

Donations Accepted Edition No. 401

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Barbara O'Reardon
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Recreation and Greenbelt
Committee Chairman
Adam Sherf met with the
Brooktrails Community
Services District Board of
Directors last month and
proposed that the volunteer
organization, the Willits Area
Cyclists, aka WAC, begin to
develop and implement the
Trail Adoption Program to
maintain Brooktrails' hiking
trails.

In response to the board's request, Brooktrails staff developed a memorandum of understanding to address the risk of liability to the District. WAC is required to have a current insurance policy (\$1 million minimum coverage) naming the district as an additional insured, and all volunteers participating in the program are required to sign individual waivers before any project can begin. Trail work may be conducted on a weekend day, and the signed waivers will need to be submitted to the district office by the next business day.

Director Tina Tyler-O'Shea recommended and made the motion that the board approve the MOU and direct staff to implement the agreement

Read the rest of
Brooktrails
Over on Page 4

**BOS
supports
Small
Business
Week,
May 3 to 7**

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors approved a proclamation at their Tuesday meeting celebrating Small Business Week, May 3 to 7, "honoring our small business heroes" and "reminding residents of the community to support our small businesses by shopping locally."

The May 4 proclamation “acknowledge(s) that our small business community, which comprises 91 percent of our local economy, has been under extraordinary pressure during a difficult time.... Throughout the duration of a global pandemic, our small business community has tirelessly and valiantly provided for and supported our county residents.”

Mary Anne Petrillo, CEO at West Business Development Center, played a "Meet Mendocino County's Small Business Heroes" video, featuring photos of county businesses and business owners, including The Book Juggler, Scoops, and the Noyo Theatre of Willits, plus a shot of the "Willits: We're All in This Together" billboard.



Photo by Maureen Jehnison

Above: Willits Frontier Days volunteers are ready to roll for this year's celebration including, from back row, left: Sweetheart candidate Claire Case Brackett, Rod Cavanaugh, Earl Rambauth, Matt Harbour, Deanna Rutledge, Tylor Yadon, Tracy Evans, June Sizemore, Jeff Cook and 2019/2020 Sweetheart Jaden Doak. Front row, from left: Karen Cavanaugh, Lee Persico, Alexis England, Willie England, Bruce Cartwright, Marcy Barry, Fred Barry and Danielle Barry.

Tentative dates announced for 2021 event season

After a bumper of a rodeo season last year, Willits Frontier Days is excited to move forward with our events this year, announcing tentative dates for events in the chart below, and on our newly updated website www.WillitsFrontierDays.com.

All events, times and dates are subject to change to make sure this year's happenings are being held in appropriate and approved ways.

Willits Frontier Days is holding a Sweetheart contest this year as well, and will encourage the public to purchase tickets in advance of the events to minimize cash handling, ticket taking, and long lines at the events themselves.

Tickets will be sold in limited quantities and will be available by contacting the Sweetheart contestants. Sanitation stations.

signage, and other coronavirus precautions will also be in place for all events.

At the moment, we have one contestant for the Sweetheart, but we are encouraging any girl aged 16 to 20 to apply.

Contestants must be willing to sell tickets, compete in a poise and personality contest, model Western wear, give a prepared speech, ride a pattern, answer equestrian questions, and represent Willits Frontier Days at local events. Contestants also earn 15 percent of their ticket sales, making the contest an excellent summer job.

Applications for Sweetheart, and a complete list of qualifications and other information, are available now on the website www.WillitsFrontierDays.com under the "Sweethearts" tab. Contestants can start selling tickets on

Wednesday, May 12. Watch the Willits Frontier Days Rodeo Facebook page and next week's Willits Weekly for contact information for the Sweetheart contestants.

While finessing and finalizing details is still underway, please be understanding, respectful and helpful to make this an achievable goal so that everyone can have a chance to celebrate the Fourth of July in the best way Willits knows how.

Please keep tuned to the Willits Frontier Days website, or social media pages, as well as Willits Weekly for more details as they become available.

All events, times and dates are subject to change – these are tentative dates.

– Submitted by
Willits Frontier Days

City Council adopts 2021 goals

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

After some months of consideration and workshops, the Willits City Council voted 5-0 at its April 28 meeting to approve a list of ranked city goals for 2021.

"We're going to utilize the list as the blueprint for budgeting purposes, and the Capital Improvements Plan, as well as a guide to the city's vision – to see if a program or task accomplishes one of the goals," City Manager Brian Bender told Willits Weekly.

The top goal (ranked at 25) was to “Complete an update to the city’s General Plan to be used to guide future development within the city including encouragement of housing opportunities and sustainable economic development.” The estimated timeframe to achieve this goal is 3 to 5 years.

Intermediate steps to reach this goal will include:

- Complete a review of Plan Elements(components) and environmental document to determine timing, and sequencing and costs to expedite completion

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

CalFire urges residents to prepare for wildfires

Submitted by CalFire

Sacramento – Being proactive and prepared for wildfire is crucial to making our communities more resilient to the impacts of wildfire. You can dramatically increase your safety and the survivability of your home by preparing well in advance of a wildfire. This week, May 2 to 8, marks California's annual "Wildfire Preparedness Week." CalFire and our partner agencies are raising awareness and encouraging families and communities to take a hands-on approach in wildfire preparedness.

The 2020 fire season broke numerous records. California experienced six of the largest and most destructive wildfires in state history. More than 4 million acres burned across the state, double the previous record from 2008. Due to continued dry conditions and temperatures well above normal for this time of year, the 2021 wildfire season could be as catastrophic and devastating as last year. So far this year, CalFire has responded to more than 1,300 wildfires that

Read the rest of
CalFire
Over on Page 11

WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS

Friday, June 18:

HOMETOWN CELEBRATION:
Main Street – Downtown Willits

Saturday, June 19:

SWEETHEART JUDGING:
Appearance & Poise: Community Center

Sunday, June 20:

HORSE SHOW:
Jack Sharp Arena

SWEETHEART JUDGING:
Horsemanship: During Horse Show
Jack Sharp Arena

NATIONAL ANTHEM:
Rodeo Grounds

Friday, June 25:

CARNIVAL:
Next to Rodeo Grounds

TRUCK PULLS:
Jack Sharp Arena

STREET DANCE:
with Flat Busted
Following Truck Pulls | Rodeo Grounds

SAVE THE DATE:
August 14, 2021: Summer Concert

Saturday, June 26:

SWEETHEART CROWNED:
Rodeo Grounds

Friday, July 2:

JUNIOR RODEO “Under the Lights”:
Jack Sharp Arena

Saturday, July 3:

LIONS COWBOY BREAKFAST:
Rec Grove Park

CCPRA PROFESSIONAL RODEO:
Jack Sharp Arena

WESTERN DANCE:
with Chad Bushnell
Following CCPRA Rodeo | Rodeo Grounds

Sunday, July 4:

HORSESHOE CONTEST:
Rec Grove Park

**PARADE – “There's No Place
Like Home”:**
Main Street – Downtown Willits

BEEF BARBECUE:
Rec Grove Park

COUNTRY MUSIC RODEOLA:
Rec Grove Park
CCPRA PROFESSIONAL RODEO:
Jack Sharp Arena

DATES, TIMES & EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Noyo Theatre donation challenge

To the Editor:

I am a proud member of the Willits High School Class of 1962. Yep, I realize that was a long time ago ... but we are still active and happy alums, located all over the world.

Our class has decided to do a fundraiser for the Noyo Theatre. We are in the midst of gathering funds now, to support their endeavors.

The Noyo was such a vital part of our growing up in Willits, and we would hate to see it close its doors. I think that we all have some special memories of movies and good times at the theater, no matter what age we are! For me, seeing "Creature From the Black Lagoon" was a real big and scary experience there ... when that ugly "hand" came up out of that black water, I thought everyone in the theater would die, most assuredly myself!

Now, here we are in 2021, and we have had the experience of COVID. We have all seen the devastation to businesses in our town, and surely to movie theaters not only here, but everywhere!

We are willing to see how much we can donate, and we are challenging other Willits High graduating classes to do the same!

If you are a WHS alumni, will you consider making a donation from your class? Perhaps someone in your class would spearhead a drive to come up with a little or big donation to the Noyo Theatre. Maybe we could have a contest to see what class could come up with the greatest donation.

My class will be turning in our donations the week of May 16. How about YOUR class?

Kathleen Ells Lewis, Willits

Thank you

To the Editor:

Thank you, Willits Weekly for doing such generous coverage of our Emerald City Museum re-opening on 4/20 in the heart of Willits!

Thank you Willits and Mendocino County folks for supporting this unique cultural history, including exhibits for our local Emerald City counterculture

and the Traveling Hemp Museum.

We are a new jewel in the crown of the Emerald Triangle.

A big shout out to Pete Swanton and Steve Marston for their continuing generosity making the old Rexall available for our exhibits.

Greg Schindel played music, Chris Moore exhibited vintage Volkswagens – thank you both! And we had speakers and special guests.

This exhibit of our mutual history is for our mutual benefit, to attract tourism and to offer future educational events. Richard Jergenson has offered this gift to us from his many years of collecting "Back to the Land" memorabilia of our area and beyond.

Willits has everything it takes to be a prime visitor spot and tourism location. We hope tourists will love to visit both of our museums!

Please stop in and see what we have done; this exhibit recognizes Willits as a major historical site of the counterculture, the back to the land movement, and origin cannabis culture. The Traveling Hemp Museum is an amazing collection that encompasses the world. We are also celebrating the 51st anniversary of the iconic ProtoPipe, made here in Willits, as well as a vibrant 420 Art Gallery showcasing 10 local artists.

Whether you love cannabis or not, it is part of our shared local history. Behind the scenes cannabis has supported our economy for decades, even though we couldn't see it because it was invisible.

We are losing our legacy farmers since legalization and the overregulation by our county and state, but we can capitalize on our history.

This museum announces to the world that we are indeed the Emerald City of the Emerald Triangle.

Thank you to all who have so generously donated, contributed and continue to support this creation, the Emerald City Museum and 420 Art Gallery. We are located in the old Willits Pharmacy, right downtown, open on weekends – Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 pm through the end of June.

P.S.: We invite you to help brand our community as the Emerald City!

Annie Waters and Richard Jergenson, Willits

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

May 2021 update

Water, water, water

By Supervisor John Haschak

Water! Water! Water! Whether this is a current two-year drought or part of a long-term drought trend, water is on everyone's minds.

The board of supervisors voted to declare a state of drought emergency for Mendocino County. We had a presentation on April 6 about the historically low water levels in Lake Mendocino and other parts of the county. The water level of Lake Mendocino is where it normally is in October right before the rainy season.

Governor Newsom visited the dry lake bed on April 14 and made a similar declaration for Mendocino and Sonoma counties. This will put us at the front of the line when the state starts allocating resources and grants to deal with the situation. CalFire Mendocino Unit Chief Gonzalez was very supportive of these declarations, seeing that the fire season could be very difficult.

I am on the drought emergency ad hoc committee with Supervisor McGourty. Our first task is to ensure that all the water agencies are communicating and receiving the proper information. With 40 water agencies in Mendocino County, this hasn't always been the case. We will be reconvening the Countywide Drought Working Group.

The new cannabis ordinance with the 10 percent of acreage increase and opening up rangeland was again approved on a 4-1 vote. I voted no because of the detrimental effects this will have on the communities, environment, and economy of the Third District.

After overwhelming public comments and the Planning Commission against this proposal, the board went ahead with it. The people, water agencies, law enforcement, Department of Fish and Wildlife, environmental organizations, and practically everyone (except the corporate cannabis industry) are against this proposal which is soon to be the ordinance. There is considerable talk of a referendum to repeal this massive expansion.

When not dealing with the cannabis ordinance, I have been busy with devising a process for the allocation of the PG&E settlement funds, working on a county operations strategic plan, coordinating a million-dollar grant proposal for Covelo clean-up as well as long-term solutions, and celebrating that the county is in the yellow COVID tier.

My wife and I are going to visit our son Ricardo, who is in the Marines in North Carolina. When I set up the trip, there were no BOS meetings scheduled. Since then, two special meetings were added, so I will be zooming from North Carolina.

Best wishes and stay well.



Spring Sports

Baseball, softball, cross-country, track, tennis and golf are back at WHS – the Wolverines are raring to go

It's been a strange school year to say the least. But despite all the COVID protocols, distance learning, and the many other challenges of the pandemic, spring sports have thankfully returned to Willits High School. "We've opened up all spring sports," Athletic Director Brian Bowles explained. "We have a normal sports season minus pre-season games. We didn't have any extra games. We just have our league competitions. Baseball, softball, cross-country, track, tennis and golf."

Even so, the students are extremely pleased to be able to be back in sports. "It's a no-brainer that they're excited," continued Bowles. "Our numbers of participants are down from normal, partly just because of the reality of coming here rather than staying at home. That has affected our sports numbers as well, most dramatically in baseball and softball as well. We've only fielded varsity teams in baseball and softball. They usually have a JV team as well but that's pretty standard across our whole league. There are very few teams that have been able to field both varsity and junior varsity this year. Otherwise, they're having a great time and doing the best they can, kicking some butt and taking some names."

The concept of "normal" sounds remote and part of a fantasy world right now, but with the protocols opening up, especially in Mendocino County, where inoculations and testing have been widely successful, life as known before the pandemic is beginning to creep out of the homes and Zoom-fueled learning practices to take its place back in the classroom for about 70 percent of the students at the high school. This includes the ability to breathe clean air, exercise, and interact with other students, all "normal"



At left: The Wolverine pitcher tries to get the ball past the batter.

Below: Coach Travis gives the Wolverines a pep talk before the start of the game.

Photos by Mathew Caine



City supports Eel River public access at the new Highway 162 bridge

Dear Caltrans Director Matt Brady:

The Willits City Council strongly encourages Caltrans to include public access to the Eel River as an objective when designing the new Highway 162 Bridge over the Eel River at the confluence of Eel River and Outlet Creek.

The Willits City Council sees tremendous value for this amenity as a means to inspire both area residents and visitors to take full advantage of a tremendous local resource. Although the site is outside the City of Willits, the council recognizes the economic boost the additional tourism the city will experience as a result of the public access.

Caltrans should not overlook this opportunity to install much-needed public access to the Eel River as part of the effort to upgrade infrastructure in Mendocino County.

As you know, access to the Eel River is very limited, with this location providing the only access along a 23-river mile segment between Hearst and Dos Rios.

As there is a need to enhance public appreciation of the Eel River, the City Council urges Caltrans to coordinate with Jerry Albright to ensure the bridge replacement project accommodates public access.

The Willits City Council values your consideration on this matter. Please let this correspondence show the council's utmost support for the installation of public access at the Highway 162 bridge site. The City Council appreciates your commitment to Mendocino County and taking the necessary leadership to commit resources to this effort.

Madge Strong, mayor, for Willits City Council
Editor's note: This letter was approved by the Willits City Council at its April 28 meeting, at the request of Willits resident Jerry Albright (a representative for American Whitewater). Albright has already obtained letters from Senator Mike McGuire and Assemblymember Jim Wood, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, and Visit Mendocino. Caltrans has scheduled the Highway 162 Bridge Replacement Project to start in 2023.

Referendum should repeal the entire proposed new cultivation ordinance

To the Editor:

The rush to adopt the proposed new cannabis cultivation ordinance is about two things -- expanding the size and locations of cannabis cultivation in the county, and taking the opportunity to allow this expansion without an environmental impact review. These are the two things that the majority of Mendocino County residents, including myself, adamantly oppose!

The existing cannabis cultivation ordinance caps cultivation size at 1/4 acre, while the proposed ordinance would allow, at minimum, a 400 percent increase, and far more in Ag and Rangeland zones. The existing ordinance closed the county's Rangeland districts to

Read the rest of Letters Over on Page 11

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

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

Volume 9, Number 401
3,500 - 4,000 copies printed by Western Web on Thursdays

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

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Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

Table with 9 columns and 9 rows for a Sudoku puzzle.

Table with 20 columns and 20 rows for a word search puzzle.

Table with 3 columns and 8 rows for word search clues.

Table with 35 columns and 42 rows for a crossword puzzle.

Table with 2 columns and 25 rows for crossword clues.

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

April 26 to May 2
By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 199 incidents in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

April 26
8:45 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
10:04 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 300 block of Robert Drive.
April 27
10:54 am: STEELE, Cassandra Candice (31) of Willits was contacted in the 300 block of South Lenore Avenue following a domestic disturbance.
11:32 am: Officers initiated a vehicle theft investigation in the 300 block of Fort Bragg Road.
1:00 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 100 block of West Valley Street.
4:18 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1400 block of South Main Street.
8:14 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 300 block of Franklin Avenue.
April 28
11:02 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of West Van Lane and issued a warning.
April 29
1:15 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 800 block of South Main Street.
3:59 am: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1700 block of Elm Lane.
7:49 am: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle near the intersection of Coast Street and West San Francisco Avenue.
8:53 am: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1700 block of Elm Lane.
2:51 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1100 block of South Main Street.
4:40 pm: ALVAREZ, Jack Steven (58) of Ukiah was contacted in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
6:53 pm: ROLLINS, Jacob William (32) of Mattawa, Washington was contacted in the 300 block of South Main Street.
April 30
1:31 am: Officers responded to a report of threats in the 1400 block of South Main Street.
9:16 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 200 block of South Main Street.
4:42pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1300 block of South Main Street.
9:23 pm: PHILLIPS, Robin Michael (63) of Willits was contacted near the intersection of South Main Street and Gregory Lane.
May 1
2:01 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of West Mendocino Avenue.
11:42 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
9:26 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance near the intersection of North Main Street and Sherwood Road.
11:49 pm: ACEVESLIZARRAGA, Irving (26) of Willits was contacted near the intersection of South Main Street and East Commercial Street.
May 2
7:28 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 300 block of North Lenore Avenue.
4:27 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 400 block of Mill Street.
4:38 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 200 block of Holly Street.

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The rest of Brooktrails From Page 1

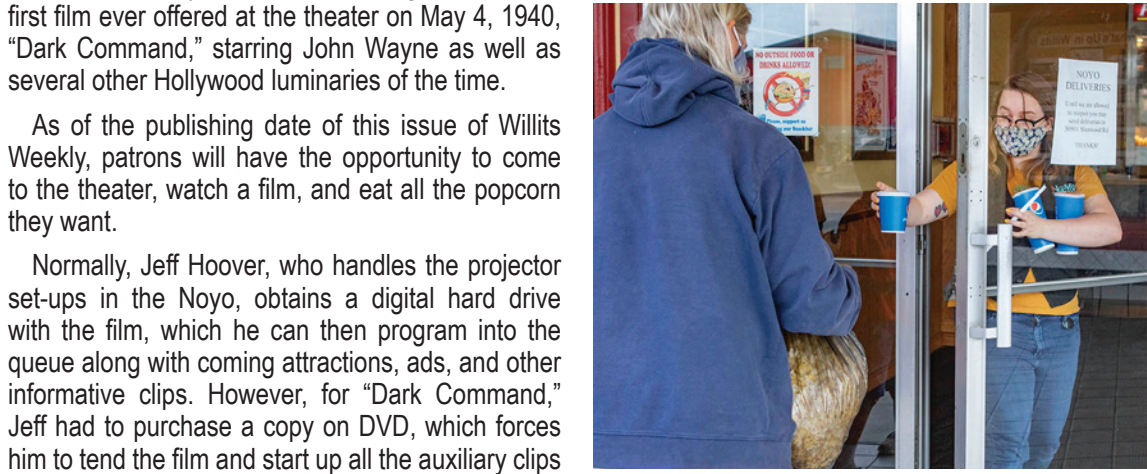
for the Trail Adoption Program. Director Tony Orth seconded the motion, and the board voted unanimously to approve. Director Ed Horrick stated: "The Recreation and Greenbelt Committee deserves a lot of recognition. Thank you to volunteer Adam Sherf for his hard work and dedication."
WAC will host regular trail work days, as frequently as monthly. Volunteers using light equipment for maintenance tasks are required to demonstrate competence and follow prescribed safety practices. It was noted that WAC has two licensed and bonded contractors on its board for any project considerations that range beyond the scope of volunteer efforts and will bring those to the attention of the district. WAC will work with the Recreation and Greenbelt Committee to assess trail project priorities. And, WAC is an inclusive group for all trail users.
Director Orth reported that the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors has set their May 4 meeting as a time for the district to formally make requests for funds derived from the PG&E settlement money. Brooktrails General Manager Tamara Alaniz stated that she has not received a direct request from the BOS regarding the settlement funds.
Accounts Payable in the amount of \$66,347.60 received the unanimous approval of the board.



Noyo Concessions
Theater prepares for opening by selling curbside popcorn, candy and sodas

"I'm excited. My husband and I like to go on movie dates without the kids," quipped Heather Linderman. "I get my mom to watch them. We'll come see whatever movies are playing here."
There are so many reasons to attend movies at the Noyo Theatre, now that it is reopening within the newest Yellow Tier COVID protocols. It could be that people want to see the latest films out of Hollywood, although currently there are not a lot of new films, but production should be ramping up soon with theaters opening all over the country.
Some theater-goers just enjoy the inexpensive "date night," a chance to get away from the kids and hold hands in the dark. Others love to gather the kids, go to the theater, and fill their children full of delicious popcorn, candy, and sugary sodas. Whatever the reason, going to the movies has been a favorite pastime since the first theaters opened early in the 20th century, providing a couple hours of escapism, entertainment, and laughs for millions.
In order to ease into opening and to let the people of Willits know they are back in business, owners Jeff and Lois Hoover unlocked the doors, brought back two of their most valued employees, and began to sell candy, sodas, and of course the most valued of all theater food - huge bags of buttered popcorn - for families to take home for their own personal movie nights.
Some brought their smiling kids to help them haul all the treats back home. Christina Knight brought her daughter, Olivia, to pick up a bag of popcorn. "I am thrilled," exclaimed Knight. "We love coming here and I cannot wait to come back to the movies. Got a ton of popcorn to take home to watch movies. We saw the sign yesterday and were like 'Oh my gosh. We have to come back and get popcorn.' They had done that a while ago. This is the only way to get movie-theater popcorn." These treats were obviously missed and can once again be consumed ravenously.
The Noyo's celebrated their opening with a fundraiser on May 4. The "soft opening" featured the first film ever offered at the theater on May 4, 1940, "Dark Command," starring John Wayne as well as several other Hollywood luminaries of the time.
As of the publishing date of this issue of Willits Weekly, patrons will have the opportunity to come to the theater, watch a film, and eat all the popcorn they want.
Normally, Jeff Hoover, who handles the projector set-ups in the Noyo, obtains a digital hard drive with the film, which he can then program into the queue along with coming attractions, ads, and other informative clips. However, for "Dark Command," Jeff had to purchase a copy on DVD, which forces him to tend the film and start up all the auxiliary clips by hand, creating a need for him to keep a close eye on the breaks.
"I'm just so happy that it's opening up again," said Trish Bacci, after receiving her popcorn. "I can't wait. I'm going to bring all my coworkers at Safeway to see 'Dark Command.' I had a bag of popcorn last night, too. I'm addicted and I like to support the theater."
"Our third projector is completely broken," explained Lois Hoover. "I applied for the Shuttered Venue Grant. I don't know when they'll be funding that. It's been delayed for about four months. I went online and they had a virtual waiting room. I was number 7,200 and that was at 9 am when they first opened it up."
"People have been very generous and very sweet," continued Lois. "One woman ran up to me and cried out, 'donation!' and just handed me some money. Jeff was working on the marquee the other day and some people shouted that they had money for him and handed him a check for \$100.
"After 'Dark Command' we're going to be showing 'Godzilla vs. Kong' [May 7]. Then we're getting 'Raya and the Last Dragon' [May 14], and then we'll have 'A Quiet Place, Part II' [May 28]," Lois informed.
In addition to showing the latest studio films, the Noyo Theatre will offer their theaters for private showings where the participants can bring their own movies from home to be projected for their friends and family. Once they have their new third projector to replace the broken one, the Hoovers plan to have an "over 21" theater where they can serve alcohol to create a very adult movie-going experience.
"I'm excited. I love this job," said Blare Elliott, who along with Jeremy Roberts, has returned to her old job at the theater. "I love seeing the regulars that we have, seeing their faces again. They're like old friends. I like to see the movies here as well. I'm looking forward to 'Raya and the Last Dragon.' I have Disney Plus, so it's advertised to me all the time but I'm not going to pay \$30 to see it online when I can

Read the rest of Popcorn Over on Page 12



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At left: The family is ready for home movie night with a huge bag of movie-theater popcorn and sodas. Above: Monica picks up a bag of to-go popcorn for the family. Below: Popcorn is the staple of movie-theater concession food. At bottom: Popcorn is a big draw on home movie night.



Above: All the concessions are now available. Below, from left: Blare Elliott delivers sodas to a waiting family. Christina Knight and her daughter, Olivia, get a large bag of popcorn to take home. Lois Hoover displays a card and bottle of wine that was given to her and Jeff from a local vintner.

Photos by Mathew Caine



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www.blueskymactech.com

Firewise Safety Tip of the Week
Brought to you by Sherwood Firewise Communities
Tip #1 EZ2B Informed
Sign up with Nixle, Mendo Alerts and SafetyNet

Celebrating the Seniors

Willits Weekly will once again be publishing senior photos from the Classes of 2021 of Willits High School, Sanhedrin High School, Willits Charter School and more in the coming weeks leading up to graduation in June. Congrats to all the graduates!

Photos by Maureen Jennison



Viviana Acevedo Duran



Liliana Acevedo



Amayah Alexander



Amy Andrade



Samantha Arms



Skylar Arnold



Manuel Banuelos



Maria Barboza Meza



Aydin Barnard



Josecelyn Beebe



Steven Beers



Steven Benavidez



Giovanni Bertolino



Hannah Bouthillier



Karina Brito



Nomiah Britton



Callie Brown



Jack Brown



Kimberly Bush



Kaiden Butler



Mark Cardona



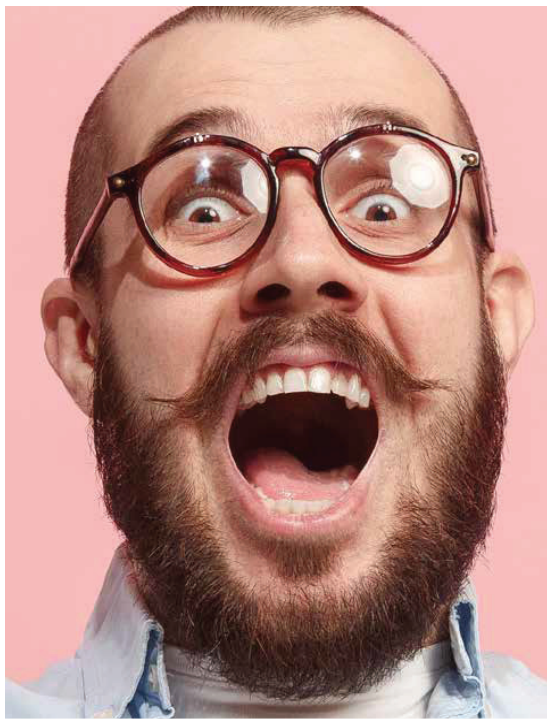
Jazmyn Carrigg



Rey Ceja



Jonathan Chavan



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ART UNDER 20



Lily Barrett

2021

Willits High School • Willits Charter • La Vida • Laytonville High School
Virtual Gallery Opens: April 30
Hours: Friday-Sunday, 11am-5pm



www.willitscenterforthearts.org

At right: A fine example of a rattlesnake enjoying the sun.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

Agape Bible Church

290 S. Lenore Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
707-303-5456
*Where love is first
and the Bible is central.*
Sunday Services:
10:00 a.m. - Worship
Awana: Tuesday, 6:15 p.m.
Info? 707-459-1905
www.agapebilechurch.com

Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church

803 Coast Street
P.O. Box 489, Willits
707-303-5456
Morning Worship - 10:30 a.m.
Pastor Burton Jernigan
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

265 Margie Drive
Willits, CA 95490
ALL ARE WELCOME
Sacrament Meeting
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Eckankar: The Path of Spiritual Freedom

• Sound of Soul events
• Membership Discourses
• Spiritual Discussions
• ECK Light & Sound Services
More information?
Call 707-456-9934
www.eckankar.org

Grace Community Church

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

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church

61 W. San Francisco Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Father Aaron Bandanadam
Mass times:
Confessions by appointment:
459-2252
Sunday Mass inside:
9:00 a.m. English
10:30 a.m. Spanish
Saturday Mass: 5:30 p.m.
Covid guidelines apply.
We welcome All Walks of Faith

St. Francis Episcopal Church

1 North Main Street, Willits
707-272-0177
Church Services / Communion
by Zoom at noon.
Call for information.
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Brunenu

St. John Lutheran Church

Karl Bliese, Pastor
Church Service:
Sunday 10:00 to 11:00
Bible Study / Sunday School
following the service.
(707) 459-2988
24 Mill Creek Drive
ALL ARE WELCOME

Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church

707-459-5714
Saturdays:
Meeting place at Adventist
School, 22751 Bray Road
Bible Study - 9:45 a.m.
Worship Service - 11:00 a.m.
https://willitsca.adventistchurch.org
All are welcome!

Willits United Methodist

A Christ centered, progressive church
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286 School St. (at Pine)
Rev. Rosemary Landry, pastor
Worship Celebration
Sundays - 10:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School - 10:45 a.m.
459-2855
Facebook: www.facebook.com

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

April Tweddell
(707) 972-2475
april@willitsweekly.com



57 East Commercial Street - Willits
707-459-NOYO (6696)
www.noyotheatre.com

Starts Friday, May 14:

Raya & the Last Dragon



(NR) 1 hr 34 mins
Fri., May 7
thru Sun., May 9
and
Thurs., May 13
Small Theater:
4:00 & 6:30 pm

Movie Times for 5/7 thru 5/9 and 5/13



PG13
1 hr 53 mins
Fri., May 7 thru
Sun., May 9 &
Thurs., May 13
Main Theater:
5:00 & 7:45pm

*Admission by Donation: Pay What You Can (for "Dark Command" only)

OBITUARY |

Eleanor Spitzer

Eleanor Louise Spitzer passed away April 17, 2021 at the age of 92. She was born December 15, 1928 to Homer S. Kelsey and Helen W. Kelsey in Goshen, Indiana.

Eleanor married Robert Eugene Spitzer December 10, 1949 in San Francisco. She was co-owner and bookkeeper for B & E Refrigeration for 40 years. Eleanor enjoyed art and music, and being very active in her churches.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Robert E. Spitzer, and her two daughters, Cynthia J. Sales and Constance B. Spitzer. Surviving her are: her daughter, Catherine L. (Roger) Brooks; son-in-law, Craig Sales; grandsons: Robert Sales, Jeremiah Sales, Jonathan Sales, Thomas Brooks, and Scott (Alyssa) Brooks; and numerous great-grandchildren.

Those wishing to do so may make donations in her memory to the National Cancer Institute or the American Cancer Society.

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



2021 Willits Community Theatre Kids Camp Registration

By Willits Community Theatre

Applications for Willits Community Theatre's 2021 Willits Youth Theater Summer Camp are now open and will be accepted through May 15.

This year the camp will be producing "Oz!", a musical fantasy written by Tim Kelly with music and lyrics written by Bill Francoeur. Both the camp and the show will be directed by Tim Fischer, who is the drama and English teacher at Willits High School.

"Oz!" is based on the classic American children's classic by L. Frank Baum and will include Dorothy, Toto, Aunt Em, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, the Cowardly Lion, the Wicked Witch of the West, and of course, the mysterious Wizard of Oz. There will be winged monkeys and a host of singing Munchkins.

Please go to the theater website to fill out the appropriate application form: www.wctperformingartscenter.org/kids-camp

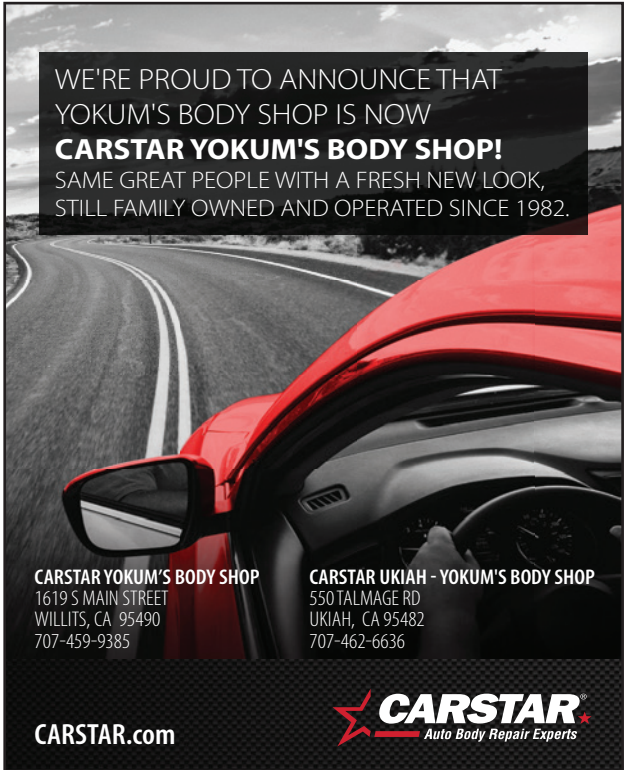
Camp is three hours a day, four days a week, for five weeks from 1 to 4 pm. Performances will take two weekends, so altogether the camp will be six weeks long, from June 28 through August 8.

The camp will be limited to 25 children between the ages of 6 and 17.

Cost of the camp is \$200 per student. For each family, the cost for the "first child" is \$200; the cost of each additional brother or sister is \$100. A limited number of 50 percent scholarships are available upon request.

Application into the 2021 Youth Theatre Summer Camp will be a two-part process. Applications will be screened for age and theatrical experience. Applicants who are accepted will then be contacted, and payment will be requested. After payment is received, your child will be enrolled in the camp.

To apply for a partial scholarship, contact the theater for the appropriate forms at WCTPerformingArtsCenter@gmail.com or 459-0895.



The rest of

Goals

From Page 1

- Identify team members both internally and externally who will complete the work
- Seek grants and other funding sources to complete work
- Complete a zoning update to implement Land Use Element of the General Plan once it is updated

The next goal, ranked at 18, was to "Develop and implement a long-range Fiscal Sustainability Plan for city finances in order to promote the city's economic health by balancing revenues and expenditures to solve systemic problems." Steps to reach this goal will include:

- Adopt annual balanced budgets
- Review options for pension liability reduction
- Develop a plan to replenish reserves
- Provide the community with annual report on the use of increasing revenues related to Measure K, cannabis revenues, and tourism revenues (annual "State of the City" Report).

Next (ranked 17), was to "Maintain a Public Safety Agency capable of maintaining a safe community utilizing up-to-date law enforcement tools and delivering emergency services to the citizens and businesses of Willits in a responsive and proactive manner." This goal will require these steps:

- Continue the implementation of the council-adopted Staffing Plan
- Interact with the city's emergency partners to complete the Emergency Operations Plan that will reflect the city manager as Chief Emergency Officer
- Develop a Community Policing Program and Community Outreach Plan.1

- Continue to implement an Equipment Replacement Program and upgrade facilities as resources permit

- Set performance goals and develop recruitment incentives where possible

Also ranked at 17 was a goal to "Maintain and improve infrastructure systems of water, wastewater, public facilities and streets capable of managing future growth while responding to current City needs." Steps include:

- Develop and implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) covering a 5-year period that prioritize projects according to

necessity while identifying timing and funding

- Complete and implement a comprehensive Groundwater Management Plan
- Maintain the relationships with Brooktrails
- Complete update to Flood Control Plan

The next goal, ranked at 16, was to "Develop a plan to encourage the construction of new housing and the preservation of existing housing stock for the city." Steps include:

- Utilize work already completed in the Housing Element Update to identify housing opportunity sites within the City
- Identify grant opportunities through the Federal Community Development Block Grant program to incentivize "affordable housing" and upgrade projects.
- Fund and implement a comprehensive Code Enforcement Program

Next, ranked at 11: "Develop and implement economic development strategies for the City of Willits that will promote the development and maintenance of strong business sector including business retention and attraction, tourism, marketing and revenue generation.

- Continue to implement the Vacant Building Program as well as other programs to Enhance the downtown core

- Work with partners to promote program focused on bringing visitors to the City
- Identify funding through the Cares Act and other sources to be used for the development of a business support program

- Continue implementation of the Main Street Corridor Enhancement Program.

Next, ranked at 9: "Develop and complete a plan to annex properties adjacent to the city that are currently in the county." Intermediate steps will include:

- Complete pre-zoning process
- Complete a sphere-of-influence adjustment through the Local Agency Formation Commission
- Negotiate a tax-sharing agreement with the county

Next, also ranked at 9: "Work towards Willits becoming an "Environmental Model City" by reducing the city's carbon footprint by 50 percent, promoting greater energy independence from utility companies, and strengthening the city's resiliency and self-reliance."

The rest of

CalFire

From Page 1

have burned more than 3,500 acres on state and federal lands combined.

"As we continue to deal with the impacts of climate change, we want to encourage Californians to be prepared for this year's fire season," said CalFire Chief Thom Porter. "With the support of Governor Newsom, CalFire has bolstered fire protection resources with 1,399 additional firefighters, added 30 new fire crews, replaced five of our helicopters with state-of-the-art CalFire S701 Hawk helicopters with more on the way, enhanced technology to assist with fire behavior modeling, and provided on-demand wildfire spread prediction, and wildfire risk forecasting capabilities. While we are ramping up our preparedness, residents need to do the same."

This year, California budgeted more than \$1 billion for fire management, fire prevention, and mitigation efforts including prescribed fire and fuel breaks, forest health, and home hardening. Building on the success of past fuel reduction work, CalFire is pivoting to a model of continuously developing and maintaining a list of more than 500 fuel projects across the state. These projects are vital to slowing the spread of fires in the wildland urban interface and providing areas from which fire personnel can safely and aggressively attack fires. Through grants to regionally based partners and collaboratives, CalFire seeks to significantly increase fuels management including hazardous fuel reduction, treatment of degraded areas, and the conservation and restoration of forests.

Firefighting alone cannot protect us. Californians have an important role in preventing wildfires as well as preparing for the upcoming wildfire season. Now is the time to ensure adequate defensible space around homes and buildings, make homes more fire-resistant, and have an emergency preparedness/escape plan.

This is especially important since approximately 25 percent of the state's population, or 11 million Californians, live in a high-risk fire zone. Thousands of communities depend on smart planning and prevention tools such as protective fuel breaks, defensible space around homes, and home hardening for their safety and survival. These tools work together to build more fire-resilient communities. Californians can learn more about all aspects of wildfire safety and preparedness at www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

Additionally, CalFire is encouraging Californians to access the "Ready for Wildfire" web-based app that includes local alerts, checklists for preparedness, evacuation plans, and other kits. To download the free Ready for Wildfire web-based app, visit https://plan.readyforwildfire.org/.

The rest of

Letters

From Page 2

new grows. The proposed ordinance would open an unknown number of acres across this dry and fire-prone landscape to new grows and associated commercial development.

We are in an epic drought. Does it make sense to encourage new non-essential irrigation-dependent agriculture when established farms, ranches, residences and even whole water districts are experiencing water shortages and beginning to institute rationing? Does it make sense to open the county's rangelands -- the drier, more remote, most fire-prone regions of the county, to commercial cannabis development, which, with the proposed new cannabis facilities ordinance, could include farm tours and events, sales and sampling, and "bud and breakfasts," as we prepare for one of the driest fire seasons on record?

Does it make sense to invite hundreds of new applications while there are still over 200 tax-paying permittees waiting for the county to complete the required paper work for state licensure under the existing ordinance, and while hundreds more growers "in the system" continue to operate without county or state licenses because the county has failed either to approve or to deny those applications?

Does it make sense to announce that Mendocino County is "open for business" while illegal grows continue to mushroom out of control; while unscrupulous growers chainsaw and bulldoze new grow sites in defiance of current and proposed laws with the knowledge that Mendocino County has little to no enforcement?

Isn't it time to give the sheriff, residents and neighborhoods, and small growers who complied with the law, a break? Those of us who support repeal of the whole ordinance say, yes it is!

The existing ordinance is fundamentally sound. It caps existing AND NEW cultivation sites at 1/4 acre. It allows for new (Phase 3) cultivation, but keeps new grows out of the more remote, drier, wildfire prone rangeland zoning district and directs new grows into agricultural zones and industrial and commercial zones as appropriate.

Does the existing ordinance need changes? Yes. Ag land soils need special and immediate protection from the proliferation of hoop houses and other semi-industrial cultivation techniques which are inappropriate on valuable agricultural land, as well as protection from sky-rocketing land prices that prevent food farmers and ranchers from buying or keeping agricultural land.

We need to phase out the use of hauled water. We need a rigorous analysis of water availability and sustainability at every new site, including on agricultural zoned land. We need a funded and proven enforcement regime.

Some board of supervisors members and county staff have been repeating the misstatement for months that the proposed new ordinance is about getting Phase 1 growers (the pre-2016 growers applying for a permit) through the the alleged "unworkable," "broken" permit process of the current ordinance. In reality the existing ordinance has never been allowed to work. In fact, it has been sabotaged. Why do I say this?

From the very beginning, the CEO expressed disapproval

of the vision of a legal cannabis program comprised of many small cultivators that would form the backbone of a new legal cannabis industry in Mendocino County. Instead, the preferred vision was one of large corporate enterprises that would bring in more revenue and presumably be less costly to regulate.

As a result, county staff failed to seriously enforce the provisions of the new ordinance. Legitimate applications were accepted but then allowed to languish "in review" for years. Along with serious applicants, hundreds of applications, many in clear violation of the ordinance, were also allowed into the program and to begin operating. Over a thousand incomplete applications have piled up in the county offices. At one point the former planning director told the board it would take staff five hours to even find an application!

In May 2019, the state sent Mendocino County a memo detailing the information it would need from each applicant to issue a state annual license. This memo included a sample document so that each applicant would know exactly how to comply with the state's request.

Mendocino County did not forward or inform applicants of this memo, kept silent, and allowed the clock to keep ticking on the deadline for applicants to supply the needed information to the state. As a result, the serious applicants are now panicked about getting their state licenses, and most still don't have county permits.

Those who never intended to come into compliance with county or state laws continue to operate under what amounts to a "protection racket" of having an application "in review" by the county, and are therefore not a priority for local law enforcement.

Despite staff's claims of state-imposed barriers, there is no evidence that the state ever rejected the permit requirements or the supporting environmental documents of the county's existing ordinance. In fact, a July 2020 memo from the state found the "environmental commitments, approvals and required permits" of several county applications to be "sufficiently covered."

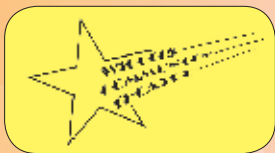
All this plays very well into the hands of staff and advocates of the bigger-is-better proposed new ordinance. Legitimate applicants are being held hostage to support the proposed new ordinance as the only path to a state license.

If the new ordinance were about helping the legitimate applicants get through the system, and about better environmental protections through the use permit process, why wouldn't the board adopt Supervisor Haschak's proposal to adopt the new ordinance but without the unpopular expansions? Because the purpose is expansion.

And, with the county failing to enforce the environmental and neighborhood protections of the existing ordinance, why should we trust the same county department to protect the environment or the character of our neighborhoods through enforcement of individualized, multi-conditioned use permits? We shouldn't.

That's why I urge you to join me supporting the referendum to repeal the proposed new ordinance, in its entirety! It's a Trojan horse -- threats disguised as gifts.

Ellen Drell, Willits



Willits Community Theatre Re-opens

We are going live again!



Youth Theatre Summer Camp

The Youth Theatre Summer Camp is possible through the generous support of The Community Foundation of Mendocino County.

Enrollments now open until May 15
Register at: www.wctperformingartscenter.org
June 28 to August 8 • Ages 6 to 17
Directed by WHS Drama Teacher Tim Fischer

“OZ!” A Musical Fantasy -
written by Tim Kelly, music & lyrics by Bill Francoeur
The performance dates of “OZ!” are July 30 thru August 8
at the Willits High School Auditorium.

“The Viewing Room”
- A casket comedy

written by Mark Smith
and
directed by Mathew Caine
A Main Stage Production
at the WCT Playhouse
Shows July 2 through July 18



In our commitment to maintain the health and safety
of all our cast, crew and patrons, the
Willits Community Theatre will follow all applicable
COVID-19 protocols during our summer camp and live shows.



For more information visit:
www.wctperformingartscenter.org



Above, left: What better movie than the 1995 classic coming-of-age story of four friends, “Now and Then,” for a birthday-eve movie rental – made even better by watching it on the big screen in a theater to themselves. Above, right: Birthday girl Gracie Jennison was happy to get theater concessions for the show. At left: Friends and general goofballs Mateya Shuster, left, Amsatou Z. Ndoye, Emelia Owsiany, and Frida Friend, front, celebrate the 13th birthday of Gracie Jennison, right. Below: Even in the otherwise empty theater, the girls enjoyed watching from the back row.

The rest of
Popcorn

From Page 5

come to the theater and see it for so much less.”

And on the big screen.

The Noyo Theatre is located at 57 East Commercial Street. For more information, call: 459-6696 (movietimes), 459-6660 (box office), 707-354-3295 (business and reservations for private showings), or email movies@noyothatre.com. Showtimes can also be viewed at www.noyothatre.com. To make a donation, visit their GoFundMe site: www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-noyo-theatre.

Rent the theater

Noyo offers private showings

The Noyo Theatre is offering a great alternative to celebrate birthdays, spend time with friends, or just enjoy a super great date night: private movie theater rentals available Monday through Wednesday. You can bring your own movie, watch a currently running show, or even bring a gaming device. The large theater seats a max of 75, and the small theater seats a max of 25. For a complete list of rules and policies, contact Lois Hoover for more information at 354-3295.



Photos by
Maureen
Jennison

Made for more poses



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