:

- Show proof of COVID-19 vaccination (2 doses of mRNA vaccine plus Booster OR 1 dose of J&J plus another COVID-19 vaccine) OR negative COVID-19 test within the last 48 hours if PCR test or last 24 hours if antigen test OR show documentation of recovery from COVID-19 within the past 90 days.

- Complete COVID-19 symptom screening and be symptom-free.

- Wear a medical grade facemask that properly covers their mouth and nose while in the facility.

- Go directly to and from the patient's room.

All other COVID-19 precautions still apply, and masks are required throughout the facility. Visitors will be allowed to enter the hospital from 8 am until 7 pm at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley and Adventist Health Howard Memorial Hospital, and from 8 am until 6 pm at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast.

Overnight visitation will not be permitted except for minors, and visitation for COVID-19 positive patients will not be permitted unless it is end-of-life.

*Adventist Health is a faith-based, nonprofit integrated health system serving more than 80 communities on the West Coast and Hawaii as well as others across the U.S. through its Blue Zones company, a pioneer in taking a systemic and environmental approach to improving the health of entire cities and communities. Through this work, Adventist Health is leading a 21st century well-being transformation movement.*

*Founded on Seventh-day Adventist heritage and values, Adventist Health provides care in hospitals, clinics, its innovative Adventist Health Hospital@Home program that provides virtual in-patient care at home, home care agencies, hospice agencies and joint-venture retirement centers in both rural and urban communities.*

## New Mendocino Sheriff website

Our Mendocino County Sheriff's Office website has been recently updated and is now found at <https://mendocinosheriff.org>.

Please update your bookmarks. (The previous website had a .com extension.)

For your convenience, the old address will continue to forward to the new address for the next few months.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office home page has links to the county booking logs, jail visitation information, and jobs, as well as information about how to sign up for emergency alerts with Everbridge and Nixie, missing persons, and resources on current laws and regulations on marijuana in Mendocino County.

– Mendocino County Sheriff's Office

## Anne Molgaard appointed director of Public Health

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors unanimously recommended that Public Health Transition Director Anne Molgaard be appointed as the director of Public Health at their Tuesday, January 25, 2022, meeting.

Chief Executive Officer Carmel Angelo therefore appointed Molgaard to the position of director of Public Health. Molgaard is a skilled administrator with over 30 years of experience in health and human services both in the nonprofit and government sectors.

The Public Health Department includes programs that serve Mendocino County's families such as WIC (Women, Infants, & Children), Nursing, Community

Wellness, as well as Environmental Health (Land Use, Consumer Protection, and Hazmat), and the county's COVID Pandemic Response.

"I'm thrilled to work with Public Health staff and partners," Molgaard stated. "There is an amazing team handling the pandemic response as we rebuild our public health infrastructure. Working to promote health and wellbeing for all Mendocino County residents? I've got the best job ever."

Before joining the Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency, Molgaard was the founding director of FIRST 5 Mendocino, where she served for 16 years. She worked closely with Public Health while at FIRST 5 Mendocino, collaborating to develop the countywide children's health insurance program, Healthy Kids Mendocino, the Pediatric Dental Initiative, and the home visiting program.



# Super Bowl Lunch

### Sober Grad's pulled-pork drive-thru adds needed funds to help keep seniors safe on graduation night

It was another warm and sunny day Sunday when lunches were packed and handed out for Super Bowl Sunday's Sober Grad fundraiser. Sober Grad volunteer Lisa Davis, also the owner of Scoops Frozen Yogurt and Deli, was busy in the morning, cooking pulled pork and making the yummy, fresh, generously stuffed and wrapped sandwiches in time for the first delivery at noon.

Meanwhile, student volunteers were at the Ag Farm pre-assembling boxes with other foods and packing the warm sandwiches that were delivered in batches. Students had fun talking and kidding around with one another while getting approximately 225 boxes made and handed out to parents, friends, and community members stopping by in their cars. They were all there to support the cause with the benefit of eating a delicious meal, while watching the Super Bowl or having a sunny, outdoor picnic.

The Willits Chamber of Commerce donated all the pork and boxes to fill with donated food, including homemade cookies made by a community member. Safeway donated \$200 for other expenses. KFC in Ukiah gave them the coleslaw.

Much credit is given to the volunteers who, for the second year, pulled off the pulled-pork fundraiser that brought in about \$3,000. It decreases the more than \$25,000 used to create a fun and exciting night of games, movies, tournaments, and much more.

The pulled-pork lunch is only one of about 12 or 13 fundraisers for the school's Sober Graduation party.

"The kids work to help fund the party in addition to community support," said long-time supporter and volunteer Gerry Gonzalez. "The idea is they have ownership in it so when it comes to showing up the day of the party, a lot of kids have bought into it and have encouraged their peers to come to the Sober Grad party instead of some other party where there's drinking or other things on graduation night."

Lily Barrett is the student representative on the Sober Grad Board and said, "I wanted to be really involved with our senior class this year and [the board] reached out to me because my mom's a teacher here. I thought that it's a really cool opportunity, so I took it. It's a nice way for me to relay the message to our class, and I'm in Leadership, so it's like I have that say here and I can help [the Sober Grad Board] with ideas from the Leadership class. I just wanted to be connected."

Cynthia Carni, a parent of former seniors, came by to "get the goodies!" She was taking two boxes for her husband and herself for lunch before the Super Bowl. Carni was on the school board and talked about how tragic it was before Sober Grad was formed. "I worked in the operating room. We would see and hear about all the accidents," she paused and then said, "This is a fantastic program they have going on!"

"I had graduates in 2019 and 2021," told Carrie Lambert. "I came on the Sober Grad board as the parent rep and have stayed on. You can look around and see what a great opportunity it is for these kids and how much the community loves it. It's a good thing!"

There will be about 115 seniors graduating from WHS, independent study, and Sanhedrin this year. They will have the opportunity to take part in a full array of activities at the Sober Grad party. "This will be the first year we're partnering with Gateway Games and Next Level Games [in Ukiah]. That's the thing kids enjoy these days," informed president of the Sober Grad board Davina Sentak. "It will be set up in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. Gateway and Next Level will provide all the equipment. Some of the games they will be able to play will be on their phones."

It was reported that, in the past, a good many seniors go to the yearly Sober Grad party. "You can get prizes and stuff. I know they were giving out \$120 backpacks last year," said Willow Daun-Widner. Jae

Read the rest of **Sober Grad** Over on Page 9



Above, left: Sober Grad volunteers pack and pass out pulled-pork lunches at Sunday's fundraiser; from right, Lily Barrett, Emma Garman, Dominik Avasnicka, Serena Smith, Willow Daun-Widner, Michael Kale, Nikoll Anderson, Jae Michels, Sam Michels and Angel Homapha. Above: David R. Ortiz is handed lunches from Jae Michels at the Sober Grad Super Bowl Sunday pulled-pork lunch fundraiser. At left: The Sober Grad pulled-pork lunch provides a generous portion of pulled pork on an artisan bun with extra sauce, chips, coleslaw and a homemade chocolate chip cookie – the perfect complement to a Super Bowl game. Below, left: Student volunteers pack lunch boxes and others chat, while waiting for the next delivery of pulled-pork sandwiches. Below, right: Included on each purchased ticket is a coupon for \$1 off on a sandwich at Scoops. At bottom: Jennifer Barrett, Lily Barrett's mother, smiles with her daughter as she picks up the boxes of goodies for the family.



Photos by Ree Slocum



## The Rules: LETTERS

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to [willitsweekly@gmail.com](mailto:willitsweekly@gmail.com). Letters focusing on Willits and Third District issues, activities, events and people have priority. Willits Weekly prints letters from residents of Willits and the Third District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once every four weeks.

Typed letters can be sent to Willits Weekly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490, but email is preferred. Letters and commentaries must be submitted with a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

## Willits Weekly

Willits Weekly is a locally owned independent newspaper, founded in 2013, covering the greater Willits area.

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# Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

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Willits Weekly's  
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

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



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!

CREATIVITY WORD SEARCH

A	M	N	B	X	E	T	A	R	O	B	A	L	S	O	T	C	S	D	C
L	D	B	V	N	H	A	M	I	G	F	W	P	R	A	D	H	I	C	O
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ARTISTIC	COLLABORATE	INDUSTRY	PORTFOLIO
BRAINSTORM	DESIGN	INFLUENTIAL	PROTOTYPES
BREAKTHROUGH	EMERGING	INNOVATION	SOFTWARE
BUSINESS	EXPERIMENT	INVENTION	SUPPLIES
CANVAS	FRAMEWORK	MARKET	TECHNOLOGY
CHALLENGING	IDEAS	MODEL	THEORY

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10									
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56		57						58								59			
60																63			
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Remain as is
5. Functional
11. News magazine
12. Popular treat
16. Area units
17. Artificial intelligence
18. Marten valued for its fur
19. Forms of matter
24. Home of the Dodgers
25. Bordering
26. Part of the eye
27. It might be nervous
28. Visualizes
29. Crest of a hill
30. Measures engine speed (abbr.)
31. Tears in a garment (Br. Eng.)
33. Not easily explained
34. Song in short stanzas
38. Detonations
39. Intestinal
40. EU cofounder Paul-Henri \_\_\_
43. Balm
44. New Mexico mountain town
45. Gobblers
49. Insecticide

CLUES DOWN

50. Golf scores
51. Has its own altar
53. 'Pollock' actor Harris
54. Being livable
56. NHL play-by-play man
58. 'The Great Lakes State' (abbr.)
59. Unpainted
60. Swam underwater
63. Native American people
64. Containing salt
65. Exam
23. Gratitude
27. \_\_\_ and feathers
29. Spiritual part of an individual (ancient Egypt)
30. Hot beverage
31. Pouch
32. It followed the cassette
33. Large northern deer
34. Ones who offer formally
35. Famed genie
36. Bequeathed
37. Skeletal muscle
38. Atomic #56
40. Silk garment
41. They deliver the mail
42. Equally
44. Check
45. Light-colored breed of hound
46. Drug that soothes
47. Railroads
48. Most slick
50. Jacket
51. A radio band
52. Hello
54. His and \_\_\_
55. Supporter
57. Popular software suite (abbr.)
61. Railway
62. NY coastal region (abbr.)

2022 WILLITS SCIENCE FAIR MENDOCINO  
COUNTY SCIENCE FAIR QUALIFIERS

Class A-Scientific Inquiry Projects

Grades 3-4 Life Science  
Cayleigh Balthrop, Keeping it Clean  
Raylan Bartow, Does the Breed affect Reaction?  
Finn Shipp, Tardigrades  
Madison Lawrence, Trotting in Color

Grades 3-4 Physical Science

Sorin Bryant, The Crystal Growing Contest  
Jace DeLang, The Biggest Bubble  
Nefara Fisher, Time to Evaporate  
Penny Morgan, Big Orbeez  
Morgan Nolan, The Best Cheesecake Ever

Grades 3-4 Earth Science, Space, and Technology

Aiyana Adams, Soil and Seeds  
Ryley Kiesbuy, How Climate Change is Affecting the Lives of Polar Bears  
Wyatt Wolf, Hydropower

Grade 5 Physical Science

Aiyana Adams, Soil and Seeds  
Ryley Kiesbuy, How Climate Change is Affecting the Lives of Polar Bears  
Wyatt Wolf, Hydropower

Grade 5 Life Science

Quinn Schadeck, Do Video Games Rot Your Brain?  
Grades 6-8 Life Science A (Biology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, or Biochemistry)  
Harbor Cassells, Bacterial Bloom  
Mia Chavez, Masked

Grades 6-8 Life Science B (Medicine, Health, Behavior, or Social Sciences)

Logan Devine, Lily Madison, Kendra Mottern, Colors  
Jacob Kirby, Brody Perez Bowen, and Lupe Zuniga, Egg-actly why you should Brush your Teeth  
Vada Morgan and Izzy Sims, Vital Gaming  
Abigail Sherf, Do Masks Replace a Familiar Face?  
Sofia Vaccaro, Boo!

Grades 6-8 Physical Science (Aero/ Hydrodynamics, Electronics, Electromagnets, Math, Software, and Computers)

Rex Davidson, Can you create linear magnetic propulsion?  
Aliha Diaz, Cups and Hot Water  
Amelia Franco and Chloe Wright, Flour Battle  
Evie Kale and Jayden Sossaman, Sugar

and Ice Cream

Grades 6-8 Earth Sciences (Geology, Astronomy, Ecology, Atmospheric Science, or Environmental Science)  
Jordan Amador, Water  
Ember Hetherington and K'Allana Arnold, Electrical Excrements  
Ryland Maidrand, The Fish Fiasco

Grades 9-12 Life Science A (Biology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, or Biochemistry)

Kyler Hall-Jimenez, A Hair's Difference  
Enzo Vaccaro, Corn on the Corn

Grades 6-8 Life Science B (Medicine, Health, Behavior, or Social Sciences)

Ana Espinoza Medina, What affects our dreams?

Grades 9-12 Physical Science (Aero/Hydrodynamics, Electronics, Electromagnets, Math, Software, and Computers)

Quincy Hawley, Gummy Bears  
Grades 9-12 Earth Sciences (Geology, Astronomy, Ecology, Atmospheric Science, or Environmental Science)  
Griffin O'Rear, Mendo Mosses

Class B-Engineering Projects

Sterling Scott and Roe Weidraw, Hamster Power

Class C-Whole Classroom and Large Groups

Miss McClelland's Fourth Grade Class, The Power of Words  
Mrs. Duran's Third Grade Class, Do our Eyes Affect the Way we Taste?  
Ms. Singleton's Fifth Grade Class Projects: The Role of Nutrition in Fighting Disease; and Heart Health, Nutrition, and Exercise

Class D-Demonstration and Display Projects

Grades 3-5  
Jefferson Muller, Paint and Water  
Macy Davidson, Can Lava be Blue?  
Tinley Logan, The Incredible Egg  
Petra Vandenbergh, Can you identify poisonous mushrooms?  
Gracie Cook, My Microenvironments  
Grades 6-12  
Ayla Hinman-Foss, Electric Lemons  
Julian Griffin, What is Psychology?  
Monica Chavez and Gloria Gutierrez, Rethink your drink  
Cyrus Gray, Why are Kiwi Bird Eggs so Big?

WPD arrests man on felony charges  
after domestic call

By Sgt. S. Gray for WPD

On February 12, 2022 at about 7:20 am, Willits Police Department officers were dispatched to the 1700 block of Elm Lane regarding a reported verbal domestic argument. The female victim advised WPD Dispatch she had been shoved to the ground and her phone taken from her.

The suspect, Derrick McCain, 28, of Willits was screaming and yelling in the background. McCain was also reported to have been consuming alcohol.

A WPD officer arrived and heard the verbal argument continuing inside the residence, with McCain making statements that he would violently assault the victim if she kept him from seeing their children.

McCain exited the residence on his own accord, at which point the WPD officer made contact with him. McCain displayed objective signs of alcohol intoxication and was belligerent, while he continued yelling at the victim from the front yard. McCain attempted to walk away, at which point he was detained.

The incident was precipitated due to the victim refusing to allow a heavily intoxicated McCain to take their children to the park.

During the course of the investigation, it was determined McCain had taken the victim's cell phone from out of her hands as she was actively speaking to the 911 operator (WPD Dispatch) before throwing the phone across the front yard. The victim's account was corroborated by a witness.

Two young children were present during the incident, and a referral was made to CPS.

McCain was ultimately arrested for violation of 211 PC (Robbery), 422 PC (Criminal Threats), 591.5 PC (Obstructing/Preventing a 911 Call), 243(e)(1) PC (Domestic Battery), and 273a PC (Child Endangerment).

McCain was booked into the county jail, and held on \$160,000 bail.

Willits Weekly

'Strong and Competent'



From far left: Gabriella Cobb gets congratulated at the end of the 10-mile race. Ryan Veness is the first 10-miler to reach the finish line. Woody is feeling a bit spent after a grueling 5K. Tabitha Glenn has company on her 5K run. Below: The race begins on the 5-kilometer and 10-mile courses.



Willits Classic  
Seventy runners show up for Sunday's 5K  
and 10-mile footrace through Little Lake Valley

The participants in the 5-kilometer and 10-mile footraces known as the Willits Classic had a hard time deciding how to dress on this gelid, shivery Sunday morning at Recreation Grove Park on February 13.

On one hand, the cold temperatures made the wearing of shorts a mode only for the brave and numb. On the other hand, they knew, given an hour or so, the fog would lift and the sun would begin to warm Little Lake Valley, creating a heated environment that would make running more difficult in warm clothing.

By race time, 10 am, the temperature turned out to be almost perfect, just the right amount of coolness to energize the participants in whatever they had on throughout the race. Even though only 15 or so racers had registered online prior to Sunday, people kept coming and signing up, and by the start, 70 runners made their way to the line to enjoy the beautiful day and the scenery of the valley.

The Willits Classic Race had its origins in 1981, when it was founded by Jim Gibbons, whose book on Northern California racing, "A Jog Down Memory Lane" was on display for the racers to peruse before or after the run.

Although the race was not run last year due to the COVID pandemic, this year an enthusiastic group of runners signed up and headed for the starting line where they were given last-minute instructions from Alex Schulz, the new president of the North Coast Striders, the governing body that produces this run each year.

Schulz, a self-deprecating and good-

natured leader, addressed the 70 participants who were warming up: "Thank you for coming out. I'm Alex. I'm unfortunately the president of this running club now. I don't know why I did that. We started organizing this race a little late due to all the issues lately but we did get it together. We have a 5K and a 10-mile race. They start together.

"Look for the white chalk marks on the ground with arrows that will guide you," Schulz explained. "Some intersections have a little sign with an arrow. The 5K will hit a turn around and there will be someone there to make sure. Just follow the arrows back. For the 10-mile run, just keep going. You have a heck of a lot more to do. The 10-mile will go all the way to Eastside Road and for a few miles on Eastside Road. It's gorgeous out there. Enjoy. Otherwise, I think I have only one thing to say ... and that is ... GO!!!" he said, catching the runners by surprise. The crowd took off north on Lenore, turning east on Commercial on their way to their tour of the valley.

Many different types of humans (and one dog, Woody, an English-and-French-bulldog mix) ran this race. Fathers and sons, sisters, whole families, and individuals ran for the competition and the sheer joy of being able to move their bodies through the lovely natural environments of Little Lake Valley. There was a woman with a stroller, a man nearing 70 years old, kids under 12, and all sorts in between.

All finished, whether at a full clip or walking. They spent part of the morning accomplishing something that benefits their

Read the rest of  
Race Over on Page 10



Above: Kenny Smith is the first over the finish line in the 5K with a possible course record. Below, left: Pele and Anthony Esserman Melville hang out before the race. Below, right: North Coast Striders member and 10-mile runner Roger Schwartz displays a book on NorCal running by Jim Gibbons.



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## Congrats LtCol Larry Buzzard

Congratulations to Lieutenant Colonel Larry L. Buzzard, a native of Willits who enlisted in the Marine Corps as an infantryman in 1995 after graduating from Willits High School. His enlisted tours included Marine Barracks, Japan and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines where he deployed with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

On February 3, LtCol Buzzard took command of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 162 at a transfer of command ceremony in New River, North Carolina.

LtCol Buzzard has numerous relatives throughout Mendocino County, including his father Larry Sr. and a brother Darrell Buzzard, also a former Marine, both Willits residents.



Above: The exquisite colors and scent of sweet peas are unforgettable in the garden or the house. They need an early start to bloom before it gets too hot. Below, left: Barley is a fast and easy-to-grow grain that is well-adapted to our climate. It can be cooked like rice, be cracked for cereal, or ground into flour. There are three locally grown varieties available from Quail Seeds. Barley should be planted now. Below, right: Tree collards are perennial vegetables grown from cuttings rather than seeds. They are more tender than normal kale or collards. Local grower Richard Jeske has been propagating them for years. You can order cuttings from Quail Seeds. We will also have them for sale at the seed swap February 19 at the Grange Hall.



Photos by Jamie Chevalier

Below, from left: Breadseed poppies are breathtaking in the garden, and also yield a crop of delicious poppy seeds. They must be planted in fall or early spring, so get them in now. This is "Hungarian Blue Breadseed." Now is the time to plant onions from seed, so they have time to make big plants before long midsummer days make them bulb up. Varieties bred for conditions in the arid West are best for our area. Mill Creek (Bred in Ukiah), Dakota Tears, and Front Range are all adapted varieties from Quail Seeds. Echinacea is a dependable garden perennial with large bright flowers, medicinal roots, and nectar that attracts many kinds of butterflies. The seeds do best if you start them now while the soil is cold, and let them sprout naturally as the soil warms up.



Photo by Andrew Still

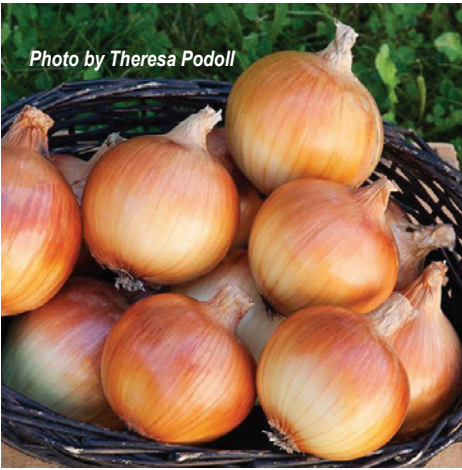


Photo by Theresa Podoll



Far left: Rosita Brandywine cherry is a determinate cherry tomato with the luscious flavor of its heirloom parent, and the compact size and big yields of a modern type. It was bred especially for NorCal conditions by a group of local farmers. At left: Bronze Arrow is a legendary local lettuce that is both frost-hardy and heat-resistant. Below: Skullcap is a delicate beauty for shade. It has traditionally been used as a tonic nerve for sleeplessness, depression and anxiety. Second below: Valerian is one of many perennial herbs that need a month in cold, moist soil before the seeds will sprout. The roots are the part used. Bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects flock to the honey-scented flowers. At bottom: The bright fresh color and juicy crunch of Bekana is an early treat from the spring garden.



## MCHC welcomes Tele-Therapist Michael Heinlein

Submitted by MCHC

MCHC Health Centers is pleased to welcome Michael Heinlein, a licensed clinical social worker, to our behavioral health team. Heinlein chose to become a therapist after a career in various helping services, including teaching and substance-abuse counseling. Heinlein's desire to provide expert-level care to people enduring hard times created his motivation to undergo the many years of education required for the expertise and licensure to practice.

"We all have times when friends, family members, or our own personal struggles are to the point where we need some professional help. I wanted to learn how to be that help and how to participate in people's healing," expressed Heinlein.

Heinlein first studied philosophy at San Francisco State University in the master's program prior to beginning the social work program at Cal State Dominguez Hills. Philosophy professor Don Ciraulo taught Heinlein a lifelong lesson about how it is each person's responsibility to give back to society as much as they have been given. This belief has served as the cornerstone of Heinlein's adult life as he has treated patients with issues such as substance use, depression, complex trauma, as well as working with the incarcerated population(s), and persons in crisis.

Ben Anderson, LCSW, the behavioral health director at MCHC stated, "Michael's depth of knowledge and experience in the behavioral-health field, combined with his commitment to giving back to society, will serve as a tremendous resource for our community, particularly for patients who find it challenging to come into the health center for care."

Heinlein joined the MCHC team as a licensed tele-therapist, providing care for patients in Mendocino and Lake counties while continuing to live in his home near Yosemite. The teletherapy model works well for providers such as Heinlein who have loved ones embedded in a distant community, yet desire to share their expertise with patients in a wide variety of locations, thereby helping a greater number of patients.

Heinlein shared, "I feel that patients have responded incredibly well to teletherapy and I am so pleased that patients with significant barriers to going into a health

Read the rest of Therapist | Over on Page 9



Valentine's EVENT

2/19 & 2/20

11AM - 3PM

GIVE A VALENTINE

GET A VALENTINE

## Give a Valentine, Get a Valentine

You are invited to our Valentine's Event on February 19 and 20 from 11 am to 3 pm at the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County.

Bring goodies for our homeless pets and we will have treats for you. We will also be offering \$14 adoption fees for our on site ready-to-go cats & dogs!!!

What does "ready-to-go" mean? It means the fur baby has been altered and vaccinated and could go home with you that very same day!

We will be very busy and recommend submitting an application ahead of time. This will help us be more efficient and get more homeless pets into loving homes.

Go online to to download the

form: [www.mendohumanesociety.com/about-adoption](http://www.mendohumanesociety.com/about-adoption)

And our dog and cat wish list for the valentines are:

- canned dog food
- canned cat food
- dog toys
- cat toys
- leashes
- treats
- bleach

The shelter is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: from 1 to 5 pm and from 11 am to 3 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information, please contact us: 707-485-0123 or email us at: [info@hsmc.org](mailto:info@hsmc.org)

At right: At Quail Seeds, our crop of Brazilian Beauty tomatoes was abundant, and we have plenty of seed this year. This local heirloom is early, sweet, and bears big crops of mahogany-red saladette-size tomatoes.

Far right: Peas are one of the first things to plant. The flowers, peas, and leafy tips are all edible. Plant a special patch to clip the vine tips for salad. You can harvest over and over.

Below, from left: Asian greens grow well in cold soil, and are ready to eat quickly. This is White Stem bok choy. Sugar Magnolia snap pea has crunchy sweet pods like sugar snap, but purple. Sugar Magnolia was bred by Alan Kapular and named after a Grateful Dead tune.

Heritage wheat has more flavor and fewer allergens than much of the wheat available. Several kinds are available as flour or grain from Mendocino Grain Project. Quail Seeds carries three varieties that should be planted now.

The easiest, fastest and juiciest salad green you can grow right now is our native miner's lettuce. The flavor is mild and delicious.

Baby-blue-eyes are fleeting in the wild, but will bloom all summer in the garden. They are perfect not only in the wild garden, as shown, but in planters, hanging baskets, and flower beds. They attract aphid-eating predators to the garden as well. Like most wildflowers, they need cool soil to start, so plant now.



Photo by Andrew Still



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SCAN & APPLY TODAY

President's Day

All branches of the Mendocino County Library will be **closed** on Tuesday, February 22nd in observance of President's Day. All branches will reopen February 23, 2022.

Visit [www.mendolibrary.org](http://www.mendolibrary.org) to find out more.

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Above, from left: Event organizer Moonshine Hathaway performs one of three beautiful songs. Jeff Shipp asks the crowd to join him in song and speaks of the angst of love, in "I Choose Love." The night offered more than entertainment, with art, clothing and food for sale. This Spanish threesome performs a spontaneous song of love.

At right: The curtain call is as sweet and zany as the rest of the show.

Far right: Simone offers his Southern Italian cuisine to hungry attendees.

Photos by Mathew Caine



# ‘Everything is Love’

Valentine's Day variety show at Leopold Collective wows crowd with hilarious and heartfelt performances by international cast

## SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

**Agape Bible Church**  
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10:00 a.m. - Worship  
Awana: Tuesday, 6:15 p.m.  
Info? 707-459-1905  
www.agapebiblechurch.com

**Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church**  
803 Coast Street  
P.O. Box 489, Willits  
707-303-5456  
Morning Worship - 10:30 a.m.  
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**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**  
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**Grace Community Church**  
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25 Hazel Street, Willits  
Modified Worship Service  
10 a.m.  
Other ministries suspended for now.  
For appointments call:  
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**St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church**  
61 W. San Francisco Ave.  
Willits, CA 95490  
Father Aaron Bandanadam  
Mass times:  
Confessions by appointment:  
459-2252  
Sunday Mass inside:  
9:00 a.m. English  
10:30 a.m. Spanish  
Saturday Mass: 5:30 p.m.  
Covid guidelines apply.  
We welcome All Walks of Faith

**St. Francis Episcopal Church**  
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707-272-0177  
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**St. John Lutheran Church**  
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24 Mill Creek Drive  
ALL ARE WELCOME

**Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church**  
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Saturdays: Meeting place  
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Worship Service - 11:00 a.m.  
https://willitsca.adventistchurch.org  
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The rest of **Leopold** From Page 8

the mother, other humans, friends, work, your passions. Everything is love."

Ilse, from Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, created "a ceremony," she explained. "I'm just going to use a drum, the heartbeat sound, and we're going to light a candle to set the intention of being here, the intention to connect with the people who are here, a dance with some music so we can dance the energy around from me to the outside." She created a message of love and had it consumed in a flame to send the intention to the heavens.

Simone performed a hilarious rumination on the various aspects of love while dressed in harlequin garb. "It is an opportunity to share my vision of true love. What is true love for me? True love is invisible and is that energy that flows between the mind and the soul, between a human and a dog, between two strangers that like each other the moment they meet," said Simone.

Ana, from Spain, came out with her two friends and created a spontaneous song about love while one of the trio danced in the background and created a hand painting on a screen. "I'm going to do something with colors and music. We are finally three people. Two with me. We want to do something spontaneous. Spontaneous art on love, because love is spontaneous," Ana explained.



Jeff Shipp, of the Willits Community Theatre, called upon his muse, Terpsichore, in an angst-driven poem, "I Choose Love," during which he engaged the audience in a loud, enthusiastic rendition of "I Want to Know What Love Is," by Foreigner.

Lucy, from France, made believe she was still in rehearsal in a hilarious rumination of the nature of love. "As we know, it is Valentine's Day soon and we don't care about it. We care about love. I was questioning all my love, 'what is love?' But it changed again and again and again. Love, today, for me, is a feeling. Love, you don't doubt about it. You are what you are with love. Love has no time, no strength, no paradigm, no constitution, no moral. Love is instinct."

Other acts included three songs by Hathaway, a cross between Bjork, folk and jazz, with lovely tones and messages; a Brazilian couple who sang a melodic samba song; a couple of mimes who did a pantomime and dance of love; Hathaway again in a skit about a girl who finds love among the buffalos of Yellowstone Park; and several other poems and talks.

It is difficult to describe the joy and exuberance of the evening, but with the success of this first venture of the People's Theatre, Willits is sure to see more of these evenings. Be prepared for some entertainment and heartfelt messaging.

Below: An entertaining pas de deux about love is charming and humorous. At left: Audrey entertains the attendees between sets.

Photos by Mathew Caine



The rest of **Sober Grad** From Page 3

Michels added, "I know if you stay the entire night you get 50 bucks."

Other activities for fun or prizes will probably include: a corn-hole tournament, carnival games outside, board games, ping pong, basketball hoops, henna artists, movies. There will also be mocktails, lots of food and snacks, cash and gift cards as well as big prizes at the end of the night, just before they leave. Things are still being planned and it promises to be an entertaining night with friends.

"This year's Sober Grad theme is 'Red Carpet,' like the red carpet for movie premieres where people dress up for it," Daun-Widner conveyed. So, added this year are professional photographers who'll make photos of the bedecked seniors in the decorated red-carpet environment.

On a sober note, "Prior to Willits Sober Grad [that formed in 1986], Willits had a tragic history. Almost every year on graduation night we would lose a young person or someone would be seriously hurt in an alcohol-related accident," Sentak said. "I can tell you, in 36 years we have never had a loss on graduation night. It's a testament to this community because it's a combined effort of many people who come together year after year."

For more information, to sponsor an event, or to volunteer, call Davina Sentak 707-841-7549, email: willitssobergrad@gmail.com, or visit their Facebook page.

The rest of **Therapist** From Page 7

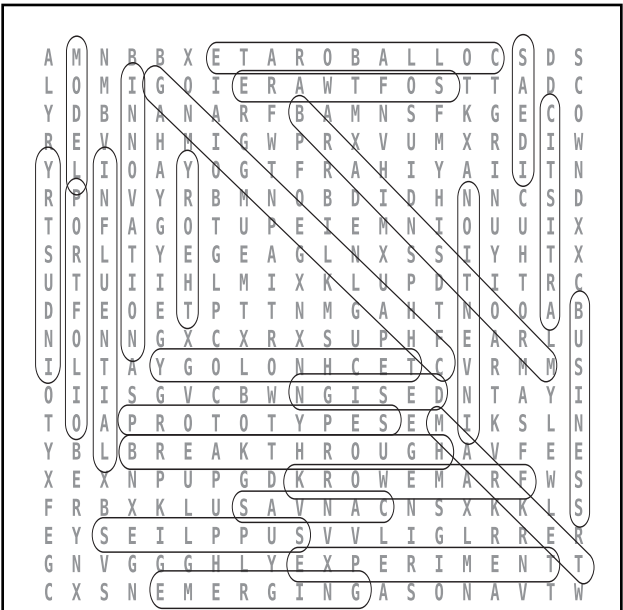
care office (or anywhere in public) are getting the care they need."

Many people are seeking help right now with anxiety and depression which are fundamental to the human condition. These struggles derive from many places including relationships, jobs, finances, COVID or illness and general life stressors.

Therapists, such as Heinlein, help us understand what is going on in our brains and bodies as we experience strong feelings and adverse circumstances, and teach us strategies so that we can become confident in our own abilities to successfully navigate life's stressors.

Scott McFarland, MCHC's CEO shared his thoughts, "We have a very compassionate team of primary care counselors (therapists) at MCHC, including Michael Heinlein, who are here to care for our patients. The expansion of teletherapy is paramount to growing health equity in our region and I am proud that MCHC is on the forefront of these efforts."

MCHC Health Centers includes Hillside Health Center and Dora Street Health Center in Ukiah, Little Lake Health Center in Willits, and Lakeview Health Center in Lakeport. Learn more at www.mchcinc.org.



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**Willits Food Bank Open**  
Willits Community Services & Food Bank continues to distribute food, following COVID-19 safety provisions, to hungry families and individuals in the Willits area, with an increase in numbers served. The front office at 229 E San Francisco Ave is closed to the public, but the back door area is open for food distribution on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Info: 459-3333; financial donations to WCS can be mailed to 229 E. San Francisco, Willits CA 95490.

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



# 2022 North Coast Striders Willits Classic Results

## 5K Winners

First: Kenny Smith

Second: Leo Buc

Third: Hannah Garrity

## 10-mile Winners

First: Ryan Veness

Second: Anthony Villasana

Third: Myriah LaTourette

## 5K Participants:

1. Smith, Kenny 18:08 – 1st overall & 1st male (possible course record)
2. Buc, Leo 19:33 – 2nd overall male
3. Garrity, Hannah 20:48 – 1st female 13 to 18 & 1st overall female
4. Gersec, Tim 20:58 – 3rd overall male
5. Vedder, Andy 22:33
6. Keough, Nicole 22:35 – 2nd overall female
7. Topolinski, Shane 22:53
8. Galusha, McKensie 23:07 – 3rd overall female

9. Henebury, Martin 23:41
10. Baer, Gregory 23:54
11. Keough, Patrick 23:57
12. Garrity, Copper 24:27 – 1st 12 and under boys
13. Bainbridge, Alicia 26:00
14. Rivera-Hoagland, Josephine 26:22
15. Topolinski, Lindy 27:04
16. Esserman Melville, Pele 27:17
17. Zotter, Alexandra 28:31
18. Bachner, Michael 28:47
19. Nelson, Jerrett 29:24
20. Goines, Samantha 29:28 – 1st 12 and under girls
21. Goines, Matt 29:29
22. Canillo, Fred 29:48
23. Campbell, Steven 29:50
24. Souza, Simba 30:30
25. Campbell, Taylor 30:37
26. Smith, Katherine 31:29
27. Henebury, Laura 31:59
28. Garrity, Michael 32:21
29. Henebury, Emily 32:27
30. Bainbridge, Jacob 33:52

31. Surman, Michael 34:02
32. Gibson, Carol 34:21
33. Mulholland, Emilia 35:02
34. Mulholland, Jack 35:15
35. Schulz, Tracy 35:17
36. Howlett, Jessica 35:20
37. Boudreaux, Terri 36:22
38. Rivera, Melinda 36:29
39. Norman, Beth 36:34
40. Webb-Canillo, Lynn 36:56
41. Shull, Payton 39:44
42. Jimenez, Rebecca 40:38
43. Taylor, Rose 41:01
44. Kurtz, Diana 41:18
45. Veness, Heidi 41:19
46. Zotter, Danielle 41:58
47. Shull, Tina 44:40
48. Folsom, Shayna 44:42
49. Glenn, Marcus 48:02
50. Vedder, Lilly 48:33
51. Vedder, Tommy 48:35
52. Glenn, Tabitha 49:08
53. Cholez, Ginny 50:45
54. Wise, Hopie 50:55

55. Smith, Nicole 50:56
  56. Zotter, Michaela 51:11
  57. Campbell, Cindy 52:41
  58. Campbell, Laine 52:45
  59. Sizemore-Schulz, Rosalie 56:31
  60. Sizemore Marisa, 56:46
  61. Folsom Shannon, 57:25
  62. Glenn, Bella 57:27
  63. Winkler, Stella 57:31
- ## 10-Miler Participants:
1. Veness, Ryan 1:10:14 – 1st male
  2. Villasana, Anthony 1:25:11
  3. LaTourette, Myriah 1:26:09 – 1st female
  4. Schwartz, Rodger 1:29:08
  5. Beatty, Lindsay 1:31:03
  6. Johnson, Heather 1:33:12
  7. Cobb, Gabriella 1:34:58
  8. Herby, Anna 1:38:10
  9. Katz, Tina 1:44:46
  10. Schukei, Kaylee 1:50:14
  11. Jimenez, Daisy 1:51:16
  12. Flynn, Nick 1:51:17
  13. Melville, Anthony 1:51:23

Below, left: Everybody finishes, even if they didn't actually race – Grandpa helps her over the finish line. Below, right: Striders President Alex Schulz and Treasurer Travis Brakeman confirm the race results.



Photos by Mathew Caine

## The rest of Race From Page 5

mental and physical well-being. The finishers smiled amidst their heavy breathing as they tore off the part of their bibs that had the information that would go on the race board to track the finishing times.

“Racing gives you purpose in your training,” said Travis Brakeman, runner, past-president of the Striders, and current treasurer. “For me, it’s hard to get out and get motivated to run unless I have a foreseeable competition or goal to work toward. Just going out and running seems kind of pointless to me, even though I’m a physical therapist and constantly promote wellness.

“For me,” added Brakeman, “I have to set those goals out in the future to have something to work towards. Running can be meditative. It’s nice to be in your own thoughts and gives you that quiet time, even though you may be surrounded by traffic. Most of the time, you’re in your own head and have time to think about a lot of things.”

The Striders produce three basic foot races each year, the Willits Classic, the Legends of the Redwoods (in the vicinity of Talmage), and the Turkey Trot in November, which is a predicted-time race in which the participants guess how long their run will take and the runner closest to their predicted time wins.

This year, there may be a special memorial race for Sam, the son of Crystal Bowles, a participant in the Striders and Kids on the Run. The race will be a trail run in Brooktrails, where there are trails Bowles has been instrumental in mapping.

Brakeman would like to thank this year’s sponsors, Adventist Health and its Blue Zones Project of Mendocino, for their generous donations to help in producing the run.

## The rest of Water From Page 1

their February 9 meeting. And, well, it didn’t go well.

The newest version of the project is simply to improve the well that the city currently uses for backup and for emergencies, the Elias well, which has no detectible arsenic. The city plans to upgrade the pump on the well, replace 3,600 feet of deteriorating water lines, and add a 250,000 gallon holding tank for the water after it’s been filtered. Nothing else would be done to the well, and no new wells would be added.

The project, although relatively small, comes under the California Environmental Quality Act. The city prepared a negative mitigated declaration, a comprehensive study that concluded that the project would not impact the environment and would not require an environmental impact report.

Even small streams sometimes overflow their banks. What burst the dam on this project was that the negative mitigated declaration did not address how often the backup well will be used nor how much water will be pumped out.

An “operational use plan” was not prepared because use of a well does not come under CEQA regulations, according to an attorney hired by the city who specializes in CEQA issues and water rights.

Andrew Ramos of the Sacramento law firm Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan, explained that the Groundwater Resiliency Improvement Project has two separate components: the environmental impact of the well; and the policies regarding use of the well (the operational use plan). Only the environmental component was addressed in the negative declaration. The operational use plan – how the city would use the well – according to Ramos, “is not the function of the environmental document” and “legally is not an issue.”

Legally required or not, the city council decided that an operational use plan should be included in the negative declaration, and that was that. Or as the lady inside the GPS gizmo says, “Recalibrate.”

**You don’t miss your water ‘til the well runs dry.** Willits is in a very rare, possibly unique situation in not only having enough water, but having an extraordinarily diuturnal aquifer: Its water level is not dropping.

Attorney Ramos told the council that groundwater levels in the Willits valley are high and continuing to recharge seasonally even during the extended drought, which Ramos added, “is amazing to me. I have clients in other areas of the state who are facing serious shrinking of the aquifer, where their groundwater levels are the lowest they’ve ever been. You have a significant healthy basin under you.”

Not everyone in attendance was as confident as Ramos about the groundwater levels. John Almida, a lifelong resident of the Willits valley, repeated his concerns that pumping from the Elias well could draw down his and his neighbors’ wells, their only sources of water. “We live in the same aquifer that everybody depends

on,” he said. The increase in the size of the well’s pump increased Almida’s worries that the city could pump him right out of his home. Assurances from the attorney and city staff, that pumping from the Elias well will not significantly impact other wells in the valley, did not satisfy Almida: “Over pumping is included which is, apparently, a very popular addition to the produce.

Almida was also concerned that the proposed increase in the diameter of the water pipe would lead to an increase in the amount of water that could be pumped. Pipe specifications, however, indicate that the new pipe has thicker walls than the old pipe, a larger outside diameter, but has the same inside diameter. Still, Almida felt strongly that it is essential to include an operational use plan as part of the mitigated negative declaration, not something to be created sometime in the future when a future city council might not be as concerned about his well, or his well-being, as the current council.

**Worries about future growth.** The long water hearing still had rocky shoals to navigate. More water often leads to more growth, a concern for some local residents and the city council. Two long-time members of the Willits Environmental Center, Ellen Drell and Rosamond Crowder, both spoke about the need to put limits on future growth, to include those limits in the operational use plan, and most importantly, to include the plan in the negative declaration, not added separately at a later date.

Drell sees the possibility of “overuse and abuse” of the water system: “Although this council may not want to double or triple the population of Willits, councils change. This council is in a position to provide a reliable backup system, but avoid the pitfalls setting the stage for a reckless water grab. It may be our lifeline in the years ahead, and it deserves our utmost care.”

Councilmembers Madge Strong, Greta Kanne and Larry Stranske all agreed with the public speakers that water usage should be included in an operational use plan, and that the plan should be part of the negative declaration.

Kanne stated, “I would feel much better if the limits of the project were clearly spelled out and transparent for council and public alike.” Strong strongly summarized what was probably on several people’s minds, “I think it’s our duty to not greenlight something that could potentially be abused in the future.”

City Manager Brian Bender said he thinks he can bring the Groundwater Resiliency Improvement Project back to the council within 30 days. The public hearing wrapped up with an indubitable thanks to the city staff from Councilmember Kanne: “I want to strongly thank staff for the work they did today. Your response gives me a lot of confidence that we’re ultimately going to have a project to serve our community very well.” You could almost hear Simon and Garfunkel standing in the back of the room singing “Like a bridge over troubled water....”

## The rest of Brooktrails From Page 1

seasonal organic vegetables for a cost of \$30 / week for a full share or \$30 every other week for a half share to any interested individuals and families.

In the spring and fall they have radishes, baby turnips, salad lettuce mix, kale, chard, kohlrabi, cabbage, broccoli, beets and carrots. In the summer they have cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant and bell peppers, kale, beets, potatoes and sweet potatoes. And, Michalak noted that with each box of vegetables a bouquet of fresh flowers is included which is, apparently, a very popular addition to the produce.

Those who would like to participate in the crop-sharing plan may contact Michalak via email at Keithmichalak@gmail.com. And, if enough Brooktrails residents sign up to participate, the vegetables will be delivered to participants’ homes.

The board then voted unanimously to approve the February 8 accounts payable in the amount of \$74,927.48.

Finally, the board voted to continue to remain in compliance with AB361 to meet remotely via Zoom until the February 22 meeting. At that time it will be decided if they will meet in person or via Zoom for the March 5 meeting.

## The rest of Mandate From Page 1

release issued by Public Health Media continues:

“The Health Officer had previously issued a universal indoor masking order in October 2021 and updated it in January 2022 after local and statewide trends showed an increase in COVID cases due to the Omicron variant. A new exemption has been added to this current Health Order that all may remove their masks in venues where the operator/organizer can show documentation (not including self-attestation) that all attendees including presenters/performers and maintenance staff have been vaccinated and boosted.

“While Mendocino County appears to be recovering from the Omicron surge based on a decrease in reported cases from PCR testing, this data is believed to be an undercount because it does not include all positive antigen test results. The county also continues to be an area of highest risk, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, with ‘High Community Transmission.’

“Furthermore, the county’s COVID-19 hospitalization and ICU rates are still higher than they were during the Delta surge. Since February 1, Mendocino County has had less than 10% ICU capacity. On some days, there are 0 or 1 ICU beds available, compared to California overall, which currently has 18-20% ICU capacity. This adds stress for local hospitals and their staff and delays other medical procedures,” the press release explained.

The most recent information, Tuesday’s Public Health dashboard posted on Facebook, shows 16 COVID patients in local hospitals, plus 5 in the ICU. Monday’s dashboard showed 12 COVID patients in the hospital, with 7 in the ICU; and Friday’s dashboard showed 12 COVID patients in local hospitals, with 6 in the ICU.

On February 14, Mendocino County Public Health announced two more deaths attributed to COVID. Death #118 was a 91-year-old man from the North Coast area; who was vaccinated with comorbidities. Death #119 was a 65-year-old man from the North County area; who was vaccinated and boosted with comorbidities.

“The Health Officer strongly recommends that all eligible persons in the county be vaccinated and boosted to protect against severe COVID and death,” the press release continued. “If you have questions about boosters or vaccines in general, speak with your doctor, or call Public Health at 707-472-2759. To find the nearest vaccine clinic in your area, please visit the Public Health website at: [www.mendocinocounty.org/covidvaccine](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/covidvaccine)

The full version of all Dr. Coren’s health orders can be read at: [www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order)

## Vaccination deadline for health care facilities

On February 11, Health Officer Coren issued a second new health order, “requiring health care facilities to enroll in the California COVID-19 Vaccination Program and report compliance to Mendocino County Public Health by March 1, 2022.”

In the past month, the February 11 order reads, “there have been outbreaks of COVID-19 in most of our health care facilities, including our hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and Long Term Care Facilities in Mendocino County with 159 active cases among staff as of the drafting of this order. Patients in SNFs and LTCFs remain at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 due to age, medical conditions, and weakened immune systems.”

The order cites a new update of a state order issued in December 2021 “requiring all health care workers (such as in our hospitals and SNFs, see Health Order) and all workers in Adult and Senior Care Facilities (such as in our LTCFs, see Health Order) to be fully vaccinated and boosted by March 1, 2022.”

## The rest of Schools From Page 1

superintendent Joe Aldridge reported the district “down [to] nearly 85 percent,” which he described as “not out of line with what other districts are seeing.”

He predicted that the numbers would “put a lot of pressure on the state to come up with different ways to look at funding, [and that] ... we should see something in the legislature this year.”

There’s funding based on attendance and then there’s funding for facilities, and Aldridge described some “changes to TK facilities funding” that might prove useful.

“TK” is short for transitional kindergarten. It’s a stepping-stone between preschool and kindergarten, and is being phased in for all the state’s 4-year-olds by the 2025-26 school year. And so funding will go with that.

For this particular funding, Aldridge described “many strings attached, including the inability to use the funding for bringing in new personnel.”

Nonetheless, he reported that the money could actually be used to “refurbish existing portables, ... so it might put back onto the table the idea of refurbishing the west wing at Brookside ... [and] we’re going to explore that option.”

On the other end of the grade spectrum, up at the high school, Aldridge informed the board of a \$151,000 “A through G completion improvement grant ... to try to get more students eligible to go to CSU and UC schools.”

Required courses for admission to these schools are referred to as A-G requirements, and these grant funds would provide a tutor ... “principally directed to students from low-income backgrounds ... to ensure that students are staying on task ... making sure they have the skills to be successful ... as they move into college.”

This is the stuff that is the board’s routine business, but sometimes routine business takes a back seat as it did in December and January when the public had something to say in a big way.

This prompted the board to “talk about how we [want] to create meetings that get the work done but also open to the public so they get to have their input,” said board president Robert Chavez as he introduced the topic.

“There’s been talk about how to proceed with school board meetings across the state with respect to potential violence as well as meetings being taken over by some unruly members of the public,” said board member Alex Bowlds. “So part of the discussion here is how do you deal with these sorts of things.

“Thus far, we’ve had very minimal [problems] at our meetings along these lines, but it might be good to at least consider how we might address this before it does become a problem, and hoping it never does,” he said.

Various methods to deal with the issue, including a three-minute time restriction, going to the back of the line after three minutes are up if more time is needed, a 20 minute overall restriction for public comment, or providing a timer indicating when to finish were suggested, among others.

Trustee Jeanne King offered the perspective that she thought there might be “a misconstruing of what the actual board meeting is ... when we’ve had a lot of public talk at the meeting and a bit of chaos.

“It’s an opportunity to hear from the public. It’s also a business meeting,” she said. “We have business we have to take care of. It’s not a public forum where people can just talk at length.

“Some of the other ways to communicate with the board,” she explained, are to “write a letter, send an email ... meet with board members on their own.

“I deeply value public and parent input,” she concluded. “We also have business that we have to take care of.”

“I like public comment. I think it’s great,” said trustee Paula Nunez. “However, as much as I strongly believe that we are at a

board meeting for business, we are definitely here to represent the public, and I’d hate for anyone to think that ‘I don’t get to say what I want to say’ ... I do think we are like a public forum.”

Perhaps, though, the public just needs to know they’ll get heard and know there are ground rules.

California School Employees Association president Dan Green offered his recent experience, explaining that “when the public comes to the meeting, they don’t understand how the meeting process works,” he explained.

“A couple of meetings ago, when a bunch of the public was there in the beginning, it kind of got out of hand,” he continued. “I walked out with a couple of folks, and I had the agenda, and I explained to them how it works, and they kind of calmed down until their time came.”

In the end, the board threw the ball to Aldridge to come back with recommendations at their next meeting.

There was only one disgruntled public comment at the meeting – high school math teacher Matthew Alaniz addressed the board on “an important health issue” he was not happy about.

“Someone, an employee of the district, maybe more than one, violated my medical records ... by giving consent to a test that I did not consent to myself,” he told the board.

“There’s at least a half a dozen who have not been tested but somehow have medical records inputted ... that [they] tested, and that it came out negative,” he continued. “My coworkers are very surprised that it happened to anyone else because they were all told that it was just one person.... To this day we have no idea how this is happening ... or how common it is.”

Alaniz repeatedly called out Aldridge as responsible for not adequately dealing with the problem.

“The issue is his total failure to provide leadership on this issue,” Alaniz said. “The results are far more widespread than he wants anyone to believe.”

For his part, Aldridge had addressed the matter earlier in the meeting.

“We have addressed some concerns with our COVID testing program,” he told the board. “Some registrations were duplicated making it difficult to track which registrations were valid with permission.

“This is particularly an issue at Willits High School due to students participating in general testing due to extracurricular activities,” he continued. “You can have three or four registrations that were hanging there and sometimes it was getting put in the wrong place.

“I’ve been working actively with the company that provides those registrations and reporting to address the issue, [and] we’re also working with Mobile MD to provide health care professionals to administer the tests ... since the start of January.”

Board president Robert Chavez brought the discussion to a close saying that “there is action being taken in regards to the whole testing situation and personnel.

“Obviously, any information in regards to direction given to personnel, we cannot share. It’s an HR matter,” he told Alaniz. “But I can assure you that we take this very seriously, and we expect to hear from you if you feel it has not been remedied.”

Teachers, on the other hand, were generally pleased with how COVID-related things were going according to Willits Teachers Association president Tessa Ford.

“I want to thank superintendent Joe Aldridge for hearing us last month and quickly responding with a plan to help the teachers get things a little bit more under control,” she said. “The COVID protocols were made very clear and there was a wonderful exceptional team effort to make sure we’re following all of them to the best of our abilities.”



# 'Licorice Pizza'



Dan Essman  
Columnist

**The Story:** The place and time is the San Fernando Valley in the early '70s, the era of President Nixon, the OPEC oil embargo, and water beds. This (brilliant) romantic comedy-drama stars Cooper Hoffman (Philip Seymour Hoffman's son in his first role) and Alana Haim (from the rock group "Haim" in her first role).

**The Drama:** Gary Valentine (Hoffman), a hyper-confident high school student, falls in love with Alana Kane (Haim), the young woman taking school photos. They have adventures. They fall together. They fall apart. They fall to pieces. And it's all pretty much a toss-up if they can work things out.

**My Thoughts:** This is a Paul Thomas Anderson movie. He directed "Boogie Nights," "The Master," "Punch Drunk Love," "There Will Be Blood," and, as they say: more! I know that he's one of America's all-time greatest directors. And I know this is a great flick. "Licorice Pizza" is two-and-a-quarter hours long. It is totally unpredictable. I cared intensely, all the way through, how things would turn out for Gary and Alana. Side note: Licorice Pizza was a chain of Southern California record stores. None of these stores appear in the movie. Record stores in America and adolescence: They used to go together. Now, not so much.

**Parents:** It's a love story. It's ironic and kind, sad and funny, and it's suspenseful. Ages: teens and up.

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



## Willits Sober Grad

### Ventura Perez Merit Awards

Willits Sober Gard will award **\$5,000** in **Ventura Perez Merit Awards** to the members of Class of 2022 who volunteer at WSG activities & participate in fundraisers!

# Furry Friends Hoping for a Home

## Bright Bert

Meet handsome, sweet and goofy Bert! This 9-year-old can be both playful and calm, depending on what his person is doing. Bert is intelligent, observant and curious about anything new. Bert is a true romantic, enjoying long walks on the beach and taking hikes with his favorite person. Bert is house-trained and knows commands like "sit" and "shake." He walks well on leash, and needs to be a solo dog or wear a muzzle in public places as he doesn't love challenges by other dogs. Bert would do best in a home with no other dogs.

To learn more about Bert or view other adoptable animals, visit [www.milofoundation.org](http://www.milofoundation.org) or the Milo Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only due to COVID-19. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment. You can reach the Milo Foundation at 510-900-2275.



## Calm Gemma

Meet our girl, Gemma. This sweet dog is 6 years old and looking for a new start in life. She is eager to please her humans, is crate-trained, house-broken, and knows commands such as "sit", "lie down," and "shake." Gemma has lived with kiddos and cats, and she does very well with both. Gemma likes to live a relaxing life and doesn't mind taking life easy.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino is located at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. Great news! We are opened back up, no appointments needed! We are open Wednesday through Friday 1 pm to 5 pm and Saturday and Sunday 11 am to 3 pm. You may also look at our available dogs and cats on our website: [www.mendohumanesociety.com](http://www.mendohumanesociety.com), our Facebook page, and on [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com).



## Cuddly Tai

Tai is a shy young cat (1 year old) who likes to snuggle with her brother, Chi. She takes some time to get to know you, but she is worth the wait. Once she knows you, she appreciates head scratches and likes to play.

For more info about Tai or to see the Mendocino County Animal Shelter's canine and feline guests, and for information about services, programs, events and updates about COVID-19 and the inland shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, visit: [www.mendoanimalshelter.com](http://www.mendoanimalshelter.com). For information about adoptions, please call 707-467-6453.







## \$30,000

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Get 1 entry for every 25 points earned

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### Ladies Free Play Deal

**TUESDAYS • 10AM – 10PM**  
Ladies can stop by the cage and pay \$20 cash to get \$30 Free Play.

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Men can stop by the cage and pay \$20 cash to get \$30 Free Play.

### DOUBLE BONUS SENIOR DAYS

**THURSDAYS • 10AM – 8PM**  
Age 55+. Stop by the cage and pay \$20 cash to get \$30 FP plus a 50% off meal coupon at Creekside Café.



### Twice the Love

**SATURDAYS • Noon – Midnight**  
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### VALENTINE'S GIFT

**FEB 14 • 9AM – 3AM**  
All members receive **\$5 Free Play!**

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**FRIDAYS • 5PM – 11PM**  
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