

EST. 2013

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

Donations Accepted Edition No. 491

Thursday, March 9, 2023

County cannabis program struggling

Forrest Glyer
Features Writer
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The monthly Mendocino Cannabis Department update was presented at the General Government Committee meeting on February 27, with the latest details and numbers on application processing, staffing and grant programs.

The troubles of the county cannabis program to process applicants since it began in 2017 have been well-documented. Some of the latest challenges include a July 1 state deadline approaching which will raise the environmental requirements for renewing provisional licenses, a funding gap of around \$500,000 in the county cannabis department this fiscal year, debates over grant money spending, more than 800 applicants still vying to get state annual licenses, and continuing criticism from the cannabis community about the slow pace and difficulties of navigating the local program.

With all this as a backdrop, at the February 27 meeting MCD Director Kristin Nevedal laid out

Read more of
Struggling
Over on Page 11

Spyrock Road rescue

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

A woman stuck in her car up Spyrock Road in Laytonville for three chilly nights was rescued Monday afternoon by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of Mendocino County Search & Rescue and Mendocino County Department of Transportation.

The Laytonville woman tried to drive up Spyrock late Friday night to check on her mother, with blankets, food and water in her car. Where she got stuck, reportedly 8 to 10 miles out, she had no cell service, but she walked on Sunday to find a signal to call for help.

She was reportedly accompanied by her daughter, and her daughter's boyfriend who had left the snowbound car and walked back down the road to a vacant house.

Public Information Officer for the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Captain Greg Van Patten told ABC7 News that rescue efforts had started Sunday afternoon "with what equipment we had available to us," but those initial efforts were "unsuccessful due to the amount of snow in this area."

Read the rest of
Rescue
Over on Page 4



Photos by Maureen Jennison

s'NO'ly Moly

OK, Mother Nature –
Willits is all set with
snowfall for now,
thanks! Let's check
in again sometime in
November, OK?

Above: The first few daffodils were not expecting a snowfall, but their arrival reminds us that spring is still coming. At left: Black Bart Rock was topped with white Monday morning after more recent snowfall on the Willits grade and Ridgewood Summit.



What a difference 24 hours makes: Above: the last south-bound turn before reaching the summit of Ridgewood Grade Monday morning, and the same corner, below, Tuesday morning with much less snow – and blue sky!



Brooktrails board honors Tony Orth

Barbara O'Reardon
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Despite an earlier dire storm surge warning, the Brooktrails Township Board met at the regularly scheduled time for their February 28 meeting at the Community Center, with most of the board members physically present. Director Tina Tyler-O'Shea, Counsel Chris Neary, and this reporter attended virtually, via zoom.

President Rick Williams arrived shortly after the meeting had begun with Vice-President Tyler-O'Shea guiding the proceedings until he was in place.

First on the agenda, with Director Ed Horrick doing the honors, was a special presentation of a plaque and proclamation for former longtime Brooktrails board member Tony Orth in recognition of his five decades of outstanding service to the Brooktrails community.

The text of the plaque says: "This plaque to commemorate a five-decade span of tireless commitment to public service, the Board and Staff of Brooktrails Township Community Service District present with appreciation

Read more of **Orth**
Over on Page 10

Laytonville locals shelter stranded motorists

**By Jayma Shields
Spence, for The Observer**

Editor's Note: Thanks to Jayma Shields Spence for sharing her amazing story from the March 2, 2023 edition of The Mendocino County Observer with Willits Weekly readers – originally titled “We Ran An Emergency Shelter By Ourselves & All We Got Was This Lousy Pile of Laundry.”

On Thursday, February 23, my husband, Rolo, our dog Chiquita and myself had just arrived home from Ukiah around 6 pm as the great Northern CA Snow Storm began. The drive from the bottom of Ridgewood Grade to Laytonville was sketchy, but thanks to hanging behind a driver making tracks and my heavy hybrid SUV, we managed to make it home safely.

At about 6:15 pm, I saw Sue Carberry, Laytonville Fire Department's retired Chief, was calling my cell phone. No offense to Sue, but when she calls, it's typically not with good news. I picked up, Sue informed me that Highway 101 was closed in both directions and motorists

Read more of
Shelter
Over on Page 5

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Grateful for Howard Hospital

To the Editor:

Last week I had the unfortunate experience of slipping in the snow and breaking my leg. It was severe enough that I needed immediate surgery.

The experience reminded me of how lucky we are to have a modern facility and staff like Howard Hospital as well as health care professionals like Dr. Katsuura in a community this size. They did a wonderful job of taking care of me right here at home. The surgery went very well and I'm on the mend.

Thanks to the Howard Foundation and community members who have supported the Foundation over the years to make this possible.

John Sherman, Willits

Thanks to former Chief Blaylock

To the Editor:

I would personally like to thank Alexis Blaylock, the former chief of police of Willits, for her recent contribution to Nuestra Alianza. Her act of recognition by generosity is a valuable contribution to a valuable local organization.

You, too, can make a donation to this valuable organization. Send a check to: Nuestra Alianza, 291 School St. #1, Willits, CA 95490.

In spite of her experience with the police department, which I think was based on racism and sexism, she was able to see something good about Willits. This is admirable behavior on her part, when someone else in the same position might have been bitter and angry.

I did not meet her when she was in office, but participated in a Zoom meeting with her. She was a consummate professional and also personable. I am disappointed that we will not benefit from the experience of having her as our chief of police.

Nancy Simpson, Willits

PG&E: Expect lower gas bills in March

Submitted by PG&E

Oakland – After three months of higher-than-normal natural gas market prices driving up energy bills, Pacific Gas and Electric Company customers can expect, on average, a 75% decline in their March natural gas bills.

The decrease is due in part to PG&E distributing the state's April Climate Credit one month earlier than in previous years. Even without the Climate Credit, March natural gas bills, on average, would decrease 40% because of a significant drop in the market prices PG&E pays to buy natural gas to serve its customers, and customers using less gas as colder temperatures moderate.

The estimated decrease, which is for natural gas usage in March, is based on customers using 38 therms (a unit of energy) compared to 50 therms in February. Depending on billing cycle, customers may not receive statements for March usage until April.

PG&E does not control market prices, nor does it mark up the cost of gas and electricity that it purchases on behalf of its customers.

"We supported the California Public Utilities Commission's decision to distribute the statewide Climate

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT March 2023 update

By Supervisor John Haschak

Snow storms have brought many problems to the County. People being stranded at home or on the road, downed trees and power lines, communication systems not working properly. I have been in constant communication with Sheriff Kendall and CEO Antle about different situations in the inland parts of the County.

Since it has been very difficult for responses to the many calls, please don't wait until the last minute to call for help in any emergency situation especially when it is widespread. Call me if you are in need and think that I can help.

It appears that the County budget for 2021-2022 which ended on June 30 of '22 has not yet been finalized. The Executive Office and the Auditor are about a million dollars apart in their figures. With only months away from a new budget year, this uncertainty is unacceptable. I would like to return to the days before the Auditor/Controller and Treasurer/Tax Collector positions were consolidated. This isn't working as is.

Cannabis continues to be problematic. The standalone department is now running a budget deficit of up to a million dollars. This was only brought to light by the Executive Office. With permits not being processed, cultivators stuck in limbo, and the department asking for more money, it is past time to admit that the status quo is not working.

I appreciate Mendocino Cannabis Alliance's letter to the state and our representatives asking for intervention. All ideas are welcome.

The Museum is holding a series of survey sessions to see how best to connect the community/county with the Museum and the Museum with the community/county. The Museum received a \$500,000 donation from the Bittenbender family. What an opportunity for the Museum!

The Willits Library will have solar panels and battery backup installed. This will provide renewable energy throughout the year and especially when power is out. The Laytonville library will open in the near future.

There will be another "Talk with your Supervisor" on Thursday, March 9 at 10 am at Brickhouse Coffee in Willits.

Please reach out to me at haschakj@mendocinocounty.org or 707-972-4214.

Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, and continues to serve 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 \$7.

Thursday, March 9: Garlic Shrimp w/White Wine Sauce, Veggie, Garlic Bread

Friday, March 10: Chicken Breast w/Hollandaise Sauce, Veggie, Roll

Monday, March 13: Western Chicken Sandwich, Cole Slaw

Tuesday, March 14: Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce, Veggie, Garlic Bread

Wednesday, March 15: Chicken Fajitas, Rice & Beans

Thursday, March 16; Tuna Salad Sandwich, Macaroni Salad, Pickle

Friday, March 17: Corned Beef and Cabbage for St. Patrick's Day

Activities: Bingo every Friday night, 5 to 7 pm. Exercise class every weekday morning from 9 to 10 am.

Pancake Breakfast: every second Sunday, 8 to 11 am; March pancake breakfast is set for Sunday, March 12. Menu choices: 1. Pancakes with eggs cooked the way you like them, and choice of sausage or bacon. 2. Biscuits & Gravy with eggs cooked the way you like them. \$8; \$7 Senior Center members; \$6 children under 8. Extra meat sides: 3 slices bacon, \$2; 3 sausage links, \$2.

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

supply basins, using natural gas storage, which was full at the beginning of the winter, and using financial hedging to protect against rising winter prices.

In February, market wholesale prices were well below the January average. Customer natural gas rates for the month are generally set based on wholesale prices at the end of the previous month.

Help with paying bills

While March bills are expected to drop, some customers still may have difficulty paying bills from the sustained higher prices this winter. PG&E offers individualized solutions and other ways to save:

- Customers who need more time to pay can extend their due date or make a payment arrangement through their online account at www.pge.com

- PG&E offers many financial assistance programs that can help customers lower their monthly bills. To learn more, visit <https://m.pge.com/#ap>.

- In addition to the statewide Climate Credit, approximately 300,000 customers who experienced financial hardships during the pandemic also received a one-time automatic bill credit under the California Arrearage Payment Program.

- Customers who participated in the Power Saver Rewards Program last year and reduced energy use on event days may receive a bill credit on their February or March energy statement, depending on billing cycle. The program is providing over \$55 million in bill credits to participating PG&E customers. Over the 10 event days in 2022, the average customer bill credit for participating customers was \$35.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation (NYSE:PCG), is a combined natural gas and electric utility serving more than 16 million people across 70,000 square miles in Northern and Central California. For more information, visit www.pge.com and www.pge.com/about/newsroom/.



Above, from left: Roses, donated by Flowers by Annette, add color to the dinner bags including these dinners, purchased by Mike Garrity, which were given to his tenants. Emadal – A Farm on a River donated all of the homemade bread. Caesar salads are boxed and ready for distribution. Below, left: After a long, early morning of preparation, many members of the crew get to relax around the fire. Below, right: Jenn Drew delivers a dinner to Beda Garman.



Sunshine for WEF Dinner

Weather clears just long enough for Willits Educational Foundation tri tip fundraiser to be a success

The intrepid tri tip crew began their day early, in the snowy, blustery cold morning, preparing the 200 family dinners, which were to be picked up by drive-thru customers between 4 and 6 pm on Friday, February 24.

Not prone to complaining, the crew got to work setting up the grill (donated on loan from Granite Construction), the bean pot (from Schmidbauer Ranch), arranging the roses from Flowers by Annette, the homemade sourdough bread from Emadal – A Farm on a River, and cookies by Kathleen Lewis.

"We're go-for-the-gusto kind of people," said Jenn Drew, of 101 Trailer and RV Supply. "It was snowing up until about noon," added Jack Drew. However, the sun decided to come out and warm up the town by the time the drive-thru began.

The Drive Thru Tri Tip Dinner is a project of the Willits Educational Foundation. Jenn Drew organized the efforts, as she has for several years, offering logistics and support to the crew, consisting of Stan Cooley, Tim King, Jack Drew, John Stone, Taylor Drew, Tanner Drew, Kevin Kvasknicka, Creighton Cooley, and others whose volunteer efforts were greatly appreciated.

Each dinner for four consisted of a whole tri tip, Caesar salad, bread, beans, cookies, and a beautiful rose as the crowning touch, adding an aesthetic nuance to the basic sack dinner.

Jenn Drew explained the event and the work of the organization: "The funds from this dinner will go out to teachers within the next month. So the teachers are going to see the money pretty quickly.

"It goes directly to the teachers who apply for a mini-grant. We look over them and grant their wishes for whatever they're needing for the classroom, like art projects or something else special they are doing in the classroom. The funds go directly to the teachers to pay for



At left: The tri tips, cooked ahead of time, are kept warm in insulated containers.

Below, left: Tim King ladles beans from a huge pot into containers to include in the package. Below, right: The Bouthillier sisters, Hannah, Madison and Gracie, who helped fill the dinners, take a break with Taylor Drew.

At bottom: Garry Gonzalez and his furry friend pick up their tri tip dinner.

Photos by Mathew Caine



MARCH MADNESS SALE Are you Spring Cleaning?



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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

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Level: Beginner

SPRING SEASON WORD SEARCH

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BIRTH	DAFFODIL	MARCH
BLOOM	EGGS	NEST
BREEZE	FLOWERS	PUDDLES
BULBS	GREEN	RAIN
BUNNY	GROW	ROBIN
BUTTERFLY	HATCH	SEASON
CHICK	HYACINTH	SHOWERS
CROCUS	LAMB	SPRING

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58							59					

CLUES ACROSS

- Half-conscious states
- Unnatural
- Deep regret
- Rogue
- Taken without permission
- An alternative
- After B
- Partner to flowed
- Weekday
- Body part
- World's longest river
- One of the Greats
- Make clean
- C. Canada indigenous peoples
- Japanese seaport
- Most unclothed
- Small grouper fish
- Soluble ribonucleic acid
- Distinguishing sound
- French realist painter
- Popular beer brand
- Views
- God depicted as a bull
- Relieve
- Residue after burning

47. Habitation

- Poe's middle name
- Japanese title
- TV series installation (abbr.)
- Beloved country singer
- Single unit
- Genuine
- Develop
- Traveled through the snow

CLUES DOWN

- Clues
- Do again
- Current unit
- Neither
- Corporate exec (abbr.)
- Second sight
- The absence of mental stress
- Supplemented with difficulty
- Stop for good
- College dorm worker
- Bones
- Most supernatural
- Spanish island
- Unlimited
- Where golfers begin
- No charge
- Print errors
- Professional drivers
- Kiss box set
- Short, fine fibers
- Administers punishment
- Czech city
- Normal or sound powers of mind
- The academic world
- Crustacean
- Currency
- Pastoral people of Tanzania or Kenya
- Cloth spread over a coffin
- Grouped together
- On land
- Glistened
- A type of extension
- One who assists
- College sports conference
- Zero
- Midway between northeast and east
- Type of screen
- The 13th letter of the Greek alphabet



Flying Flakes

Cattle-feeding assistance from National Guard begins for tri-county area

KMUD News reported Wednesday afternoon that the California National Guard has just deployed for "Operation Hay Drop" in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity counties. The CH-47F Chinook and UH-72 Lakota will help deliver hay to starving livestock across the Emerald Triangle. Thanks to Gary Ford for sending this photo of feeding cows in the snow up Sherwood Road.

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICE LOG

February 13 to February 18

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 71 incidents in this 6-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

February 13

1:37 am: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of School Street and West Mendocino Avenue and issued a warning.

4:22 pm: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Barbara Lane and issued a warning.

8:23 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 700 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

8:49 pm: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of South Main Street and West Highway 20 and issued a warning.

10:57 pm: MALLET, Janet Kay (48) of Laytonville was contacted near the North Willits Bypass. She was arrested on misdemeanor charges of driving with a suspended license and failure to appear.

February 14

10:05 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 1400 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

10:15 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 200 block of Margie Drive and issued a warning.

February 15

2:43 am: Officers conducted a stop in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

7:38 am: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 300 block of Mill Street.

11:35 am: Officers conducted a stop in the 1300 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

11:25 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.

February 16

8:41 am: Officers conducted a stop in

The rest of

Rescue

From page 1

On Monday, equipment used included a Mendocino County Department of Transportation bulldozer, a Sheriff's Office Snocat, and Mendocino County Search & Rescue tracked UTV (utility terrain vehicle).

Sheriff Matt Kendall told KMUD News Monday afternoon that MCSO's Lt. Cromer used an app called SARtopo during Monday's rescue, and they could plot the rescue mission on a map. SARtopo is "a real-time loaded computerized map," Kendall said. With the app "we can see exactly where the responders are. That's really incredible for us, if one of those breaks down."

MCSO did have some trouble with the Snocat on Monday. As per a Tuesday post on Facebook, MCSO reported they were back in the Spyrock Road area "performing a rescue of the Sheriff's Office Snocat which sustained a broken wheel on a front track during yesterday's rescue mission." There was still heavy snow, ice, and white-

the 100 block of Holly Street and issued a warning.

9:27 am: Officers conducted a stop in the 21000 block of Baechtel Road and issued a warning.

10:06 am: Officers conducted a stop in the 400 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

7:09 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of East Commercial Street and issued a citation.

February 17

8:18 am: LANE, Christopher Francis (42) of Lakeport was contacted in the 100 block of North Main Street. He was arrested pursuant to 422 PC (Criminal Threats) and 240 PC (Assault).

1:15 pm: SIMPSON, Gerald Crandall (53) of Willits was contacted in the 200 block of South Main Street. He was arrested on felony charges of violation of parole.

5:34 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.

9:17 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 200 block of Pine Street.

February 18

12:11 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1400 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

1:41 pm: MOHAN, Sanjay (48) of Ukiah was contacted in the 400 block of South Main Street. He was arrested pursuant to 273.6 PC (Violation of a Protective Order) and 1203.2 PC (Violation of Probation).

3:36 pm: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 200 block of Franklin Avenue.

4:22 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity near the intersection of South Main Street and West Highway 20.

9:40 pm: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of Walker Road and South Main Street and issued a citation.

out conditions in the area on Tuesday, but the Snowcat was successfully retrieved.

Sheriff Kendall said MCSO was still getting calls for service from residents worried about relatives and friends they hadn't heard from. "People want folks checked in on," he said. Snowbound people may be warm and safe at home, but without phone and internet service, Kendall noted.

"If you live in these more rural areas like where I live, if my generator runs out of fuel, and the power is down, I don't have internet, so I don't have any communication, absent I've got one copper landline in there still -- just because of that."

Follow "Mendocino Sheriff" on Facebook for updates, and photos and videos. Here's a link to a video showing conditions on Spyrock Road on Monday: www.facebook.com/MendocinoSheriff/videos/672594537959056/

More of

Shelter

From page 1

were now stranded in Laytonville, and asked if I could open up Harwood Hall to be an emergency shelter.

I made a deal with her -- I would go down at 7 pm (I needed to do some chores first), and I would hang out until about 9 pm and by then, I would assume I would hear from the County on officially activating our site as a shelter, or the highway would re-open. I decided I was going to open my office at Laytonville Healthy Start instead of Harwood Hall, because I leave the heat on low during the night inside my office and Harwood Hall is an icebox and is difficult to heat in the winter.

Rolo and I arrived at Healthy Start by 7 pm, and there were already a half-dozen cars out front. We unlocked all the doors, turned on the lights, and welcomed people in. As we were greeting guests, we set up extension cords with power strips for phone charging, gave out the Wi-Fi password, and began pulling out extra folding chairs. While Rolo entertained our new guests, I went into the kitchen and began making hot water for tea /cocoa /Cup O Noodles, pulled snacks from our emergency food stash, and began my duties as a hostess.

By 9 pm, the snow hadn't stopped, the highway hadn't reopened, and more guests were arriving. Word had spread that we had opened up. Our guests were attempting to get back to Humboldt County. One family, a mother, her sister-in-law and three teens, had just returned from a trip to San Francisco and were heading back to Arcata. Another family with a little girl mostly spoke Spanish, so we translated through their teen daughter -- they were from Eureka.

Others were couples and single people, destination Humboldt County. One woman and her partner were on their way back from Stanford hospital, where she had an emergency heart procedure the day before and as she disclosed: "I wanted to leave and be miserable at home, but I should have stayed." Her partner sheepishly admitted he didn't check weather/road conditions before they left. The woman was grey and looked ill. This put my anxiety level up a notch as now I wasn't just hosting a group of strangers, I was officially hosting someone who had a serious medical condition.

Our guests were anxious to know when the highway would reopen and when would the snow stop. We did our best to supply information as we knew it. I had to explain over and over again, I wasn't technically a shelter, rather, we had just opened our doors out of the kindness of our hearts, and I was waiting to hear if the county would declare us the emergency shelter site. I told our guests, we're the designated shelter site for our community, and the county has its emergency shelter trailer parked on our property, but they have to "activate" us in order to use their resources. People wanted to know throughout the night "well, when is that happening?"

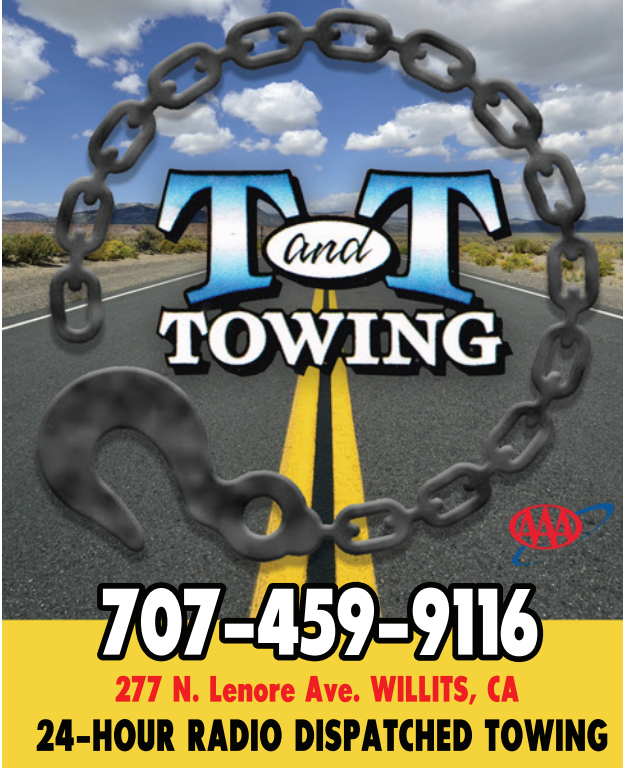
About eight years ago, our organization signed an agreement with Mendocino County to be the emergency shelter site for our community. As part of that agreement, our staff had to undergo shelter management training from the Red Cross. The idea was, in the event of an emergency, we would be asked to open our doors, and operate the shelter until our county or the Red Cross could send staff to take over. Last year, we agreed to let the county park the shelter trailer on our property, since it was previously housed at the fire department.

The trailer is filled with all the basic supplies you would need to operate a shelter -- cots, blankets, coffee pots, etc. and it made sense to have it on site. The trailer is also locked, and I was told after I asked a member of OES (Office of Emergency Services) how we would unlock it, he said, "We send a staff person to unlock it," I thought that was weird, but to bureaucrats who have more rules than I do, I guess that made sense to them.

By about 9 pm, three of us had made contact with various members of the county to tell them about our situation and asked for access to the trailer. My dad spoke with the Sheriff, Sue spoke with a few members of OES, and I spoke with two members of OES. We all made a threat that we would use the "Master Key" (bolt cutters) to gain access to the trailer if need be. We were asked "Why did you open up?"

Easily over 100 people were stranded in Laytonville, about 20 were currently inside my office, the highway was closed due to a heavy snow storm with freezing temps and no sign of stopping, but that wasn't considered an emergency to county officials. We were told that "we will continue to monitor the situation" and that the highway was predicted to open up soon. The highway didn't open up to south-bound traffic until Friday afternoon and it wasn't until Saturday afternoon that 101 finally opened up to north-bound traffic.

By 10 pm it was obvious to me that no one was coming to our rescue. That we weren't being given permission to access the emergency shelter trailer. So, we knew that it was up to us to provide a warm and welcoming place for



our new guests. I said to myself -- if the power goes out, we are screwed. (It would go out, but not until Friday morning around 9 am and come back on about 5 pm Friday)

Rolo called a buddy who knew a guy who had a stash of cots. Rolo and Taylor Norris, a local health center employee with medical training, went to pick them up. Taylor's presence with our heart patient made me feel better. Luckily, a few weeks ago, Healthy Start had received a donation of a few sleeping bags, and a few months prior to that, a donation of new fuzzy blankets. I went home and picked up a few more blankets. Everyone at that point received either a blanket or a sleeping bag, and about six lucky people got to sleep on cots. Others slept on the floor. We moved our couch inside the office -- a family of three slept together on that. The heart patient and her partner slept on cots inside my spare office. I felt she needed a more private room with a space heater to relax and keep warm. A few more leaned back in our office chairs.

Throughout the night, more stranded travelers appeared. We opted to open up the "Community Room" at the old High School. About six people hung out there for a few hours to warm up, charge their phones, and rest. By around midnight, they had opted to sleep in their cars. One was a patient being driven by a medical taxi.

At our "shelter," I could see the stress on the faces of our guests as they talked to loved ones over the phone and explained the situation. No one had solid answers about the highway or the weather or when they would return home. At that point, people had come to terms they were going to sleep next to strangers in a random office in a town they didn't know and make the best out of a terrible situation.

Lucky for me, accessing resources and problem-solving is my day job, so I felt comfortable enough to host our guests overnight. It wasn't the most ideal setting but we made it work. We had lights, heat and Wi-Fi; I figured it would only be for one night.

I ended up going into our pantry and seeing what I could cook quickly for a large crowd. Spaghetti it was. I don't know, it just felt like serving your stressed-out guests some comfort food was the best choice. It worked; they were happy to have a hot meal. I could see some tension melt away.

About 2 am, more guests had arrived, discovering we were open as they didn't want to sleep in their car at Chevron's parking lot. Rolo went to retrieve a futon pad from our upstairs room in our storage barn, he hurt his back in the process. Sleeping on the floor the first night in my office didn't help his back either. We made sacrifices that night to accommodate a group of about 25 strangers. I didn't know who these people were. I just hoped no one was a murderer. I didn't sleep but a few hours I was so stressed about the situation.

Early morning, I made coffee. I walked around quietly setting it up. More people had arrived during the night and were sleeping on our hard office floor with no blanket. One man had opted to sleep inside Harwood Hall with a space heater. A few more were parked outside with their cars running. Our office cat Jax seemed to be the most content of us all as he had 25 new friends and had a choice of whose bed he could sleep on. I felt a sense of relief as the sun came up, we had made it through the night.

As our new office guests started to awaken, I let them know the latest updates I heard. Highway 101 was still closed with no estimated time of reopening. We began to see the updates from the north and the Confusion Hill mess. We began to get a better sense of the damage the storm had caused. But, still no official word from the County as far as activating our site as a shelter.

About 9 am, as the power went out, I received a call from



A photo from Jayma Shields Spence showing how her Laytonville Healthy Start office looked "when we first started converting to the 'Laytonville Emergency Shelter.'"

a county representative about the trailer. We were finally being given permission to open it. I said it had a combo lock, and I don't know the combo. She didn't either. She texted me a few minutes later with three options. None of them worked. Finally, a fourth option was texted -- "that is the combo"; it didn't work. Perhaps the lock was frozen, I'll never know as I didn't ever get into the trailer. By that point, we had gathered our resources and it didn't matter to me- I needed it open last night.

By mid-day Friday, we had received word the highway had re-opened to south-bound traffic, but no one could get north from Reynolds Highway outside of Willits. I announced this, with some trepidation as I wasn't 100% certain it was the case. But it turned out by the time about a half-dozen guests opted to leave for Willits /Ukiah where they could get a motel room, the highway was indeed open for folks heading from Laytonville south.

A community member, Lisa "Rabbit" Sacks, called our office and said "what can I do to help? Can I make soup?" Lisa made a pot of veggie soup, and Anna Salmeron picked it up on her way to town and delivered it. It warmed up our guests to have another homecooked meal.

Since the power was still out, we hooked up our generator (Thanks to a grant I wrote to the Community Foundation a few years back. After I applied, one of their grant reviewers called me and asked why I would request funding for a generator if the county was supposed to supply resources in the event we were activated. I replied, because I don't believe in relying 100% on the county, and I can imagine there will be times when they won't be able to get up here and I will be left to run a shelter by myself. I obviously had dusted off my crystal ball back when I wrote that grant ha-ha).

Also on Friday, a gentleman fairly new to Laytonville came by to check on things -- he brought back a few more cots and sleeping bags. Now, we had enough to accommodate the remaining crew we had. We were ready for Friday night.

Rolo pulled the night shift for me, this time he had a cot to sleep on in my office. I went home, took care of chores, made a quick dinner and hit the hay. I woke up early Saturday morning to new snow; later the sun would eventually come out, and after we all had coffee at our "shelter," plans were being made by the guests to "get out of your hair." I told the group, I'm not kicking anyone out, but if you don't mind hanging out in town for part of the day, Rolo and I need a break. I also told the group I was hearing from multiple reliable sources that 101 North would be opened by Saturday afternoon. I further said to our guests "If I were you -- I would head into Laytonville, get gas, enjoy a hot breakfast, and head to Leggett. When they open that highway, you want to be first in line and get through there as soon as possible!"

One family was hesitant as they explained through a translator that they had been in an accident Thursday night, punctured their tire and were running on a donut. I told them their best option might be Willits since they had more services than we did.

The guests helped us clean up and put our office back to normal, they made piles of blankets for

Read the rest of

Shelter

Over on page 11

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Poets Mike A'Dair and Steve Hellman to read at WCT

By Steve Hellman, for WCT

Veteran poets Steve Hellman and Mike A'Dair will read their poetry and prose at the Starlight Lounge series at the Willits Community Theatre on Saturday, March 11 at 7 pm.

Mike A'Dair holds the title of the most obscure poet in America. A longtime resident of Willits, A'Dair has been a newspaper reporter for Mendocino County, The Willits News and Willits Weekly from 1990 to 2020. He is the author of two books on the Shakespeare Authorship Question and a book of poems, "The Recrudescence of the Supernal." In 2020, he debated String Creek playwright Don Samson on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Since his work first appeared in print in 1972, Steve Hellman has published poetry, fiction, memoir, journalism, reviews and translations in numerous publications, among them: the San Francisco Chronicle, Carmel Pine Cone Weekly, Willits Weekly, North Beach Magazine, 14 Hills Literary Journal, and the "Clamor of Innocence" anthology. He has performed as a spontaneous spoken word poet since the early 1980s, after learning the form from Beat Era forerunners. He currently teaches creative writing at Mendocino College.

A small donation at the door will be appreciated, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. An open reading will follow. The Willits Community Theatre Playhouse is located at 37 West Van Lane, behind Mazahar Clothing Store and Shanachie Pub.



Poets Steve Hellman and Mike A'Dair.

Photo by Mathew Caine

OBITUARY |

Richard Wartell

Richard Alan Wartell, 70, of Willits, California, passed away December 13, 2022 due to complications from lung cancer. Richard was born April 17, 1952 to Judith and Harold Wartell, Bronx, New York. He grew-up in Queens and attended Hawthorne Cedar Knolls School, Westchester County, in the late 1960s.

In the mid-1970s Richard drove a Grey Rabbit Bus across the country, landing in southern CA. Richard toured with bands in the LA music circuit and managed an apartment complex in Ellwood Beach. In the 1980s, Richard lived for many years on Price Ranch in Los Alamos, buying and selling antiques /collectibles. He was a caregiver for youth with cerebral palsy in Santa Maria. After a series of terrible personal losses he left CA in the early 1990s, and moved to Haskell, Texas, then Phoenix, Arizona.

In 1997, Richard returned to Queens to assist his ailing mother. During this sad time, it was also Richard's new beginning, he met Angela. When his mom passed away a few months later they were engaged and returned

to Phoenix where Richard re-established his mother's magazine advertising sales business. They married in 1999, moved to Nipomo, CA in 2000, and in 2001 bought a home in Brooktrails.

In the early 2000s Richard's business, Judi Block Associates, prospered. He sold advertising space locally for the BPOA Brooktrails Welcome Book. He worked as an Instructional Aide at Brookside Elementary School, 2015-2016.

Richard's kids and their activities were the favorite part of his life. Many people will remember Richard with his camera, the "official" photographer for Junior Giants, Willits Little League, Gateway Gymnastics, and videographer for the Baechtel Grove Band. He was an active parent with Boy Scout Troop 42. Richard was always ready with a story to tell about NYC and his adventures.

Richard was preceded in death by his first wife, Kim, and their son Benjamin, his mother and father, and his brother Arthur. He is survived by his wife, Angela, son Tristan, and daughter Sylvia, of Willits, and his sister Marcy Brown of Bayside, NY.

A celebration of life is being planned for April 2023.



At left, above: Caltrans workers on a recent snowy day. At left: Caltrans snowplows head up the hill.

Photos courtesy of Caltrans District 1



Thank you to Caltrans crews

Posted by Caltrans District 1

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!!!

It takes a highly skilled and dedicated team to maintain the more than 2,400 miles of state highway in District 1 – Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino counties.

Whether you're working in the field or in the office, we appreciate everything each one of our staff does every day to keep our state moving.

Recently our maintenance crews have been working around the clock to respond to impacts from winter storms. They're supported by teams in our dispatch center who provide 24/7 information, Division of Equipment staff who keep vehicles in good working condition, and many other employees who've contributed to the response.

On Employee Appreciation Day, March 3, 2023, thank you all for your extraordinary efforts!

SHAMROCK SHOWDOWN FRIDAYS 6PM - Midnight

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LEGAL NOTICES

WW414 Fictitious Business Name Statement 2023-F0061

The following corporation is doing business as Rosco Transport, 7401 Lorene Road, Redwood Valley, CA 95470. Registered owner: Rosco Corporation, 7401 Lorene Road, Redwood Valley, CA 95470. This business is conducted by a corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on January 26, 2023. FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on February 2, 2023. /s/ Ross Mayfield III, CEO Publication dates: February 16, 23, March 2, 9, 2023

WW419 Fictitious Business Name Statement 2023-F0108

The following person is doing business as Willits Power Equipment, 1600 South Main Street, Willits, CA 95490. Registered owner: Michael Garrity, 22928 Davidson Road, Willits CA 95490. This business is conducted by an individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 20, 2012. FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on February 23, 2023. /s/ Michael Garrity Publication dates: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 2023

WW421 Fictitious Business Name Statement 2023-F0093

The following 501c3 non-profit corporation is doing business as Golden Rule Gardens, 11725 Orchard Lane, Willits, CA 95490. Registered owner: Golden Rule Church Association, 11725 Orchard Lane, Willits, CA 95490. This business is conducted by a 501-c3 non-profit corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on May 1, 2022. FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on February 16, 2023. /s/ Cody Bartholomew, President, GRCA Publication dates: March 9, 16, 23, 30, 2023

WW422 Fictitious Business Name Statement 2023-F0094

The following 501c3 non-profit corporation is doing business as Headwaters Grazing, 300 Seabiscuit Drive A, Willits, CA 95490. Registered owner: Golden Rule Church Association, 11725 Orchard Lane, Willits, CA 95490. This business is conducted by a 501c3 non-profit corporation..

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on January 1, 2023. FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on February 16, 2023. /s/ Cody Bartholomew, President, GRCA Publication dates: March 9, 16, 23, 30, 2023

WW420 NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: GLADIS ARDELLA SHANNON

Case No. 23PR00015

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate or both of Gladis Ardeella Shannon: A Petition for Probate has been filed by Thelma Lucille Shannon in the Superior Court of California, County of Mendocino.

The Petition for Probate requests that Thelma Lucille Shannon be appointed as Personal Representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

The Petition requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.

The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval.

Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The Independent Administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows:

Date: April. 21, 2023 at 9:00 A.M. in Dept. E of the Mendocino County Superior Court, located at 100 N State St., Ukiah, California 95482.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the Court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor.

You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a request for special notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and in Probate Code, section 1250. A request for special notice form is available from the court clerk.

Petitioner in pro per: Thelma Lucille Shannon, PO Box 1642, Willits, CA 95490, Telephone (707) 483-0741.

Publication Dates: March 9, 16, 23, 2023

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Deputy District Attorney I/II/III \$76,419 - \$122,824

Deputy Probation Officer I/II \$51,937 - \$69,617

Deputy Public Defender I/II \$76,419 - \$92,913

Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II \$62,628 - \$87,214

Eligibility Specialist II \$47,132 - \$57,324

Emergency Services Coordinator \$84,531 - \$102,752

Juvenile Corrections Officer \$50,710 - \$61,630

Juvenile Corrections Officer – Extra-Help \$24.38 hourly

Program Specialist I/II \$50,897 - \$68,244

Senior Program Manager \$92,705 - \$112,694

Social Worker I/II/III/IV A-D \$48,942 - \$92,206

Social Worker Assistant I/II \$40,206 - \$51,292

Social Worker Supervisor I/II A-C \$70,387 - \$99,028

Vocational Assistant \$37,024 - \$38,875

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Flood Watch ahead

The National Weather Service has put up a Flood Watch for its forecast for Willits, from 1 pm Thursday, March 9, to 10 pm on Friday March 10. NWS is also advising residents to watch for upgrades to Flood Warnings for their area.

"Flooding caused by excessive rainfall continues to be possible in a portion of northwest California, including the following areas: Northeastern Mendocino Interior, Northern Lake, Northwestern Mendocino Interior, Southeastern Mendocino Interior and Southwestern Mendocino Interior from Thursday afternoon through Friday evening," the watch states.

"Excessive runoff may result in flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, and other low-lying and flood-prone locations. Creeks and streams may rise out of their banks. Flooding may occur in poor drainage and urban areas," the Flood Watch continues.

"You should monitor later forecasts and be alert for possible Flood Warnings. Those living in areas prone to flooding should be prepared to take action should flooding develop."

Regular forecasts for the town of Willits predict less than 3 inches of rain over the Flood Watch period, "followed by another period of heavier rain and gusty winds early next week."

You can enter your own address for a forecast, at https://www.weather.gov/

Computer Help Need help with your computer? PC, Macintosh, Android and IOS devices. Repairs, configuration and tutoring: \$50/hr. Call Liam 459-2470 or email uicearbhail@gmail.com

John Ford Ranch Beef John Ford Ranch still has the 50 lb. Rancher's Choice Box for \$375.00 and the 25 lb. Hamburger Box for \$160.00. Please contact Debbie Arkelian @ 459-5049.

Firewood for Sale Fir. \$250/Cord; Oak, \$350/Cord; Kindling. Free delivery near Willits. \$45 delivery near Ukiah. Call (707) 456-0270 or (707) 354-2244

Love Willits Weekly? Help support our free-circulation community newspaper by becoming a "street subscriber"! You send in an annual donation, and pick up the edition on the street each week! We love our regular subscribers too: \$75 for home delivery in the Willits area; \$100 for a year's subscription in the U.S. mail. Visit https://form.jotform.com/61915582053153 for a sign up form and more info.

Have You Had a Spiritual Experience? Join us for a lively discussion on spiritual experiences with a starter topic on dreams. Come share or just listen! Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street, Saturday, March 11, 2023, 10 to 11 am.

Room for Rent Room for Rent. Must work, have references. No pets. No drugs. \$600 including utilities. Available now. 707-354-0287.

RV/Trailer Space for Rent Space for RV's and Trailers \$425 per month, includes water & garbage. Close to Safeway in Willits. Call Tony (707) 972-4696. See at http://www.oaknvine.net/lp

Willits Food Bank Open Willits Community Services & Food Bank continues to distribute food in the Willits area. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the front office at 229 East San Francisco Avenue, Willits CA 95490 – knock or leave in the locked mailbox in front. Food distribution is available at the back door on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4:30 pm. Info: 459-3333.

Indoor Yard Sale Giant Indoor Yard Sale – Deep Valley Christian School, 8555 Uva Drive, Redwood Valley, (across from the Broiler). Saturday, March 11 – 8 am to 4 pm

Classified ads are just \$15 for 30 words for 2 weeks!

More of **Orth** *From page 1* and sincere recognition this plaque to Tony Orth. First elected in 1984, serving through 2022, from volunteer firefighter to Brooktrails Board and LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) President, and Elder Statesman of Mendocino County.”

Following the presentation, Tony Orth began by thanking the board and sharing a certificate of appreciation presented to him in 1980 from the directors for his help in establishing the Brooktrails Fire Department.

“I can appreciate being an elder statesman and there’s a few other things that I’d like to note for you,” Orth continued. “Of course, the Parcourse which is one of the best-used facilities around here. There’s the planting of the original redwood trees. In my first term we planted 5,000 small redwood trees with the Conservation Corps, and I recently counted 300 survivors. After planting, we started a seven-year drought. Having the 300 survivors is important.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

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Sunday Evening Service-
6-7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study-
7-8:00 p.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
265 Margie Drive
Willits, CA 95490
ALL ARE WELCOME
Sacrament Meeting
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Eckankar: The Path of Spiritual Freedom
•Sound of Soul events
•Membership Discourses
•Spiritual Discussions
•ECK Light & Sound Services
More information?
Call 530-224-8703
www.eckankar.org

Grace Community Church
Celebrating Life In Christ
25 Hazel Street, Willits
Modified Worship Service
10 a.m.
Other ministries suspended for now.
For appointments call:
(707) 459-3106

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
1 North Main Street, Willits
707-272-0177
Sunday Service - 10 a.m.
In-person and on Zoom
Call for information.
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Bruneau

St. John Lutheran Church
Church Service:
Sunday 10:00 to 11:00
(707) 459-2988
24 Mill Creek Drive
ALL ARE WELCOME

Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church
707-459-5714
Friendly, open worship
Saturdays
Bible Study - 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.
Zoom Transmission Available.
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting - 6:00 p.m.
399 W. Mendocino Ave.
All are welcome!

Willits United Methodist Church
Labyrinth and Peace Garden
A place to find comfort where all are welcome
Pastor Rosemary Landry
Sunday Worship at 10:30 am
286 School St. (at Pine)
707-459-2855
wumc@willitsonline.com
www.willitsumc.org
Facebook: facebook/willits umc

If you want to be included in this column please call:

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Proclamation for Charles Anthony 'Tony' Orth

From the Brooktrails Township Community Services District Board of Directors

Hear ye, hear ye:
Joining the Brooktrails Fire Department as a young volunteer to help his community;

Learning the ins and outs of the District to support his interest in volunteering and elected service;

Serving his community as a Brooktrails Board member, spanning the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s and 2020s;

Influencing development of the Brooktrails Specific Plan toward District planning authority over its own development;

Facilitating formation of the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts and associated revenue increases to fire agencies from various sources, including the County of Mendocino;

Supporting reallocation of Proposition 172 funding from only law enforcement funding to include fire agencies county-wide;

Sharing his understanding, encouragement and support for the Willits Highway 101 Bypass, its mitigation lands and associated Sherwood Road intersection improvements, which provide safer vehicle and pedestrian movement at the entrance to Brooktrails;

Helping establish shaded fire



Above: Down at the road, the Medstar Ambulance waits to load up the rescued patient.

Firefighters rescue snow-bound residents

Posted by CALFIRE MEU

Over this last weekend, CALFIRE's Mendocino Unit, with the assistance of Little Lake Fire Protection District firefighters, Ridgewood Ranch fire volunteers, and Medstar Ambulance, extracted snow-bound residents in need of medical attention in rural Willits.

The rescuers trekked up to a ½ mile to access the patient and bring them to the waiting ambulance for transport.

This is just one example of the calls CALFIRE Mendocino Unit personnel are responding to during these extreme winter weather conditions. They have also been clearing snow, removing fallen trees, and responding to traffic collisions with our partners, the California Highway Patrol, Medstar Ambulance, Caltrans, and other local fire, law enforcement, and public works agencies.

CALFIRE MEU is proud to serve the residents of Mendocino County.



Above: Firefighters haul a Willits area resident needing medical attention through the snow.

At left: Medics check out the patient before transporting down to the waiting ambulance.

Photos courtesy of CALFIRE Mendocino Unit

The rest of Shelter *From page 5*

laundry, swept the floor, and they were packed up and left by about 11 am. On their way out the door, I was asked for ways they could donate. A few handed us cash and expressed gratitude. One woman said, "I am amazed by what you pulled off." Another woman said, "Words can't express what this meant to me and my family. I will be sending a donation to you."

As I stayed behind and began to do piles of laundry and clean up even though I was exhausted but I figured it would help ground me from experiencing a solid 36 hours of anxiety and little sleep. I made a mental list of the things I would ask for donations/supplies to get us through the next emergency. This experience further solidified for me the need to be ready to open my doors and not rely on the County to step up.

It's a further example of what I have come to realize in my 13 years of running Laytonville Healthy Start Community & Family Resource Center: if we want something done in Laytonville, we do it ourselves. We have to take care of our own (or Humboldt's own, ha-ha). And I believed we proved that. I walked away with an experience I and those 25+ people will never forget.

How to help

I am calling on our supporters and community members for the following "Wish List" to expand/enhance in the event we need to open our "Laytonville Emergency Shelter":

Funding to purchase or donations of 12 folding/easy to store cots; 12 pillows (new); 8 sleeping bags; and 6 fuzzy blankets

Volunteers willing to lend a hand with set up, clean up and watching over the shelter, offering relief to our staff

Funding to be placed into a special fund that we could access to purchase food to make meals, buy bottled water, snacks

We have, thanks to funding from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, a supply of extension cords, power strips, folding animal crates, cleaning supplies, and a generator to power our office

My Big Wish is to have a permanently stationed heavy-duty generator hooked up to Harwood Hall 365 days a year that would allow us to run the heaters or a/c along with our refrigerator and freezer in the event of a power outage. PG&E supplies a generator during wildfire season for PPS events since we are their designated PPS site.

Donations can be made to: Harwood Memorial Park-FRC, memo line "Laytonville Emergency Shelter" at PO Box1382, Laytonville, CA 95454 Donations made will receive a tax-letter from our non-profit organization. Donations can be made on our website via Paypal as well

https://www.laytonville.org/healthystart/how-to-help/donate/

I want to thank those that helped us out: my husband, Roland Spence, my dad Jim Shields, Sue Carberry communicated with me about the situation and kept us updated more than anyone else, Taylor Norris who came by both Thursday night and Friday morning to lend a hand (she also provided blood pressure check to our heart patient), Michelle Downes from LVHC who offered to put us in touch with Dr. Sam if the heart patient needed to ask questions about the pain she was experiencing, Victor B-G for helping us set up and clean up, Martin for the extra cots and sleeping bags, Jeff & Natalie for the cots, Rabbit for making a home-cooked meal and Anna Salmeron for delivering it.

We proved that a little town with limited resources could host a group of stranded travelers and make a difference, and I think we saved some lives that first night. I can't imagine some of our guests in high-risk health situations being left in the cold. I know I wasn't going to be the one to not open my doors to help those in need – I'd be ashamed of myself if I had the power to help a group of people and I didn't because of a rule book. As Kevin Marsh said on this past Saturday's "This & That" radio show with my dad on KPFN, "Burn the rule book, we gotta stay warm." And my dad followed that up: "Handle emergencies first, paperwork second."

The rest of Struggling *From page 1*

a plan and some projections with hopes of increasing the speed of reviewing applications with the help of additional planners.

According to a table in the February report, MCD is hoping to review 176 "priority renewal" applications and 182 "priority applications" between this month and June of 2024, for a total of 358 out of the 832 "active applications and permits for commercial cannabis and nursery operations" in the county.

As described by Nevedal, this work plan is contingent on having a combined 27 MCD fulltime employees and outside contract planners working on the applications through June of 2024.

It seems as if the county should reach that number of workers soon, since at their February 28 regular meeting the full board approved a \$1.6 million grant-funded contract with 4Leaf, Inc., to add 20 or so cannabis planners, albeit only temporarily until that money runs out.

Nevedal did say the 4Leaf planners will need some training for the local program, including on the "Appendix G" environmental checklist, before they get up and running.

In the staffing section of the MCD February report, a chart showed that their department currently had seven planners, one chief planner, a director and three other positions filled, while still vacant were 10 positions, including four planners, a senior planner and a recently resigned program administrator. Nevedal also said that two other staff persons "did not pass probation and are no longer with the department."

Nevedal emphasized that the department had been recruiting and interviewing for multiple positions recently.

"So it has been a heck of a busy, busy time working through recruitments with Human Resources," she said, "scheduling interviews, conducting those interviews, and hiring as we find candidates who are qualified and interested."

When asked if the moving of the cannabis department office from Ukiah to the Justice Center in Willits in November was impacting recruiting and staffing, Chief Planner Elora Babbini replied that it was, though there were other factors as well.

"One of the largest struggles that we have is the location currently, and the amount of candidates that we are receiving," said Babbini. "When we get a small list of people, two to three candidates, there's many open positions in the county, the difference of gas is a big issue for folks. But we have had a few people with concerns of working in cannabis, just because of kind of some of the public opinion and contention I think, and just working in cannabis in general in the state.

"But I think in hiring we have been really successful in promoting internally for folks that are really happy within the department," she added.

Nevedal broke down how the MCD were choosing which cannabis applicants to review first, with applicants who have been "deprioritized" deemed "not eligible for application review," though they can be "reprioritized" if the county decides they have fixed their issues.

According to the MCD update, 371 active cannabis applications and permits have been deprioritized due to findings of a lack of a state license and/or being delinquent on local cannabis taxes.

For those applicants in the "prioritized" or "reprioritized" categories, the report said that those who have provisional state licenses coming up for renewal the soonest will be slated to be reviewed first moving forward.

The Mendocino Cannabis Alliance, an advocacy group for local small farmers, has frequently been critical of the MCD and county cannabis program in general, with numerous memos, letters and public comments at meetings detailing changes they feel are needed.

In an interview with Willits Weekly on Tuesday, MCA Executive Director Michael Katz said he was skeptical that the county would be able to process as many cannabis applications as they were projecting given their track record and staffing issues, and also claimed that the "deprioritization" system was haphazard and prone to errors.

Katz said that, based on an "informal survey" of around 30 applicants that MCA undertook, "90% of the people that we surveyed said that when they were cited as not having [a state license], they did," but were not told by the county to send in documentation and so were deprioritized.

"They're literally putting people on the deprioritization list, sending them a letter, removing them from review, creating all this unnecessary stress," said Katz, "when the people have the documents that they're looking for, and they could easily identify that."

"It's part of a pattern of behavior that

seems to be designed to make this process impossible for our local operators," he added. "And so there are all of these folks who are not included in the work plan, that their intent is to get back into the queue, and never should've been fully removed from the queue anyway."

Katz said MCA was also very concerned about the impact of the upcoming July 1 state deadline.

"We believe that this is a really significant deadline for a number of reasons," said Katz. "The additional requirements that the state has now built in that are required to be in place in order for folks to be able to renew their state provisional licenses starting on July 1 is significant, and the state provisional license is basically what allows the licensed cannabis operators to participate in the regulated market."

"Now there's this very short window, as far as the cascading effect, every month now, starting in July," he continued. "There are going to be hundreds of state provisional licenses that come up for renewal that will need to have gone through not only the full county review and have been issued a county annual cultivation permit, they will also need to have submitted their California Environmental Quality Act paperwork. And that will have to be submitted and identified as complete, because in order to receive the renewed provisional, they have to show that their CEQA is in progress."

Katz said that MCA was worried that, even with the MCD's new projections and the addition of the contract planners, hundreds of applicants will still get left behind and out of the system, especially the deprioritized.

At the GGC meeting, Third District Supervisor John Haschak, who is a member of the committee, asked Nevedal about the plan and timeline for getting all those currently deprioritized through the permitting process.

"If you don't account for them being in the queue at some point, then you're kind of planning for them not to be reviewed?" Haschak inquired.

"Or to review them upon completing the priority reviews," responded Nevedal. "So we will complete all priority reviews before we can consider reviewing deprioritized applicants."

In his latest supervisor update, Haschak talked about his overall concern with the shortcomings of the county cannabis program.

"Cannabis continues to be problematic," he said. "The standalone department is now running a budget deficit of up to a million dollars. This was only brought to light by the Executive Office. With permits not being processed, cultivators stuck in limbo, and the department asking for more money, it is past time to admit that the status quo is not working. I appreciate Mendocino Cannabis Alliance's letter to the State and our representatives asking for intervention. All ideas are welcome."

Haschak was referring to a 16-page February 8 letter sent by the MCA to state officials with the heading: "Requesting Urgent Intervention to Prevent Mendocino Licensing Collapse."

As for the budget gap in funding for the MCD, Nevedal said it stemmed largely from a lack of revenue coming in since most of the applicant fees for applications they are processing were paid in previous fiscal years.

An initial estimate from the county executive office put the MCD budget gap at around \$1 million for fiscal year 2022/23, but Deputy CEO Steve Dunicliff said at the GGC meeting that it was likely closer to \$500,000.

Budget deficits

At a budget update item during the February 28 regular meeting with the full board, the supervisors were informed that they were likely looking at a multi-million dollar deficit for the county overall in the 2022/23 fiscal year, which ends in June.

At that meeting Monique Ramirez, a local small farmer, said during public comments that if the county cannabis program worked more efficiently more cost-recovery money could come in for the county.

She noted that processing 800 applicants for renewal each year at \$733 per renewal fee could bring in around \$586,000.

Ramirez felt that 150 to 200 hours of county staff time which had been estimated per application seemed really excessive, saying, "You can get a state license approved very quickly and the documents are almost identical that are being requested of you as an applicant, so I don't really get what's going on with the county's process."

"It's really concerning that this budget situation is happening," she continued, "and I just want to draw attention again to the fact that the reason we don't have this money is because we're not processing applications. And we have a new timeline for renewals that are being pushed out for almost up to

another year and, for me personally, that means I might not get my permit renewed for almost 19 months. If it comes up to two years, that's two years of revenue that the county didn't get for my permit fees. And that's just appalling."

Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams pointed to a confluence of strict state regulations, declining cannabis prices, and a flawed county ordinance as being at fault for much of the local cannabis problems.

"The applicants aren't getting their state license, the price of the product is falling, this is a cheap commodity today," he said. "It's awfully hard to build a program with those dynamics where the people in the program are losing their farms, and we have no control of the underlying regulations. So ... I'm with the small farms. They see that this program is failing them – they're right, it is failing. I don't know what this board can do to change the outcome."

While many county applicants have been able to get their state provisional licenses, very few have gotten to the ultimate goal of an annual state license.

MCA put the total number at six in their February 8 letter to the state, although a February 18 article at SFGate said that their research into county and state documents showed that there were 12 county applicants who had obtained their annual state license.

In either case, that's only around 1 to 2% of applicants and permit holders in the county, far less than the 49% of licensees in California and 62% in Humboldt County, 58% in Nevada County, and 23% in Trinity County according to MCA.

Currently the deadline set for provisional licenses to be disallowed completely in California, with state annual licenses required for all cannabis operations, is January 1, 2026.

The rest of Orth *From page 10*

management contract and he accepts these responsibilities. He's a supervisor and oversees the management of the golf course. The managers are committed to doing good.

"The golf course has been going down for two years," Cedarholm continued, "and it's time for it to turn around. There are some immediate changes that need to occur. It's important at this point for things to turn around."

As she completed her comments, Cedarholm pointed to Tyler and Rudy Larson, potential new managers of the Brooktrails Golf Course, who are designated to appear before the board at its next meeting on March 14 to discuss the particulars of a plan to assume the golf course management. Director Horrick complimented Cedarholm on the letter she had sent, saying: "It was very well written."

The Accounts Payable report in the amount of \$91,533.65 was then unanimously approved by the board.

Finally, Consideration of Resolution 2023-02 Adopting an Agreement with William Scott Daniels. General Manager Alaniz reported on the agreement with Brooktrails resident Daniels, and stated that due to a sewer backup that happened in his home in January an agreement was formulated by Counsel Chris Neary to compensate Daniels for the costs incurred after the sewer backup. The total cost of the repairs to Daniel's home was \$5,870 and a check has been cut to Daniels to cover the repair costs. General Manager Alaniz assured the board that after assessing the damage and ascertaining the cause of the damage compensating Daniels was the correct action to take.

'Building Community #2', March 19

About four dozen community-minded folks met on Feb. 5 at the new Firehouse, for the first "Building Community" meeting, exploring ways to cross-pollinate among diverse groups and issues.

Meeting #2 is set for Sunday, March at 4 pm at the Willits Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. We expect to focus on several issue areas:

- Housing (especially the immediate need for a Warming Center)
- Health (more accessible & affordable options)
- Local Food/Agriculture
- Youth & Senior Resources; and
- Business Support

Together with community partners, we'll be identifying what's already underway, doable next projects, and how to move those forward. Come join in building the resilience and health of our community!

For more info contact Jane at Janemccabe1944@gmail.com or Madge at mstrong@willitsonline.com

WCT Music Series

Danish folk duo Gangspil took the audience on a musical journey

On Saturday night, March 5, the latest in a series of magical music and performance nights happened at the Willits Community Theatre. Gangspil, an entertaining duo of Danish folk performers, thrilled the crowd, who braved the weather, with their spirited violin and accordion (sometimes harmonica) duets of venerable Scandinavian tunes.

Kristian Bugge and Sonnich Lydom took the attendees on a musical journey around their homeland, explaining the origins of the songs and humorous anecdotes of the region. Gangspil, whose name refers to the giant capstans on sailing ships, got the people off their seats to have them dance around the duo on stage, as well as leading them in the chorus of a song about the subterfuge involved in sneaking a suitor into a windmill, in a sack, in order to court the miller's daughter.

Although their songs were in a tongue that very few of the locals understand, Gangspil proved that music is a universal language.

Willits Community Theatre, in its quest to fill the playhouse with music, plays, spoken word, and poetry, and to minimize down time at the facility, has been booking local and touring bands throughout the year.

The entertainment began with the mother/daughter duo of Linda and Pearl with their off-the-cuff brand of song, poetry, and dance. Next up last fall was a wildly successful night with Malakai Schindel, Sarah Rose, Forrest Glyer and friends. They will be returning May 6 with a new set of remarkable music. Local funk group, Funkacillin delighted their fans in the fall and got them up dancing.

Next up, the fantastic blues guitarist, Blue Luke, will be taking the stage on March 25, followed by The Real Sarahs, Bug Guts, Ramana Viera, Clay Hawkins, The Dry Branch Fire Squad, and many more as they become available.

The Willits Community Theatre strives to present the best of local and touring talent. More information on upcoming concerts can be found at: www.wctperformingartscenter.org/.



Above, left: Sonnich Lydom tells an origin story of one of Gangspil's folk tunes. Kristian Bugge and Sonnich Lydom entertained those who were adventurous enough to come out on the stormy March night. Below, left: For the final song, Gangspil invited all the guests up on stage to dance. Below, right: In addition to accordion, Sonnich Lydom showed his musical skill by accompanying Kristian Bugge on harmonica.



Photos by Mathew Caine



Between songs, Kristian Bugge and Sonnich Lydom relate entertaining stories of their Danish homeland and folk tales that have inspired some of their songs.



MORE FULFILLMENT

You're made for more career growth. That's why we've created a variety of opportunities for nurses like you who love making a difference as you advance your career. We're hiring nurses at all levels of experience across our three hospitals in Fort Bragg, Ukiah and Willits. It's more than another job, it's a chance to cross-train as you grow the career of your dreams. We even offer generous benefits and up to a \$25,000 relocation incentive.

Learn more at
AdventistHealthMendocino.org/NursingCareers

