

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

Online & Print

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

Donations Accepted Edition No. 396

Thursday, April 1, 2021

WELL forum features emergency responders

Jenny Senter
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

There was a wealth of information shared during the "Snow Happens (& Fire, Wind and Power Outages)" Forum, sponsored by Willits Economic Localization, held online via Zoom on March 15. Madge Strong, chair of WELL and City of Willits mayor, organized the meeting and John Haschak, Third District supervisor, was the moderator.

The goal of this meeting was to bring together local first and second responders, the local

Read the rest of
Forum
Over on Page 13

Superior Court seeks 2021 / 22 Civil Grand Jury members

by Superior Court of California, County of Mendocino

"All qualified citizens interested in serving on the 2021 / 2022 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury are invited to submit their applications to the Superior Court for consideration," announced the Honorable Jeanine B. Nadel, presiding judge of the Civil Grand Jury. The deadline for application submission is Friday, May 28, 2021. The 2021 / 2022 Grand Jury will be sworn in at the end of June, 2021.

Service on the Civil Grand Jury is an excellent opportunity to learn about the inner workings of government while providing a valuable service to the community. The 19 members of the Civil Grand Jury serve for one year and

Read the rest of
Jury
Over on Page 11

Supes to hear cannabis changes on April 19

At the March 23 county board of supervisors' meeting, staff said it would not be possible to consider the Planning Commission's recommendations about Phase 3 changes to the county's cannabis ordinance at the April 20 board meeting, the date the board had originally chosen. This was due to time needed for other items already on the agenda. Staff suggested holding a special meeting on April 19 to consider the changes, and supervisors agreed.



Above, from left: The Willits High School Wolverine looks for a perfect place to hide some eggs. Makeshift "bunny ears" are provided to the Wolverine by Leadership teacher Shawna Byrns. Ahh yes, the perfect place to hide some eggs along Main Street for the community to find! Below, left: Some 400 eggs will be hidden from WHS to Rite Aid along the main sidewalks of Main Street. Below, right: Little DaisyLynn Maciel, 4, excitedly finds an egg the Wolverine left for her especially near the high school – but remember – eggs for the rest of the community will be on the areas near the sidewalks of Main Street, from the high school to Rite Aid, and NOT on campus!



The Wolverine Laid an Egg

Willits High School helps provide fun for Easter time with Main Street egg hunt

After laying some 400 eggs in just a matter of days, the ol' Willits High School Wolverine will be pretty tired, but it's all for the fun of the community, and giving a corona-safe event for all to enjoy.

Last week and again on Wednesday and Friday nights this week, eggs will be placed

just on the main sidewalk areas of Main Street stretching from Willits High School all the way to Rite Aid on both sides of the road. Be quick to hunt, however, since eggs are going fast!

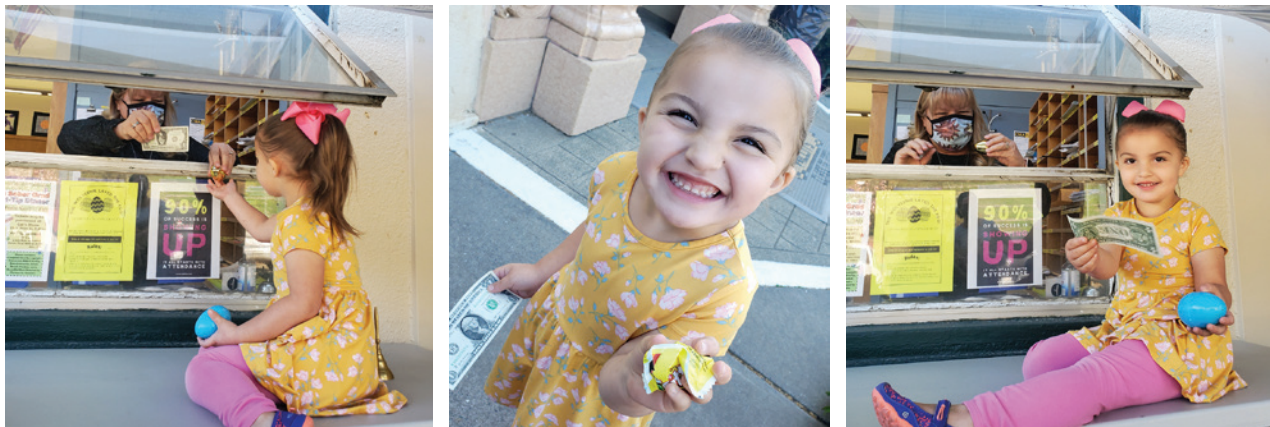
There will be two types of eggs; colored ones containing candy, and golden eggs that can be

Read the rest of
Wolverine
Over on Page 10

Below, from left: DaisyLynn Maciel, 4, shows how to turn in any golden eggs found to the WHS office where Karen Thiel, or other office staff, will exchange them for a \$1 bill.

Colored eggs hold candy, and DaisyLynn wasn't sure which she was more excited for... in this photographer's opinion: it was the Reese's candy.

Photos by
Maureen Jennison



Above: Adventist Health Howard Memorial president Judson Howe, left, stands with 20-, 30- and 35-year award winners, including from left: Nika Patterson with 20 years; Gloria Leon with 35 years; Cynthia Carni with 30 years, Maria Rogers with 30 years; and Jessica Branscomb with 20 years. Not pictured: Henrietta Simonsson with 20 years and Vickie Schiemann with 30 years.

Annual service awards honor Howard hospital staffers

By Cici Winiger,
for Adventist Health Howard Memorial

Last week, we celebrated our Adventist Health Howard Memorial team members for their many years of service to the hospital and our community during our Annual Service Awards. Our service awards celebration has always been Kentucky Derby-themed as a nod to our connection to Seabiscuit. Unlike in years' past, there weren't lots of big hats or strawberry shortcake, but the day was still filled with lots of love and cheers.

We celebrated a total of 485 years of service! Amazing! That's about 126,585 days of caring for our community.

Some of our notable milestone celebrations include Gloria Leon for 35 years, Cynthia Carni, Maria Rogers, Vickie Schiemann for 30 years, and Jessica Branscomb, Nika Patterson and Henrietta Simonsson for 20 years each. We have so many long-term members of our Howard family, and that speaks volumes about

Read the rest of
Howard
Over on Page 10

Supes ask for reports on 2 possible PHF locations

Forrest Glyer
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

At their March 22 meeting the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors gave direction to staff to bring back reports on the feasibility of operating a psychiatric health facility in two different locations in the county.

One report will be for "the Ranch proposal" put forward by the county's Deputy Health Officer Noemi Doohan in March, which would put a PHF facility and possibly other services on "a yet to be identified or purchased property in the unincorporated area of Mendocino County."

The other report will involve the Whitmore Lane property just outside Ukiah city limits which was recently acquired by the county to have available for isolation and quarantine during the COVID-19 crisis.

County Chief Executive Officer Carmel Angelo said that the building is "big enough for a 16-bed PHF unit and other services as well."

The building was bought by the county in August with

Read the rest of
Measure B
Over on Page 11

Brooktrails board supports fire district funding

Barbara O'Reardon
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The March 23 Brooktrails Township board of directors meeting began with Director Tony Orth presenting what he referred to as a position paper/letter addressed to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. The letter, signed by Director Orth and four other members of the Steering Committee of the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts, cited concerns regarding inequities in the representation that the fire districts have experienced in the Mendocino County budgeting process, and the letter urged the board of supervisors to allocate funding to public safety first responders. (To read the entire letter, see Page 2.)

In response to the letter, board President Rick Williams stated that the letter serves as "a good trigger" for the Brooktrails board of directors, and that the board fully supports the Brooktrails Fire Department's Fire Chief Jon

Read the rest of
Brooktrails
Over on Page 11

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

No on drastic expansion of cannabis

To the Editor:

Thirty years of my 40-year career with CalFire involved assignments to locations throughout Mendocino County. During numerous on-site pre-fire assessments, fuels reduction projects, and wildland firefighting operations, I observed widespread, significant environmental damage and wildfires caused by illegal cannabis grows.

I was therefore very pleased to see development of the county's current commercial cannabis ordinance to include small-scale size requirements, environmental protections and violation enforcement. These regulations also economically protected and rewarded small, usually environmentally responsible cannabis growers, many of whom had been growing illegally for decades.

Unfortunately, Mendocino County has been unable to effectively implement the existing ordinance. There are still numerous illegal grows, including those that are large and environmentally destructive. The onerous permit process and insufficient oversight of legal grows is also problematic. Specific impacts include watershed degradation, drastic reduction of natural surface and groundwater levels, and increased incidence of wildland fires.

So, given that county government has struggled to manage the existing ordinance, why would you *even consider* drastically expanding cannabis cultivation? Why would you intentionally do it now to avoid the CEQA process that would be required after July 1, 2021? There is not any reasonable, long-term justification for your proposed ordinance.

I commend Supervisor Haschak for his principled stand in opposing this outrageous proposed ordinance and beseech the other supervisors and the planning commissioners to reconsider their proposition. The short-term pursuit of increased revenue at the permanent expense of the natural and social legacy of our beautiful, rural county is dangerous and without merit. Thank you for your consideration.

William Bradley, Willits, division chief (retired), CalFire, Mendocino Unit

A good bet

To the Editor:

No one likes uncertainty. We all like black-and-white guarantees. The COVID 19 virus is not like that. The COVID vaccines are not like that. The virus has been studied for a year+ as has the vaccines. Why should I as a doctor and more than 90 percent of my colleagues strongly recommend the vaccine? Medicine like much of life is more like betting on a horse race – you try to find the overwhelming favorite. Be it a spouse, a career, or a horse – there are no guarantees.

The "COVID Horse" kills 10,000 to 20,000 out of 1 million victims. The "Vaccine Horse" kills zero and

protects 950,000 out of a million doses.

The COVID Horse maims over 100,000 out of a million victims. The Vaccine Horse results in medical treatment in 4 to 10 out of a million doses.

The COVID Horse attacks your family. The Vaccine Horse protects your family.

The long-term risks of the COVID Horse for those that are not killed or maimed are unknown but sobering with the brain fog and lung damage common. The long-term risks of the Vaccine Horse are unknown but the vaccines of the last 70 years, developed using similar methods, have been overwhelmingly safe and effective.

The Virus Horse has now infected over 130 million people worldwide and killed over 2.7 million. The Vaccine Horse has been given to more than 552 million worldwide with profound effectiveness and safety.

Which horse would you bet your life on – you have to choose one.

John Glycer, MD, Willits

Stop using social media for community alerts

To the Editor:

The recent Facebook conference by Mendocino Sheriff Matt Kendall regarding the Khadijah Britton case in Covelo reminded me of how much our public agencies rely on social media to relay information, regardless that not everybody uses such. And with the approach of fire season, I felt we needed to be aware of the consequences.

I am concerned that our public agencies continue using privately owned social media to publish what should rightfully be placed on the taxpayer-funded public websites. This includes not only announcements, but also emergency updates (fires, weather, etc.), health (COVID, vaccinations, etc.) and general government updates. Taxpayer monies fund our public agency's websites and call lines, and critical information should be published there first, then elsewhere as is deemed necessary, not the other way around.

I expect government to work for all of us, not just those that are members of some corporate social experiment. And we certainly don't need to hear and see the comments of trolls and malcontents during public safety announcements do we?

Facebook recently had a disagreement with the Australian government over carrying news items. As a result of the disagreement, Facebook shut off news stories across Australia for a period of time. Caught up in the shutdown were the bush fire reporting, leaving folks there scrambling for alternative sources of this critical information. Can you imagine that happening here during one of our fires?

Let's not wait for something like that to happen. We must employ taxpayer-funded CalFire and Sheriff sites for the primary citations of facts (e.g. fire at such and such location, moving in X direction). Social media can follow as desired, typically by social media users sharing what they hear or see.

For those of you on social media, are you aware that everything you say, or your "friends" say about you, is permanent? That an employer, landlord, loan officer or any government agency can find this to use in judgment? Or that every interest you express (and location you visit) is collected and sold to companies from which targeted advertising follows you? Not to mention that algorithms feed like-minded posts to you that do not necessarily represent the reality in the real world.

Push your representatives to publish information in a trusted location and manner.

And for the county government agencies, please consider reconfiguring your taxpayer-funded websites for ease of posting critical and timely information the public needs to be advised of (and please, don't let the trolls have a place for comments). Trust is built through reliability and dependability -- we just can't afford to have loss of life result from inaccessible critical alerts.

Brian Corzilius, Willits

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

April 2021 update

STOP PHASE 3 FROM DEVASTATING MENDOCINO COUNTY

By Supervisor John Haschak

The proposed Phase 3 Cannabis Cultivation Ordinance endangers our environment, communities, and local economy. The expansion proposed by the board of supervisors in both acreage and zoning has the potential to dramatically change what our county will be. I strongly oppose this proposal.

We can already see environmental damage from supposedly small grows. In this time of drought, local residents fear that massive use of water for growing cannabis will dry up wells and springs, leaving people short of water for the essentials of life. Wildlife will suffer as animals become more desperate as riverbeds and waterholes dry up. The cumulative impacts of this expansion need to be studied yet the board frantically tries to pass this new ordinance before July 1 without doing an environmental impact report. This is our environment where we live.

Communities will change giving us hoop houses instead of pastoral vistas. Food and regular agriculture will not be able to compete as land prices skyrocket. Food production will be converted to cannabis production. Prime ag lands and vulnerable range lands will be rocked over, plastics will cover the land, and hoop houses will multiply. Guard dogs and higher security will dominate our country roads, valleys and hillsides. Code enforcement and law enforcement have already lost control of the situation. These changes will greatly accelerate if the board passes this ordinance without addressing the dangers. When the boom bursts, which it will, whoever and whatever is left will have a lot of cleaning up to do.

We shape our economy and communities with our policy decisions. Phase 3 could devastate mom and pop growers while huge cannabis grows proliferate. Wall Street investors, buying up land for profit, are instigating a race to the bottom, damaging our local economy by bringing cheap labor and extracting profits to benefit far-away private equity funds.

Mendocino County has failed to properly implement Phase I and II of the ordinance. Permits were wrongly granted. Out of the 1,100 in the county permit system, only a handful have received state annual licenses which is what is needed to grow legally after January 1, 2022. Code enforcement can't keep up. Law enforcement has been overwhelmed by illegal grows. Yet somehow some board members believe that this new ordinance, opening up rangeland and expanding grow sites will make everything

Read the rest of
Haschak Over on Page 11

County funding of local fire districts

To the Editor:

Open letter, dated March 18, to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors: The intent of this letter is to address the continued and escalating difficulties facing Mendocino County Fire Districts and the breakdown in communication between the fire districts and the County of Mendocino.

Fire districts continue to be impacted and disadvantaged by the lack of representation at the county level and with the board of supervisors. This lack of representation is most clearly demonstrated during the annual budget deliberations. Fire districts have no dependable advocate within county government to ensure that county Public Safety Policy includes addressing the increasing needs of all Public Safety first responders.

Increasing demands for emergency medical services, ambulance and fire emergency response due to climate change must be recognized by the board of supervisors and address the county's financial responsibility for these separately defined services. Mendocino County must publicly acknowledge that it is the county local fire districts that deliver these critical public safety functions.

Regards the current FY 2021-22 budget deliberations, concerns among fire district boards of directors are focused on the county's lack of communication as to the status of funding sources currently dedicated for Fire/EMS funding. These sources include:

Prop 172: Current receipts for 19/20 is \$8,067,252. Current allocation for 20/21 to fire is \$398,000. The increase to \$485,000 for FY 18/19 was sponsored by then-supervisor John McCowen (\$87,000, added to compensate for the allocation provided to Ukiah Valley) came from the general fund and was characterized as a yearly discretionary funding increase. This increase was rescinded the next fiscal year (FY 19/20) with no notice or explanation given to the fire districts. All supervisors at that time voted for this decrease.

During the early days of the Prop 172 Fire ad hoc (created by the board of supervisors in November of 2015) with then-supervisor Dan Hamburg and Supervisor Dan Gjerde, there was ongoing discussion regarding any increase (float) above the then current \$7,500,000 income could be allocated for fire/EMS. This would have been a reasonable accommodation for the needs of fire/EMS that would

Read the rest of
Letters Over on Page 13



At top, from left: A player attempts to hit the ball. Minors players receive instructions on how the tryouts are to be conducted. A prospective solid hit for this player.

Above, left: A player hurries to first base after the fifth pitch. Above, right: Parents watch their kids try out for Little League at Lofling Field.

Little League

Young players show off their skills at tryouts for Willits' minors, majors and juniors teams

Little League has returned to the Willits ballfields after COVID-19 created a hiatus of a year. For the entire 2020 season, the fields had been allowed to grow fallow, without grooming, as they were not being utilized for the enjoyment and recreation of the youth of the area.

Now the fields are back, thanks to the efforts of concerned parents and Little League board members, who brought in equipment, such as rototillers, to better define and widen the base paths. The City of Willits is again trimming and caring for the grass so that the ballfields, once considered some of the best in the division, can again provide a safe and effective place for the kids to partake in "America's Pastime."

The weekend's activities, designated as "try outs" were actually more of a showcase for the prevailing talents and abilities of the participating kids, in order for the coaches and board members to be able to evaluate in which level each child belonged. There are three levels into which they can be placed: the minors (8 to 10-year-olds), the majors (10 to 12-year-olds), and the juniors (13 years and older). President of the Board Andrew Hosford, at the noon tryouts for the minors, said, "Anybody that's a little younger but more advanced can tryout to be in the minors. Generally, the minors are eight or nine to 12. Twelve-year-olds that maybe haven't played as much would probably in the minors.

"That's one of the cool things about Little League," continued Hosford, "is that kids have all different abilities and mature differently, so there is a lot of age variance in the leagues. That way, a really advanced kid who has skills that match a higher level has an opportunity. Inversely, a kid without a lot of experience that is 11 can play in a lower league so they don't feel overwhelmed."

The tryouts consisted of a short series of skills for the evaluation of the prospective coaches. Each player first was stationed at the shortstop position and hit a series of five balls which they then threw to first base in order to test their infield skills. Then they moved to left field where they attempted to catch five pop-flies (which were actually thrown by one of the coaches). After getting the ball, mostly off the ground, they then threw it to their cutoff player.

Finally, each participant got to swing at a series of five balls pitched from a machine. On the fifth pitch, they were asked to run to first base as fast as they could. Due to COVID restrictions, all the coaches and players wore masks and distanced as well as possible.

In addition to the playing skills, the assessment also included sportsmanship, how well they listen and work together. "Do they follow instructions deliberately and quickly," according to board member Jerry Gurero, who gave instructions prior to the beginning of the tryouts, "all the things that make a good player on their team."

After each kid had completed his or her (boys and girls played together) turn on the field, the rest of the players and coaches gave them a rousing round of encouraging applause. Wednesday, the coaches were to hold a draft at Sparetime Supply, where they, one at a time, chose players to be on their teams, utilizing what they learned at the tryouts.

In addition to the three levels of Little League, there are two other levels for

Read the rest of
Baseball Over on Page 10



Above, left: A minors player throws to first base. Above, right: A quick throw to first base tests infield skills. Below: Travis Dockins, coach of kids from T-ball to WHS varsity, throws balls to the outfield for the kids to catch.

Photos by Mathew Caine

At bottom: Parents, board members, and coaches work on the field a weekend prior to the tryouts.

Photo courtesy of Willits Little League Facebook page



The Rules: **LETTERS**

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to 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

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P.O. Box 1698 Willits, CA 95490 / 707-459-2633; 707-972-7047 willitsweekly@gmail.com / www.willitsweekly.com

Jennifer Poole, publisher and editor / willitsweekly@gmail.com / 707-459-2633

Maureen (Moore) Jennison, art director and photographer / maureen@willitsweekly.com / 707-972-7047

Mathew Caine, photographer / calendar editor / features writer / mathew@willitsweekly.com

Forrest Glycer, reporter / forrest@willitsweekly.com

Joanne Moore, reporter / features writer / joanne@willitsweekly.com

Barbara O'Reardon, Brooktrails reporter / willitsweekly@gmail.com

Ree Slocum, features writer / ree@willitsweekly.com

Danya Davis, features writer / police log / danya@willitsweekly.com

April Tweddell, ad sales / 707-972-2475 / april@willitsweekly.com

Jackie Cobbs, features editor

Ad inquiries: call 707-972-7047 or email advertising@willitsweekly.com

Willits Senior Center Lunch

Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Meals

The Willits Senior Center is continuing to provide drive-thru, walk-up and delivered meals, although the dining room is closed. Prices for drive-thru and walk-up To Go lunches will remain at \$5 through June 2021, thanks to funding from the Community Foundation and Sparetime Supply. Meals on Wheels delivered meals remain at \$5.50. Call 459-6826 for more info.

Drive-thru and walk-up To Go meals are available 12 to 1 pm, Monday through Friday. Pickup is outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road.

Home Meal Delivery

The Senior Center Meals on Wheels delivered meals are \$5.50 per meal. Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery; Monday through Friday. Delivered throughout Willits.

Thursday, April 1: Steamed Tilapia, Rice Pilaf, Veggie Roll, Green Salad

Friday, April 2: Carnitas Tacos, Rice, Beans

Monday, April 5: 5 Country Biscuit & Sausage Patty smothered in Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Hash Browns

Tuesday, April 6: Turkey Curry, Rice, Veggie, Roll, Green Salad

Wednesday, April 7: Chicken Salad Sandwich, 3 Bean Salad, Cottage

Thursday, April 8: Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Garlic Bread, Green Salad

Friday, April 9: Teriyaki Chicken Stir Fry

Transportation for seniors: Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors' appointments.

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855.240.6606
675 S Main St, Willits, CA 95490
105 W Clay St, Ukiah, CA 95482
nicholas@ncfinancialgroup.com
nicholas.casagrande@ceterafs.com**

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Happy Easter

SPARETIME GARDEN CENTER

We will be Closed Easter Sunday

Regular Business Hours
Monday - Saturday 8am - 6pm
Sunday 9am - 5pm
200 E. San Francisco Ave. (707) 459-6701

Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

	1			2	9	6	3	5
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EASTER TIDINGS WORD SEARCH																								
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BASKET	DINNER	HOT CROSS	MIRACLE
BONNET	EGGS	BUNS	PASTEL
CELEBRATION	FAITH	JELLY BEANS	RABBIT
CHOCOLATE	FAMILY	JESUS	REJOICE
CHURCH	HIDE	LAMB	RESURRECTION
CROSS	HOLIDAY	MARSHMALLOW	SPRINGTIME

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CLUES ACROSS

- One who manufactures
- Science degree
- Database management system
- Desert
- Inventor Musk
- Welsh valley
- Round Dutch cheese
- Saying
- Comedian and TV host
- Uppermost portions of the brain
- City in Transylvania
- Where astronauts go
- Men's hairstyle
- Indicates position
- One point east of due south
- Businessmen may have one
- Grass part
- Running back Gurley
- Unwavering
- Options
- Annoy
- Greek mountain
- Pastas
- Fishes
- Wrap
- Potentially a criminal (slang)

- Seize
- The Constitution State
- Upset
- 1991 men's Wimbledon champ
- Central Chinese province
- Predisposition
- A notice of someone's death
- One-time Kentucky Rep.
- Swiss river
- Dried-up
- Finger millet
- ___ Allan Poe
- German river
- Brew
- Kenyan river

CLUES DOWN

- Millisecond
- Acts as military assistant
- Knot in a tree
- Husband-and-wife industrial designers
- The Ocean State
- Point the finger at
- Parts in a machine
- Midway between northeast and east
- Portray precisely
- Blister
- Mental illness

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!

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

March 22 to March 28

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled **115 incidents** in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

March 22

- 1:51 am: Officers responded to a report of threats in the 1400 block of South Main Street.
- 5:22 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.
- 7:00 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1500 block of South Main Street.
- 11:11 am HEILIG, Jeremiah Daniel (40) of Willits was contacted in the 1600 block of South Main Street. He was arrested on felony charges of burglary and on misdemeanor charges of violation of probation.
- 11:39 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1200 block of South Main Street.
- 2:28 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

11:11 am HEILIG, Jeremiah Daniel (40) of Willits was contacted in the 1600 block of South Main Street. He was arrested on felony charges of burglary and on misdemeanor charges of violation of probation.

11:39 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1200 block of South Main Street.

2:28 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

March 23

10:50 am: Officers initiated a vehicle theft investigation in the 1600 block of South Main Street.

1:42 pm: Officers responded to a report of an assault in the 200 block of South Main Street.

3:59 pm: Officers responded to a report of threats in the 400 block of East Commercial Street.

March 24

9:59 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 200 block of East San Francisco Avenue.

11:08 am: Officers initiated a vehicle theft investigation in the 1600 block of South Main Street.

6:33 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 200 block of South Main Street.

8:17 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of West Mendocino Avenue.

8:50 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

March 25

11:31 am: Officers initiated a vehicle theft investigation in the 1600 block of South Main Street.

3:54 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

4:19 pm: Officers responded to a report

of an unwanted subject in the 1700 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

5:44 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 100 block of West Valley Street.

March 26

7:54 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 100 block of West Valley Street.

3:53 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.

4:28 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of Marcela Drive.

7:28 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle near the intersection of Madrone Street and Magnolia Avenue.

8:53 pm: Officers initiated a missing person investigation in the 400 block of West Mendocino Avenue.

9:27 pm: Officers responded to a report of an assault in the 100 block of Holly Street.

March 27

1:26 am: ARBAYO, Robert Stephen (52) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Brookside Drive following a report of a prowler. He was arrested on misdemeanor charges of stalking and threatening bodily injury.

10:30 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Northbrook Way.

1:34 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.

6:07 pm: STEWARTWILLIAMS, Jaydhen Reeder (27) of Willits was contacted in the 200 block of North Street following a domestic disturbance. He was arrested on felony charges of willful cruelty to a child with possible injury or death and domestic battery, and on misdemeanor charges of false imprisonment and disorderly conduct (alcohol).

March 28

10:25 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 1500 block of South Main Street.

12:05 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 300 block of North Main Street.

1:55 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person near the intersection of West Valley Street and McKinley Street.

2:56 pm: Officers initiated a missing person investigation in the 400 block of McKinley Street.

4:40 pm: Officers responded to a report of threats in the 800 block of South Main Street.

CalFire announces availability of funding for projects that proactively address fire prevention and forest health

Submitted by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection announced the availability of up to \$317 million for Forest Health, Fire Prevention, Forest Legacy and Forest Health Research grant projects. CalFire is soliciting applications for projects that prevent catastrophic wildfires, protect communities, and restore forests to healthy, functioning ecosystems while also sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

CalFire's Forest Health Grants Program will award up to \$170 million to landscape-level forest health projects that seek to significantly increase forest fuels reduction, fire reintroduction, reforestation, and the utilization of forest biomass. An additional \$14 million will be available through the Forest Legacy Program to conserve environmentally important forest land threatened with conversion to non-forest uses, and \$3.8 million will be available specifically for applied research, examining forest health and fire science.

CalFire's Fire Prevention Grants Program seeks to award up to \$130 million for local projects that address the risk of wildfire and reduce wildfire potential to communities in and adjacent to forested areas. Qualified activities include hazardous-fuel reduction, wildfire-prevention planning, and wildfire-prevention education, with an emphasis on improving public health and safety.

While funding for the grant programs is contingent on budget approval, these programs are part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The call for applications for Fire Prevention, Forest Health, Forest Legacy, Forest Health Research grants opened on March 10 and will be due by 3 pm on May 19, 2021.

Due to COVID-19 constraints, only virtual public workshops will be held. These workshops will be recorded and made available at www.fire.ca.gov/grants/fire-prevention-grants.

For more information and to sign up for email announcements, visit www.fire.ca.gov/grants.



Above, from left: The new rebranded labels for Mendocino Spirits are in the art deco style. Crispin Cain, president of Tamar Distillery, and Tamar Kaye, vice-president, share a lighthearted moment. Low Gap, one of the distillery's original labels, is available in corn, bourbon and rye whiskey. Below, left: Partners Crispin Cain and Tamar Kaye have built their business to earn the respect of critics.



Tamar Distillery
Redwood Valley producer of gin, bourbon, rye, brandy and more wins awards and impresses critics

If absinthe makes the heart grow fonder, then Tamar Distillery's gins, bourbons, ryes, and other spirits could possibly make one fall in love. Tucked in the grounds of Flow Kana in Redwood Valley, in the old Fetzer Winery, this local distiller has been creating and perfecting its own brands of liquors and spirits since 2008, garnering awards and placing anywhere from first to 10th in prestigious blind-taste tests from New York to California, rivaling the better-known ryes and brandies of other top distillers.

Crispin Cain, president, and his partner Tamar Kaye, vice-president, have created an oasis of fine palate-stimulating libations. The spirits are the culmination of Crispin's 35 years' distilling experience and several more years apprenticing with one of the masters of brandy production.

"There are mysteries about brandy production," said Cain, "that have been passed from master to apprentice for more than 500 years. I've had the great good fortune to have apprenticed with a brandy master from Cognac, France, Hubert Germain-Robin, who was here in the county for many years producing brandy. His brandy was world famous. They produced from 1982 to 2018, before he sold the brand to Ernest Gallo.

"I worked for him for many years at Alambic, Inc.," he continued. "I started in the summer of 1989 when I was 26. Eventually, I suggested that I do my own projects and would they lease me the equipment? They helped me get started. The first product Tamar and I made was Crispin's Rose Liquor. It was a liquor made from fresh rose petals and spirits made from apples and honey. The next thing we did was the absinthe. Then we moved on to whiskey and gin."

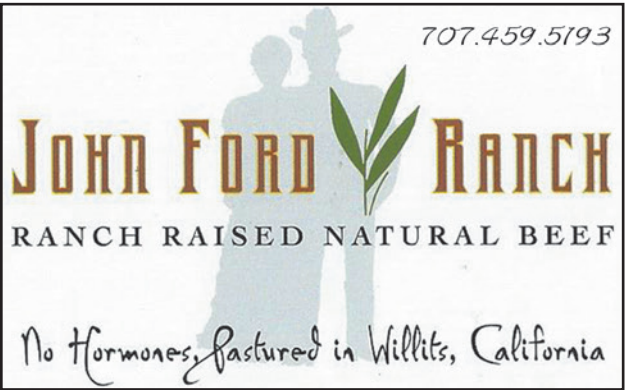
Although their original concept was to remain small and produce a fine group of spirits, they have been growing through the quality of their product. They can now be found in 33 states, under the Low Gap Whiskey, Russell Henry Gin, Fluid Dynamic label.

They have recently created a new label, Mendocino Spirits, for sales in California, although the label can now be found in Kentucky and soon, Utah. The multiple labels are made necessary due to various stringent federal regulations that make it difficult to change distribution once a label is entrenched.

"We have different names due to the complexities of distribution," explained Cain. "We're a distilled-spirits manufacturer, so in this state, as in 35 other states, there is a three-tiered distribution system that is mandatory. Once you've got into a distributor with one label, Low Gap for example, you're locked in for a while. You cannot decide to just switch distributors, but if I create another label, I have more freedom in distribution.

"We started Mendocino Spirits because we wanted labels that have particular artwork. The Low Gap label was designed by marketing people. I like it and the concept but I wanted a label with a different look from the beginning. We wanted something that was more Alphonse Mucha, more art deco. That's what Mendocino Spirits is and expresses.

Read the rest of Distillery | Over on Page 10



DeMarco and his Dogs
HIS K-9 PARTNERS THROUGH THE YEARS:
Wera: 1994-1999
Argus: 1999-2002
Barry: 2004-2011
Morgan: 2011-2012
Ruddick: 2012-2021



Get ready to watch movies at Noyo Theatre soon!

The Noyo Theatre is "coming back May 4, our 81st birthday. We are showing the first movie to play at the Noyo, on May 4, 1940, 'The Dark Command,' featuring John Wayne. This will be a fundraiser to help us keep this beautiful cinema alive. Admission as a donation is up to you. The movie has been restored and digitized to perfection. Hope you come see it. We will run it at least a week."

- The Noyo Theatre



Easter Carrot Wreath

Willits crafter Nicole Basler was inspired by Pinterest to make this darling carrot-shaped "wreath" as Easter decor for her door.

To make the wreath, use 50 silk tulips in an orange hue, layer them closely together, overlapping so only the petals show. Each stem gets wrapped with wire and attached to stems already affixed below. Silk greenery gets added next, layered in the opposite direction and a bow hides the seam.

Easy and long-lasting, and bunny resistant!

- Maureen Jennison



Into the wild blue retirement

Sergeant Joseph 'Joey' DeMarco retires after 32 years of service

Submitted by Mendocino County Sheriff's Office

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office would like to congratulate Sergeant Joseph DeMarco, known just as "Joey" to most Mendocino County residents, on his retirement after 25 years of dedicated service to the residents of Mendocino County, along with his K9 partner, Ruddick.

Sergeant DeMarco didn't start his law enforcement career with the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, but we're honored that once he became part of the MCSO family in 1996, along with his K9 Deputy Wera, he stayed with us. He began sharing his knowledge of K9 handling with other members of the sheriff's K9 team from the first day with us, until retiring as the K9 unit sergeant.

His law-enforcement career began in 1989, when Sergeant DeMarco worked in the San Benito County Probation Department and later in the San Juan Bautista Police Department as a patrol officer. In 1993 he was recruited by the Willits Police Department as a police officer and K9 handler.

Sergeant DeMarco's commitment to public safety was evident and by 1999, he became a field training officer and K9 team trainer in the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. Known for his strong work ethic, good-natured attitude, and ability to lead his teams with strength and humility, it's no surprise that he was awarded Deputy of the Year in 2012 and again in 2013.

Sergeant DeMarco worked in both the North and Coastal sectors during his time with the sheriff's office and also served the public with compassion and kindness.

Sergeant DeMarco's K9 deputy partners include Wera, Argus, Barry, Morgan and Ruddick.

Joey, we'll greatly miss your expertise, invaluable contributions, and thank you for serving this department and our community. We wish you continued success and happiness in retirement. Congratulations!



At top, from left: Sergeant Joseph DeMarco and K-9 Morgan pose together at training. Already happy in retirement, DeMarco and Ruddick say their "goodbyes" to the community. DeMarco poses with his first K-9, Wera (pronounced "Vera") in 1994 when he worked for the Willits Police Department. DeMarco shares his lunch with K-9 Barry after spending some 30 days on the job during a manhunt in 2011.

Above: When DeMarco first started at the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, he and dog, Wera, did some training exercises, with a hopefully willing partner, Deputy Kenny Lewis.

Below, from left: Mendocino County Sheriff deputies pose together in 2017 by the dedication sign at the Morgan Ruddick K9 training center in Willits, including from left: Deputy Jeffery Andrade and Doc Holiday, Sergeant Joseph DeMarco and Ruddick, and Deputy Jonathan Martin with Cam.

DeMarco and K-9 Barry pose together by the Sheriff Office's vehicle. Now official, Ruddick's 2020 preparation and appropriate accessory for retirement, finally comes true in 2021.

Photos provided by Joey DeMarco and Retired Sheriff Jim Tuso



Willits Willie



Willits schools chief Debra Kubin with her award.

Jim Wood names Debra Kubin Assembly District 2's Woman of the Year

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Santa Rosa) announced Monday he had named Debra Kubin, superintendent of Mendocino County's Ukiah Unified School District, as 2021 Woman of the Year for Assembly District 2.

"In addition to her already challenging role as UUSD's superintendent, Ms. Kubin responded to the COVID pandemic by leading an amazing effort to not only help continue the education of Ukiah's students but oversee an amazing effort to make sure that more than 3,000 students who need food support have received daily meals, including students who attend charter and private schools" said Wood.

Superintendent Kubin worked with the district's food distributors to ensure that they received the necessary amount of food, and at the same time, worked to assist students in transitioning to remote learning by providing all sixth- through 12th-grade students with Chromebooks. For those who did not have access to the internet, UUSD purchased 150 hot spots that were distributed to families who live in remote areas of the district.

"Ms. Kubin, together with the city of Ukiah and a district team including their food services director, workers, bus drivers, maintenance workers and volunteers, improved the reach of their meal drive-thru program by ensuring that the needs of the children who do not have transportation to pick up the food were met by delivering meals by bus to regular bus stops," said Wood.

Willits Willie

Willie is a handsome big boy that came to us in a trap from out near Hearst ... with a stop at the Ukiah Shelter Clinic for neutering. He's adjusted quite well to life at the Milo Foundation Sanctuary. He's a tad shy, but with a calm approach, he's a love!

To find out more about Willie, who is currently living at the Milo Foundation Sanctuary in Willits, or to view other adoptable animals, visit 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.

Silky Theo

This little short-hair rabbit would love to be a part of your family! Theo is a fairly calm young boy who loves to be held and get head scratches. He is 3 months old and weighs 2 pounds.

For more about Theo 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. For information about adoptions, please call 707-467-6453.

Sweet Cisco

Meet Cisco, our chubby little buddy! Cisco came to us with his friend Coco after sadly losing their owner. After losing their owner, they were left to live outside before help arrived. Cisco is blind and needs to lose some pounds but otherwise is an adorable, happy, sweet boy who likes to be called by his name. He needs a warm, predictable and safe home where he can be successful. Cisco is only 4 years old and has a lot of living left to do! Cisco's buddy, Coco, found her forever home, now it is his turn! We would love to get him out of the shelter and into a loving home as soon as possible. Apply to love Cisco today at www.mendohumanesociety.com.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County, 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley, is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, by appointment only, for intakes, adoptions and fostering. For information or any questions, call



Sweet Cisco

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45 Hazel St., Willits

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COMMUNITY SCAVENGER HUNT

THE EGGS WILL BE READY AROUND TOWN MONDAY MORNING, MARCH 29TH UNTIL APRIL 4TH

Kids of all ages are welcome to join in!

Rules:

1. COLLECT AS MANY COLORED EGGS AS YOU CAN!
2. LOOK OUT FOR THE GOLDEN EGGS!
3. GOLDEN EGGS ARE LIMITED TO ONE PER PERSON.
4. THERE IS FAKE MONEY INSIDE. TO RETRIEVE YOUR REAL DOLLAR YOU GO TO THE OFFICE AT WILLITS HIGH SCHOOL.

Please Support Our BIGGEST FUNDRAISER Of The Year !!

Willits Sober Grad Tri-Tip Dinner

Friday April 23rd, 2021

Tickets may be purchased at: **Cat's Meow**
29 S. Main St. Willits

PRE SALE ONLY !
Or Call : **Linda Matz 459-6201**
Karen Thiel WHS 459-7700 ext. 1504

Dinner Includes: **Complete meal for 4 people. Marinated, BBQ'd Tri-Tip, Baked Potatoes, Salad, Bread, Cookies, and a Beautiful Rose Donated by Flowers by Annette.**

Willits Sober Grad is a non-profit organization that works each year from September through June to raise funds which are used to put on a safe, sober party for graduating Seniors of the Willits Community Schools on Graduation Night. These schools include: Willits Charter School, Willits High School, San Hedrin High School, La Vida Charter School. Since it's inception in 1986, no High School Senior has died on Graduation Night.

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Judith Ann Heegler Ray

January 18, 1944 - March 22, 2021

Judith Ann Heegler Ray died after a long illness. She was born January 18, 1944 in Berkeley, California. For her last twenty years she was debilitated by a seizure disorder, rendering her unable to carry on her life's works of art, clothing design, parenting, and householding.

She is survived by her husband William Ray, their four children, Lara Ray Jones of Kenly, North Carolina, Kenneth Ray of Norwell, Massachusetts, Hannah Ray of Brighton, Massachusetts, and Avrah Ray of Santa Rosa, California plus their respective spouses, and the four grandchildren—Lara's Daryl and Lynne Jones and Kenneth's Alexander and Emma Ray.

Few of her contemporaries know she was blinded at birth from obstetrical damage, recovering sight at age two. She manifested early as a prodigal talent, receiving the Oakland Schools penmanship award in sixth grade. She became a skilled seamstress and clothing designer at age eight, winning a national coat-making contest at fourteen, and was invited to apprentice in high couturié salons in San Francisco during high school. She was befriended by the singer and actress Ethel Waters when both were summer visitors in Boonville with Ida and Emmet Jackson, the former being Oakland's first Black teacher. Judith studied ballet in San Francisco and performed for the San Francisco Ballet Company when Maria Tallchief was the premier ballerina. She later displayed a genius for languages. She lectured at UC Berkeley in Castilian Spanish at age eighteen and learned French in six weeks. She played Bach recorder parts by ear.

She proved to be a superior swimmer, first developed as an athletic pastime when her family vacationed by the Eel River near Myers Flat. She paced her classmate Sylvia Ruuska, the 1960 Olympic women's relays backstroke champion. At fifteen serving as camp lifeguard on Lake Tahoe, Judith swam from the Western to Northeastern side of the alpine lake and back, a total of sixteen miles. As a child in Humboldt County she had encountered a bear close enough to touch. Neither caused fear in the other. They ate along the same huckleberry patch.

After earning her BA at UC Berkeley, she was sponsored into a Medieval French PhD program by Robert Brentano, heir of the distinguished European historian lineage.

She married early and bore two children, Lara and Kenneth, but still graduated in five years with a general teaching certificate. She taught school on and off for several years until her health failed. Along the way, she helped initiate Mountain Meadow Waldorf School in Calpella. The Ray's two younger daughters attended this school. Their son, Kenneth Ray, attended High Mowing Waldorf School in high school and stayed in New England thereafter.

As a teenager she was befriended by M.F.K. Fisher, the eminent real-food pioneer in Sonoma County, and became a gourmet cook. She gardened property east of Willits with her husband and children beginning in 1971, learned herbal medicine to remedy illness and infertility, and practiced Yoga for five decades.

She requested no service at her interment in Little Lake Cemetery on East Hill Rd. If mourners think it right, they may honor her by referring to a prayer imparted by a Tibetan Lama. The prayer text is included below. It was felt that the soul is significantly aided in its journey to higher realms by mourners voicing sixteen repetitions per day of the mantra while visualizing that person surrounded in emanations of golden light. The transit between the lower and higher states is said to take forty-nine days, seven times seven. Judith was the most virtuous of wives and mothers.

Biblical Woman

The word-filled friendships the comings and goings
Soundless beside her seated form
Costuming preparing and comparing
Frozen beside her braceleted wrist
Drawn lines known rules for battle and conquest
Games before her shapely boot
She has four rings the beryl pendant
Rubies round as pearls
An anklet of gold links studded with twelve stones
For ten fingers and two temples of light
The second is diamond, eighth an emerald
With jasper, sapphire, carnelian
Circles of green in blue azurite, malachite
Obsidian streaked with amber
Nephrite jade, sea green from west of En Gedi
Onyx, lapis lazuli from the north
And the ninth is topaz
Ivory and gold are banded high on her arm
Whose hand holds a fan of light feathers
They pay tithes of mint and anise
To hear her voice in the valley of Hebron
Bdellium from wooded Carmel on a table
And agate with linen and coral nearby
Garments smelling of myrrh and aloe nearby
Coral and linen by her bed that she leaves
Judith woman of the full gesture
To seek the mountain streams in the afternoon
And at evening sits for hours beside the rhythmic clear water

—WJ Ray, Willits California, 1973

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

our culture and makes such a difference in the care we provide.

Henrietta was so dedicated to her job, she could not make it to receive her award since she was busy teaching a Basic Life Support class. We couldn't miss an opportunity to recognize her. So Judson

2020 Service Award Winners

35 Years:
Gloria Leon

Rebekkah Steinbuck
Jennifer Stephens
Holly Sears

30 Years:
Cynthia Carni
Maria Rogers
Vickie Schiemann

Aphrael Dunston
Jenifer Evans

20 Years:
Jessica Branscomb
Nika Patterson
Henrietta Simonsson

Jaimie Jacobsen
Trisha McKeon
Shelly Rutler
Ryan Runyan
Cici Winiger

15 Years:
Constance Criswell
Marti DeNeef
Samantha Gott

5 Years:
Gina Celeri
Deanna Cruise

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

brought to Willits High School to exchange for a \$1 bill.

"We just really wanted to give back to the community," explained Leadership teacher Shawna Byrns. "The community didn't really have a hunt last year, and this year we wanted to create something COVID-safe. It's not a fundraiser or anything, just a fun thing to do for Willits."

There's not too much going on for Leadership this year, rallies, dances and the like are all still on pause, even as students start to make a comeback to the physical classrooms.

"We're excited to see the students returning to the halls again," said WHS Attendance Secretary Karen Thiel. "Please make sure you make it to school if you've

The rest of **Distillery** | *From Page 5*

"We like being flexible and having a variety of products," he continued. "We're making four different kinds of whiskey, but these days, I'm really concentrating on bourbons and ryes. The whiskey world is really divided between the bourbon people and the rye people. I've noticed that our bourbon does well in the Midwest but the East Coast likes our rye."

Since Tamar Distillery is located in wine country, it's only fitting that they also produce brandy. They start by crushing grapes and vinifying them into wine. "The wine is new and fresh. The fermentation is just finished," said Cain, explaining the process of creating brandy. "It gets transferred into a still. The fire is turned on underneath it, which causes a steam to rise off of it, which is water, alcohol and flavor. The steam is piped to a condenser that compels the steam to become liquid again. The liquid is saved and redistilled. The second time through a pot still, we can create a high-proof alcohol which is about 70 percent alcohol.

"The heart of the second-distillation process, known in France as 'eau de vie,' is clearer than rain water, really marvelous. The place smells like candy and flowers. That spirit is then transferred into barrels. The oak gives it the brown color. After years of aging, it has become what we enjoy drinking."

Working in the distillery, in addition to Cain and Kaye, are Cain's son, Crispin Dylan Cain, and Caitlin Riehl, chief of operations. Riehl's husband, Hoolis C. Nation, is a consultant in the art of mixology and creates many of the recipes which can be found on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.4380517032023332&type=3.

According to Cain, Tamar Distillery

The rest of **Baseball** | *From Page 3*

the really young, T-ball, where the kids hit off a stationary holder and coach-pitch for the slightly older ones. If they can't hit the coaches' pitches, they are then allowed to hit off a tee. "T-ball is more like herding cats," joked Hosford. "Some kids spend more time rolling in the dirt and throwing sand. No stress. It's just to get them out there and get them some fundamentals, how to catch, how to throw, how to hit, how to run the bases, what the bases are called. Then they advance from there."

Little League has been around for approximately 100 years since its beginnings in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. It has grown to international status and is

Howe, our president, surprised her and brought the cheers and recognition to her!

We also celebrated our team members who have been part of our family for 15, 10 and 5 years. Congratulations everyone, and thank you for choosing Howard to contribute your skills and time. Please join us in thanking our teams for their many years of service to our hospital and the Willits community.

35 Years:
Rebekkah Steinbuck
Jennifer Stephens
Holly Sears

10 Years:
Aphrael Dunston
Jenifer Evans

Jaimie Jacobsen
Trisha McKeon
Shelly Rutler
Ryan Runyan
Cici Winiger

5 Years:
Gina Celeri
Deanna Cruise

signed up for in-person learning! We want to see your faces!"

Leadership will be helping to coordinate the upcoming graduation festivities for the high school, which hope to be a great send-off for a class that has had to go through a lot for their senior year. Stay tuned for details!

Kristan Frost, who graciously volunteered to don the Wolverine costume, is a senior this year and Associated Student Body historian. She is excited to spend time serving in the U.S. Army as a water treatment specialist before returning to civilian life where she will look to attend art or film school.

Thank you, Kristan, and good luck with your future!

The rest of **Distillery** | *From Page 5*

currently produces 3,000 to 4,000 cases per year, but has the capacity to produce 50,000 if they end up expanding their market overseas, at which point they will have to take on more employees.

Tamar Distillery has racked up an impressive list of blind-taste wins and showings. "Our Mendocino Spirits Captain Fletcher Private Reserve Rye is in the top 10 of ryes produced in America by the Ultimate Spirits Challenge," Kaye explained proudly. They have also placed in the top 10 at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. "These are blind taste tests with usually more than 25 judges, industry critics, distributors, etc.," according to Cain.

"We are grateful for the recognition of tough critics," exclaimed Kaye. "We strive to keep that reputation up."

Their products can be found locally in Willits at both Village Markets, in Redwood Valley at the Redwood Valley Market, Harvest Market in Fort Bragg, at their distributor, Caddell Williams' showroom in Ukiah, among other vendors. They are beginning to sell directly as well, at the distillery, 1110 Bel Arbres, Redwood Valley, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 12 to 5 pm and on Friday, 12 to 6 pm. Sales are limited to three bottles per customer per day through their craft-distillers' license, but "come back tomorrow, we can sell you another three bottles," laughed Cain.

For more information on Tamar Distillery and their award-winning liquors and spirits, visit www.tamardistillery.com, www.mendocinospirits.com, or www.facebook.com/Mendocino-Spirits-Tamar-Distillery-135768876498190. To contact them, email tamar@mendocinospirits.com or call 707-485-2068.

The rest of **Baseball** | *From Page 3*

now played in over 6,500 communities in over 80 countries, with a World Series each year played in Williamsport. According to Treasurer Russ Roundtree, Little League has been played in Willits since around 1945.

"The benefits of the Little League include social skills, coordination, learning to be a team player," stated Hosford. "Baseball is a team sport but it's also an individual sport. It's an individual sport when you're batting and a team sport when you're in the outfield. It helps them build confidence and all the other developmental skills that are important as the kids get older."

The rest of **Measure B** | *From Page 1*

\$2.2 million of CARES Act funding, and Angelo said that no county general funds were used in the purchase.

However the county will need to pay to repair the roof before it can be used, which has been estimated to cost nearly \$3 million.

In a March 16 report from Doohan, the Ranch proposal she described would use about \$30 million of Measure B funds to "cover the startup of the ranch and operation for 2 years." This would include \$5 million to purchase the ranch, \$9.5 million to build a 16-bed PHF, and \$15,800,000 to operate it for two years.

Placing a PHF near the Adventist Health Hospital in Ukiah was also discussed at the board meeting, but eventually the direction was given to staff to first consider the ranch and Whitmore options.

Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams thought that the ranch concept could be promising since it may avoid the "not in my backyard" type of opposition they've seen by some in the county when looking at locations for a lock-down style PHF.

"It looks like an innovative model," said Williams. "Given the inherent NIMBY attitudes around a mental health facility, locating it in the unincorporated far from neighbors – it seems like there may be some potential."

"The NIMBYism is really deeply disturbing to me," said First District Supervisor Glenn McGourty. "Because there's a lot of implications there the way that mentally ill people are perceived. And they're ill, OK. Let's get that out on the table. And they get better. And they get better when they're treated. And that's what we're trying to do here."

Third District Supervisor John Haschak also thought the ranch idea looked promising, but said that the county would have to identify additional funding streams to make it work.

"If we're having to pay millions of dollars for a ranch, that would have to be compensated by the state or some entity because that's probably not in the budget of Measure B," said Haschak.

Williams said that the ongoing operational costs for the county was really the bigger concern about a PHF facility.

"I'm not worried about the cost of construction," he said. "We have enough funds to build a facility. I'm worried about whether we can operate it."

McGourty and other supervisors expressed some frustration that so little progress had been made in creating a local PHF unit, given that the county is now in its fourth year since Measure B was passed in November of 2017.

"It feels like we're kind of getting into the 11th hour on this five-year cycle of funding," said McGourty. "I don't understand why this wasn't looked at earlier on in the game.... But I agree with Supervisor Williams we should at least take a look and see if it's even feasible."

Mendocino County Behavioral Health Director Dr Jenine Miller said that county staff and outside consultants have considered and analyzed several locations as potential PHF sites in the years since Measure B passed, and Haschak also spoke about those efforts.

"I know as part of the ad hoc with Supervisor Williams, we have looked at a lot of the commercial properties around that are available in the Ukiah area and the Willits area," he said. "And

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

Noyer and Director Orth and would provide as much leverage is needed to help in gaining representation at the county level.

The board then unanimously approved the Accounts Payable in the amount of \$75,323.54.

Adam Sherf, chair of the Greenbelt Recreation Committee, was in attendance to discuss consideration of the Willits Area Cyclists' proposal to adopt trails to complete associated trail maintenance work. The Brooktrails Community Services District has not had the funding or resources for the upkeep of the trail network, and as a result, the trails have been primarily user-maintained. An agreement between the Brooktrails district and the WAC would help to create an avenue for an official volunteer trail work program.

Following some discussion General Manager Tamara Alaniz and Chief Counsel Chris Neary committed to work to make sure that insurance coverage is adequate and will develop a memorandum of understanding that better defines the partnership between the district and the committee. WAC's

we haven't found very much that we can really work with."

He mentioned that the idea of using the old Howard Hospital building in Willits as a PHF is basically off the table since it was recently sold by the Howard Foundation, entering a 60-day escrow at the end of February.

Haschak did agree there should be a sense of urgency towards creating a PHF in the county, saying, "We can't let this drag on another year."

At one point Angelo expressed concern that all 11 members of the Measure B Advisory Committee would not vote for any of the PHF facility plans put forth, but Williams countered that this shouldn't be necessary.

"I think we've been a little off-track on expectations of the Measure B Committee," said Williams. "The language that the voters passed was to have the committee [complete] the annual audit, and provide recommendations. But I don't think there was ever expectations that we need to get 11 people in agreement," he said.

"The people told us when they passed this they wanted a psychiatric health facility," he continued. "It's our job to pull that off. So my attitude is pick a couple locations, let's look at them side by side and choose one, and then stick with it and there's our plan. And someone can figure out if can we afford to build it and can we afford to operate it, and hopefully the answer is yes. If it's no, then we'll look at additional funding streams."

While there has been some debate as to whether a PHF facility is required under the language of Measure B, Haschak felt that it should be part of the county plans.

"Let's see what kind of PHF we can get with the money that we have and if it is viable," he said. "Let's just move forward with this idea that we're going to do the PHF and then if it's not viable we go to Plan B, which we don't know what it is right now."

The supervisors also directed staff to ask the Measure B Committee to come up with plans to have an annual audit of Measure B funds.

Haschak brought up the audit issue, asking why none had been done given that the language of Measure B states that an annual audit is required.

As for other projects being undertaken with Measure B funds, Miller said that the crisis residential treatment facility on South Orchard Avenue in Ukiah is still on track to be operational by November 2021.

McGourty was thankful that this facility would be opening soon.

"The crisis residential treatment center is a really good start because that's one of the things that's very, very difficult for people who are in mental illness is to get stabilized," he said. "To come out of a PHF unit and go to a place where they can kind of be in respite and become better and be compliant with medications. So we are making progress."

Millers said the county has also begun hiring staff for the Mobile Crisis and Response Team and are working to get at least one person trained and out in the field soon.

In addition she said the county is working towards getting a Crisis Assessment and Psychiatric Hospitalization Aftercare Program going, and should be bringing a contract with Redwood Community Services for the project before the board in April.

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

are empowered to investigate the operations of county, city and district governments; provide civil oversight of local government departments and agencies; and respond to citizen complaints. The Civil Grand Jury sets its own agenda and meeting schedule. Much of the work is performed in small committees, allowing for considerable flexibility in the work schedule and meeting locations.

To attract more residents from the geographically distant regions of Mendocino County, the Civil Grand Jury is making it possible for interested members of the public to participate in a safe environment. The Civil Grand Jury will implement remote meeting protocols to maximize participation while reducing the demand for travel.

Grand Jurors are compensated \$25 per full-panel meeting, \$10 per committee meeting and committee attendance at public meetings. Mileage is reimbursed at the current County of Mendocino rate. There is free onsite parking. Prior to being nominated, each qualifying applicant is interviewed by a Superior Court judge. Training for Grand Jurors will be provided in early July 2021, either remotely or in the county offices.

To serve as a Civil Grand Juror, the following requirements must be met:

- At least 18 years of age
- United States citizen
- Resident of Mendocino County for at least one year
- Sufficiently fluent in written and spoken English
- Not currently serving on any other governmental board or commission during the term
- Not presently holding a public office
- Not personally active in any campaign of a candidate for elective office
- Computer skills highly desirable

Applications and related information are available on the internet at: Grand Jury (ca. gov). The application may also be obtained in person at the Superior Court, 100 North State Street, Room 303, Ukiah or by calling the Grand Jury at 707-463-4320. For more information, contact Kim Weston, administrative assistant for Superior Court of California, at 707-467-6437.

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

right. Wishful thinking. A much bigger mess is ahead of us if we go down this path.

In a democracy, the elected representatives need to listen to the people. The Planning Commission received over 400 letters – 99 percent were against this expansion. The Sheriff, Farm Bureau, Municipal Advisory Councils of Laytonville, Redwood Valley and Round Valley, Willits and Mendocino Environmental Centers, Covelo Cannabis Advocacy Group, and many other groups are against this proposal. Big cannabis businesses are for it.

Please make your voices heard by writing to or calling the board before the April 19 meeting.

[Editor's Note: At the board of supervisors' March 23 meeting, county staff said it would not be possible to consider the Planning Commission's recommendations about Phase 3 at the regular board meeting on April 20, as the board had originally directed, due to time needed for other items on the agenda. So the board instead agreed to hold a special meeting on April 19 to consider the Planning Committee's recommendations.]

If the BOS decides not to listen, then the people need to be able to vote on this issue.

Looking ahead, Mendocino County needs to reject this idea of expansion of acreage and zoning, perform an environmental impact report, and fund code and law enforcement to enforce the rules we have. The future of Mendocino County is at stake.

COLUMN | Wellness

Data mines and dopamine

By Robin Goldner, LCSW

Last month, I heard an interview with Dr. Anthony Fauci on the one-year anniversary of the U.S. acknowledgement of the COVID pandemic. He stated that one of the hardest parts of his job as director of the National Center for Allergies and Infectious Diseases has been the polarized, politicized climate of the country which has impeded his efforts to effectively combat the disease. He also expressed his dismay that some people believe misinformation about the vaccine, such as it implants Bill Gates' microchips into recipients.

I am not a conspiracy theorist but I do read and think about the effects of the internet on humans. In my opinion the vaccine doesn't infiltrate our minds, but big tech companies do. I am convinced that corporations like Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube already infiltrate and influence our minds.

Why do I believe this? Because these companies "harvest" or "mine" data about our thoughts and behaviors by tracking what we do when online. Additionally, according to Geoffrey Fowler, tech columnist for the Washington Post, iPhones and "smart" speakers can record your conversations and report that data to whatever brand speaker you use.

Through tracking device usage, what links you click on, what videos you watch, who you connect with, your facial expressions and what you were doing just seconds before you clicked on something, internet companies are able to determine how you think and behave. Algorithms embedded in devices easily track this information, and sell it to other companies. These companies then advertise directly to you, based on your personal behavior and preferences. You unwittingly become a "product" that is sold for profit.

I know I may sound extremely paranoid or right out of a sci-fi novel, and yet anyone who has used YouTube has been offered more videos that the algorithm thinks you'll like. It's likely you've also experienced pop-up ads related to what you recently searched for or purchased.

This capacity to track your behavior and preferences is also at the heart of Dr. Fauci's dismay at our country's extreme polarization that has reached unprecedented levels. Social media plays an important role in creating the division, and so do internet sites like Google and Facebook. Your news feed is based largely on your search history, and therefore comports with your established point of view.

You read more and more of what you agree with and don't get the opportunity, unless you search for it, to read content that differs from your opinion. You get more and more confirmation that you are right. The net result is that you stop being open to others' points of view. Being right feels good.

Enter dopamine. Dopamine is the brain's chemical "feel-good" hormone and neurotransmitter. Dopamine is the cornerstone of addiction. You can become addicted to a substance, like alcohol or drugs, or to a behavior like running, gambling or Facebook usage because it makes you feel good, at least temporarily. These behaviors stimulate your brain to release dopamine.

Facebook was designed with the use of "likes" to be a "short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loop," says Chamath Paliapitaya, the former vice-president of user growth at Facebook. The problem of addiction occurs when your body becomes accustomed to big hits of dopamine through the use of drugs or various behaviors, and your body can't naturally produce those big hits you have come to crave. And "negative" emotions affect us more powerfully than "positive" ones. What motivates you more strongly, anger or happiness? Fear or contentedness?

Because your internet behavior is constantly being data-mined you have not only lost your privacy, but you are being manipulated into political camps that don't serve to unite a country for or against anything, including a pandemic. Thus, Dr. Fauci's dismay.

With the fear of being horribly redundant, I offer my same antidotes. The less time spent on devices, the more time we have to have a life that is independent from corporate interests. We can go outdoors and look up instead of down at phones, start a garden, slow down, read a book, listen to music, watch clouds, and really connect (not just have contact) with others. And move our bodies. Movement is critical for physical and mental health; walk, dance, stretch, throw a ball, roller skate, play soccer ... just move!

I also highly encourage you to create screen-free times for yourself and your family, like meal times or when driving in cars. Screen usage exercises just one of five senses – find ways to use the other four! And if you're really up for a challenge, listen to someone with whom you don't agree and grow your tolerance muscles. We have to be in this together!

Robin Goldner is a psychotherapist in Willits and can be reached for comments @ 459-5673 or rgoldner@pacific.net.



‘Nature’s Art’

Willits Arts Center to showcase Margaret Pirouette’s paintings and J and E Crafts’ redwood and knife creations in April

Submitted by Willits Center for the Arts

The Willits Center for the Arts is proud to display paintings by Margaret Pirouette and redwood crafts by Juliet and Erwin Ludwig April 2 through 30.

Margaret Pirouette was born in New York and has lived in Willits since the late 1970s. She has been painting and drawing since the 1960s. “I paint because art is my constant,” shared Pirouette, “art is my savior, art is my god.” Pirouette is one of the faithful members of the Willits Center

for the Arts’ life-drawing class, which will hopefully be able to resume soon.

In this show, Pirouette will present new works of watercolors and oil paintings.

J and E Crafts refers to Juliet and Erwin Ludwig, a couple that happens to do a lot together including craftwork. After many years as a scientist, Erwin is getting back into his love for woodworking that his dad had taught him as a young child. They live and work in Ukiah.

“I started off with antler tables as a

winter project and wood boats as summer projects,” said Erwin. “In the last few years, I’ve built 10 tiny houses on wheels in the summers, every one getting better, while incorporating new designs. As a winter project, I decided to craft handles and mosaic pins for high-quality steel knife blanks. Then I began leather crafts for sheaths, holsters and belts.

“With new tools,” Erwin continued, “we now forge our own knives, Juliet doing most of the forging and I do the grinding and polishing. We also invested in a CNC

router for more precise cutting of our redwood burl magnetic knife blocks, and also designing and making cutting boards and boxes from redwood burls. I like to say that we make nature’s art into functional pieces, ‘functional art.’”

The art of these three talented artists can be viewed 11 am to 5 pm Friday to Sunday at the WCA gallery, located at 71 East Commercial Street.

For more information contact, Gary Martin: gtm1950@gmail.com or 707-972-3326.



At top, left: “Green and White,” a delicate water lily painting by Margaret Pirouette is featured on the postcard for the Willits Center for the Arts show. At top, right: “Tick Tock” by Margaret Pirouette. Above, left: Redwood table with deer antler legs by J and E Crafts. Above, right: Custom knives by J and E Crafts.



Sophomore Amy Liu represents Mendocino County at statewide student poetry competition

After winning the Mendocino County Poetry Out Loud competition last month, Developing Virtue Girls School sophomore Amy Liu represented Mendocino County at the state-level competition.

Blake More, Mendocino County Poetry Out Loud coordinator and poetry teacher said, “The Mendocino County Office of Education has been co-sponsoring this competition for nine years, and when the pandemic forced us onto a virtual platform, I was concerned we wouldn’t get as many participants. In fact, the opposite happened. We had more participants than ever, and the quality of competition was excellent.”

Liu took first place and the runner-up was ninth-grader Sidney Regelbrugge from Point Arena High School. Kadance Nelson of Pacific Community Charter High School and Heidi Blythe of Developing Virtue Girls School tied for third place.

More described Liu as kind, conscientious, respectful, and deeply committed to learning. “She is a talented poet and presenter who takes the extra time required to produce her best work,” More said. More also spoke highly of Regelbrugge, saying she was a “brilliant writer.” Competitors presented three poems. Liu presented “mulberry fields” by Lucille Clifton, “Oh could I raise the darken’d veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and “Let It Be Forgotten” by Sara Teasdale.

Liu said, “The arts allow me to set aside negativity and enjoy the experience of creating something true to myself. Poetry Out Loud gives me the perfect opportunity to bring this joy to others.”

The local 2021 Poetry Out Loud event was sponsored by the Mendocino County Office of Education, Arts Council of Mendocino County, California Poets in the Schools, the California Arts Council, and the National Endowment of the Arts. This year’s state competition marked the 16th statewide production.

California’s Poetry Out Loud program is designed to encourage high school students to learn about poetry through memorization, performance and competition. The program is the largest event of its kind in the U.S. and has grown steadily since its inception in 2005. This year’s competition series encompassed 47 counties, 208 schools, and 416 teachers, reaching more than 10,000 students statewide. Event details and a list of winners for the 2021 California Poetry Out Loud state finals can be found at www.capoetryoutloud.org.

Visit www.mcoe.us/news-events/sophomore-amy-liu-represents-mendocino-county-at-statewide-student-poetry-competition to view student submissions to the county and state competitions.



Ukiah sophomore Amy Liu won the Mendocino County Poetry Out Loud competition and Liu represented Mendocino County at the state-level competition.

The rest of Forum From Page 1

firewise group officials, and the public to address what worked and what didn’t in the past to be better prepared for future emergencies.

Haschak began by thanking first responders (Mendocino County Sheriffs Office, police, fire departments) and second responders (PG&E, Caltrans, Department of Transportation), for their service during the recent snow event, and last year’s fires. He shared a story of Caltrans employees during the January snowstorm who witnessed several trees falling in the road and had to spend the night in their trucks.

Mendocino County Sheriff Matt Kendall emphasized that, even though the evacuation from Brooktrails during Oak Fire was “smootheest operation in his 31 years in the Sheriff’s Office,” we still all need to be better prepared. He added that during the Brooktrails evacuation, the sheriffs learned that because of COVID-19, more people were at home, which led to the need for more help to evacuate, including the need for lift assists, which added time to the evacuation.

Sheriff Kendall mentioned that communication with family, friends, and neighbors when you are leaving home, both for vacation and evacuation, is essential. That simple act will save people from worrying about your safety – and help the Sheriff’s Office so they don’t needlessly check on you during an emergency.

He also recommended signing up for Nixle and following Mendocino Sheriff’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, because the Sheriff’s Office updates their social media accounts with the latest information. Sheriff Kendall also has hopes for building out a Dedicated Emergency Operation Center so that we are able to “stand things up much more rapidly. We can’t control what Mother Nature throws at us, but what we can do is control our responses to it.”

George Gonzalez, CalFire Mendocino Unit chief, shared that the Mendocino Unit has been working on vegetation management programs (control burns), in Brooktrails, and throughout the county. He reassured those that are worried about the storm-damaged trees on the ground that the downed trees are of concern, but not as much of a concern as the vertical trees that have the potential for crown fires which cannot be reached from the ground.

Chief Gonzalez explained that the Mendocino Unit has increased their response to fires with more engines, dozers, and crews. He reflected that the Oak Fire had the potential to be a much larger fire, 50,000 up to 200,000 acres, but because of the training of the crews and aggressive response, it was kept at 1,400 acres.

This summer the unit will add a new helicopter, a Sikorsky FIREHAWK®, which holds 1,000 gallons of water, has a one-mile vertical lift in 30 seconds, and doubles the horsepower and the crew-carrying capability of the current helicopter. The Mendocino Unit will add more crew members and is adding California National Guard members to its training courses this year.

He also praised the local 501-3c non-profit organization called Co-op Air Patrol. The co-op is a participatory program, and they do patrols of Mendocino County looking for fires. They work with CalFire’s Air Attack program and spend countless hours in the air over Mendocino County spotting and reporting fires. Each year they have been the first to report on 15 to 17 fires, “which is huge.” Contact Chief Gonzalez if you are interested in volunteering.

Gonzalez also underscored that “90 percent of fires in the state of California are human caused.” He challenged Mendocino County residents to turn the tables on that sobering statistic and “give ourselves a chance this summer.”

Willits Police Chief Fabian Lizarraga reported that the biggest issue WPD faced in the Oak Fire and January snow event was the difficulty communicating with responders from other agencies. He said this was frustrating for both the citizens and officers. There are plans to work on a better way to communicate with first and second responders so the officers will be better able to give a timeframe for road reopening. He also reminded the folks that the roads are closed for the safety of citizens and responders, and asked for understanding and patience.

Brent Blaser, manager of Mendocino County’s Office of Emergency Services, emphasized that the Department of Transportation crew are the unsung heroes of any response in our county. He went on to explain OES offers support to CalFire to help them report back to the executive staff in order to build a strategic plan when the fire is out to help citizens. The faster a damage assessment, the faster our county gets disaster relief.

OES also helps get assistance for the firewise councils to do the work needed

to mitigate danger before an emergency occurs. Current goals are to provide faster collection of data for a potential declaration of emergency in future events. They are also working with a web designer to create a better source for citizens to find out information about areas of evacuations.

Blaser suggested that we let new residents know about where to turn for help during an emergency and what to know about being prepared.

Alison Talbot and Eric Haggerty from PG&E talked to the group about what PG&E is doing to mitigate the fire danger near their lines. Haggerty, the vegetation manager for PG&E, said crews are still working to clear damaged trees from the January snowstorm. Haggerty reported that PG&E is working on enhanced vegetation management in Brooktrails up to the gates and into Laytonville.

In answer to a question about power outages in the second snowstorm, he said that some of the damage to trees didn’t show from the ground and led to more trees falling in the second snowstorm. If you see trees damaged by lines, call 1-800-PGE-5000, or email Haggerty at eric.haggerty@pge.com. Talbot also suggested customers update their emergency contact information with PG&E. To learn more about PG&E’s plans, consider tuning in for PG&E’s “interactive, regionally-focused safety town hall as we discuss our plans for reducing wildfire risks with residents of Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity and Siskiyou counties” on Facebook on Wednesday, April 7 from 12 to 12:30 pm. You can access the webinar – and past events – at www.pge.com/en_US/safety/emergency-preparedness/natural-disaster/wildfires/community-wildfire-safety-open-house-meetings.page

Willits City Manager Brian Bender said that several City of Willits employees live in Brooktrails and couldn’t make it to work during the January snowstorm. He is concerned and said this needs to be addressed in order to provide consistent central services to the community. He stressed that these emergencies are always learning opportunities. He suggested that the group have a follow-up session to address the issues and to build some resiliency into the network.

Scott Cratty, coordinator for all county firesafe councils, said the councils have been able to do some road clearing on Birch, Poppy, Primrose, Lilac and Williams Ranch Road. Crews have been out recently out clearing debris on the side of the roads to reduce fire fuel. He predicts more chipper days and road clearing coming up. He suggested everyone to go to firesafemendocino.org for information about safeguarding your home, PG&E’s working schedule for cleanup, to report to PG&E about dangers to power lines, and for more valuable information. A second chipper will soon be available to rent to firesafe councils in the county.

The four-person Hopland Band of Pomo crew will be doing roadside and chipper work in the Brooktrails area. Team Rubicon, a veteran’s group of volunteers from the Bay Area, plans to be coming up to work in the Sherwood and Pine Mountain firewise councils’ areas.

Lauren Robertson, of Pine Mountain Firewise Council, covering the area from the southeast corner of Willits down to above Redwood Valley, stressed that hardening your home against fire is extremely important. Robertson also stressed defensible power poles are very important. “Take out your weed eater and clean around power poles” so that fire doesn’t burn the bottom of the pole, causing it to fall and block your exit, she advised.

Keith Rutledge of Sherwood Firewise, shared that “thousands and thousands of trees are down,” and they are focusing on trees down near homes. The Sherwood Firewise Council is collecting names of residents with downed trees in anticipation of the help from Team Rubicon. If you have trees down near your house or have questions, please email info@sherwoodfirewise.com

Eric Hart, organizer of the new Ridgewood Firewise Council southwest of Willits, which includes the Ridgewood, Shafer Ranch, and Walker Road areas, shared his concern about the numerous dead snags that are in their area and asked for information regarding grants to help remove the dead snags. Sheriff Kendall and CalFire Chief Gonzalez offered several ideas for ways to mitigate this problem.

Supervisor Haschak thanked everyone on the call for their help in updating the community on how these agencies are working to mitigate fire danger, and how to improve their response to these disasters. He went on to mention Sherwood Firewise’s motto of “when we are making safer communities, we’re making stronger communities,” and the bonds between the people, too.

Mayor Strong thanked all the resource people on the call, and everyone for their hard work keeping our community safe. The recording of the “Snow Happens” meeting is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=idhW73SefGY

Mendocino College mostly online this summer, planning for more on-the-ground classes this fall

Submitted by Mendocino College

Mendocino College will continue primarily remote instruction through the summer 2021 semester, announced Superintendent / President Tim Karas.

“We are looking forward to transitioning back to more on-ground / face-to-face classes at all locations and plan to see our fall 2021 class schedule reflect that,” says Karas. “We are happy to report that with the help of Mendocino County, we have been able to provide all interested employees access to the COVID-19 vaccine so they feel comfortable coming back to campus and providing excellent student service as before the pandemic began.”

The college has a “Transition Group,” which consists of classified staff, faculty and management leaders, brainstorming ways to get more students back on campus in a timely and safe manner. The college is also surveying students to gather input about how that might look. In the fall 2021 semester, the schedule will offer an expanded on-ground / face-to-face course listing.

“We won’t be 100 percent back to normal by fall, but we will be increasing the number of classes at all of our locations,” says Debra Polak, vice president of instruction. “We will be introducing innovative instructional methods in the fall that will allow us to have fewer students in classrooms. We hope some of these new methods will help us reach students in our vast geographic area in post-pandemic times as well.”

“In the fall, the centers in Fort Bragg, Lakeport and Willits will have a heavier on-ground presence to support students who have had a difficult time accessing online education. We plan to offer close-to-the-traditional variety of courses, just with reduced class enrollment caps, that align with current county safety guidelines,” says Dean of Centers Amanda Xu. “The center computer labs will also be open during regular business hours so that our rural students can more efficiently access online courses.”

Since the pandemic began, Mendocino College has continued to expand support and services geared toward student success, including free tutoring, books, tuition and more. More than half the students who attend Mendocino College qualify for some form of financial aid, and many meet the guidelines that eliminate unit fees completely, regardless of their financial situation. For more information, visit www.mendocino.edu/financial-aid.

“There will be numerous opportunities for students to access funds to pay for tuition and other educational expenses in the coming months,” says Karas. “We want students to know that we’re here to help break down any barriers that may be preventing them from returning to school. There is no better time than now to pursue your educational goals.”

Currently enrolled students can register for summer classes using MyMendo beginning April 24 and new students can apply now online at www.mendocino.edu. The summer 2021 semester officially begins June 7. To make a counseling appointment, please email counselingappointments@mendocino.edu.

The rest of Letters From Page 2

have the lowest impact on the other public safety providers (District Attorney and Sheriff’s Office, primarily) and satisfied the original intent promoted by Prop 172 sponsors and approved by the voters in 1993.

Measure D (TOT): Current allocation available is \$600,000. Per the supervisors meeting on March 9, it is understood that these funds are now ready to distribute to the qualifying fire districts.

Measure AI and Measure AJ: Cannabis tax/fees: Program receipts from Measure AI for FY19/20 were: \$5,500,000. Accompanying Measure AJ, also passed by the voters, directs (advises) the board of supervisors to allocate the majority of revenue generated by the Measure AI business tax to fund enforcement of current marijuana laws, Mental Health services, county road repair, and fire and emergency services. Fire/EMS was to receive 1/8th of the collected revenue per this measure. The allocation to Fire/EMS based on the FY 19/20 receipts would have provided a benefit of \$687,500. Unfortunately, it is currently understood that this revenue distribution,

approved by the voters, is being used to “true-up” budget units that have gone over their budgeted amounts for their fiscal year. This is not what the voters approved.

During the board of supervisors meeting on March 9, supervisors reviewed budget overruns with the “other” public safety providers (DA, SO and Probation, for example). Instead of asking why these departments ran over budget, department heads were instead advised to just provide more realistic budgets next time so that the board can just allocate more funding to them. Simple. When fire districts request to be included in these revenues, they are told to provide an itemized rationale of why these districts should receive any funding. This is unacceptable.

Currently, there is no direction in place to provide any distribution of Measure AI funds to fire/EMS as advised by the voters. Transparency in these revenues and their allocation is problematic. This situation confirms that fire/EMS (as well as the other designated funding recipients) is still being locked out of the budget process due to non-existent representation. The cannabis tax

revenue must be used as approved by the voters. On April 19 [changed from the originally scheduled April 20 date], the board will dedicate the majority of that meeting to cannabis-related issues. This would be a good opportunity to include discussions about Measure AI, Measure AJ and the how the board will respond moving forward regarding the allocation of these funds.

PG&E Settlement Fund: During the March 9, board meeting, a special session for potential EMS funding from the PG&E Settlement Fund was scheduled for the board meeting on April 6. The supervisors suggested that Coastal Valleys EMS, the Sheriff’s Office and the Fire Safe Council be invited to participate in the discussion. Not invited to attend are representatives from the Mendocino County Fire Chiefs Association or the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts, the agencies and people that actually deliver emergency medical services in Mendocino County.

Mendocino County currently does not have a dependable and robust ambulance capability. Frequent service brown-outs due to out-of-county transfers and lack of adequately staffed ambulance crews pose a significant risk to the county population and transient visitors. The board of supervisors must act immediately to correct this situation.

Allocation from the Settlement Fund would be a reasonable short-term application of this available funding, pending a long-term resolution to this critical issue.

In summary, it is understood that the unprecedented challenges faced by Mendocino County due to the COVID-19 emergency has complicated the county’s ability to address public safety funding. However, as the impacts of the pandemic are now being mitigated, it is now time to resolve the issue of representation, equity and funding for fire/EMS and to ensure local fire districts are compensated fairly for these services.

We will look forward to the Board of Supervisors response. Respectfully,

Andres Avila, AV/CSO; Ben MacMillan, Elk CSD; Tony Orth, BTCSD; David Roderick, HFPD; and Michael Schaeffer, Comptche CSD; Steering Committee, Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts

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General Contractor
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coburnsconst@gmail.com

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Randy Cantua
Insurance Agent
Lic. #0C67822
Auto • Home • Life • Health • Business

FARMERS
CANTUA
INSURANCE AGENCY
16 W. Valley Street • Willits, CA 95490
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