

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

Online & Print

Willits Weekly

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

Donations Accepted Edition No. 358

Thursday, June 11, 2020

City planner gives update on local projects

Forrest Glyer
Features Writer
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At the May 27 Willits City Council meeting, Community Development Director Dusty Duley gave an update on several projects the department was moving forward with despite the recent challenges of the COVID-19 social distancing rules.

"I just want to start by reminding the council and the public that the Community Development Department continues to be open and available

Read the rest of
Projects
Over on Page 13

Commission approves Pine Mountain cell tower

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

On Thursday, June 4, the Mendocino County Planning Commission voted 4-0 to approve a use permit for AT&T to construct and operate a 143-foot cell tower on Pine Mountain.

The vote was not without its surprises, the first of those being, that it marked a complete reversal from the previous 6-0 vote in favor of directing Planning Commission staff to draft a resolution of denial of a use permit for the cell tower. That vote took place on May 21.

A second surprise is that a 4-0 vote should happen on what is normally

Read the rest of
Approves
Over on Page 13

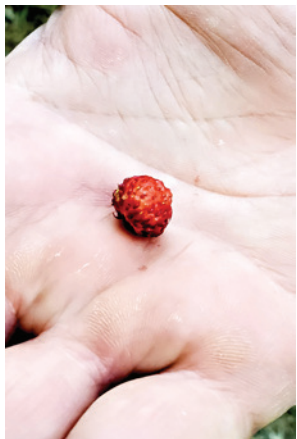
Sheriff, fire chiefs invite public to online forum on new wildfire plans

Submitted by Lieutenant Shannon Barney, MCSO

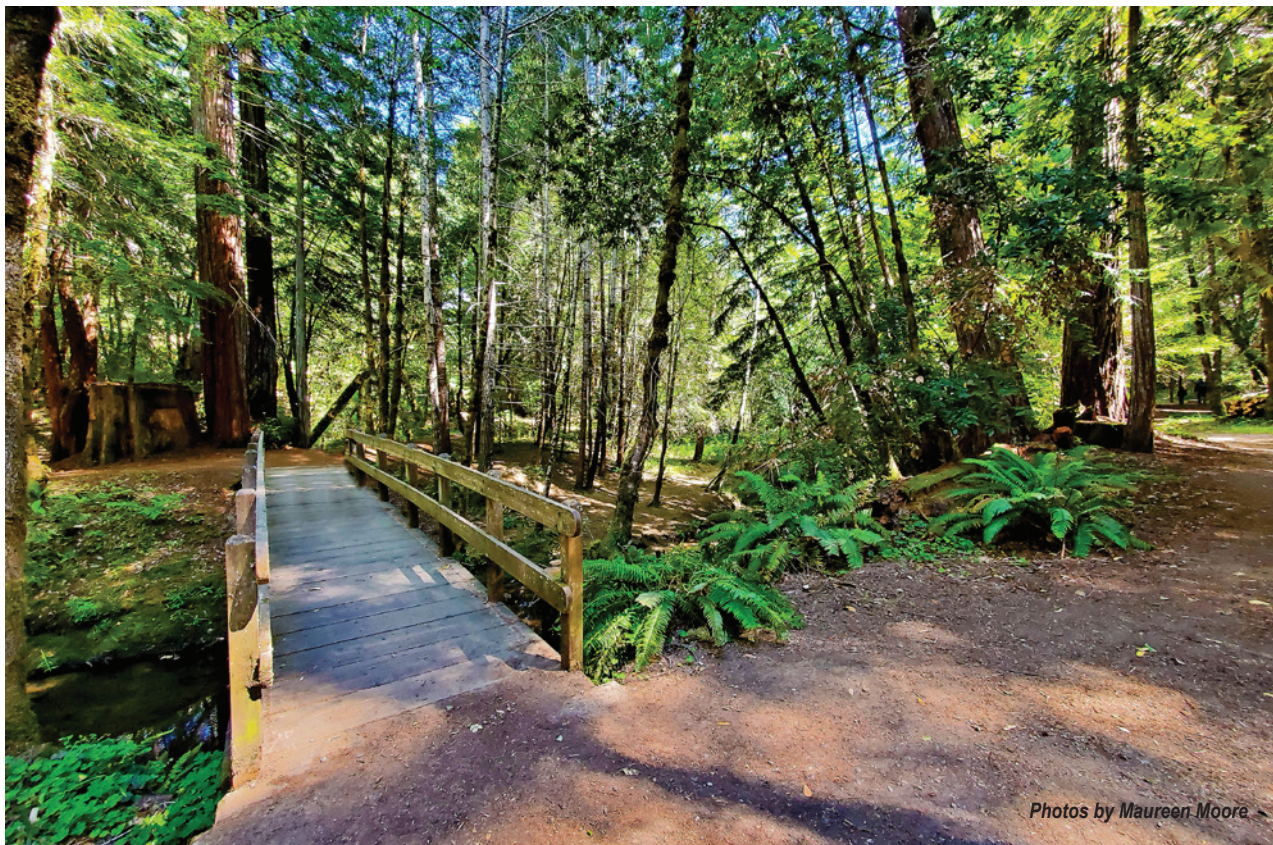
Sheriff Matt Kendall and the Mendocino County Fire Chiefs Association president, Chief Sue Carberry, are pleased to announce the development of three new planning documents that will significantly improve the wildfire safety of Mendocino County residents.

On Monday, June 22 at 10 am, the public is invited to join a Zoom Public Forum on the three new

Read the rest of
Zoom
Over on Page 13



Above: Wild strawberries, left, climbing stumps, center, and firecracker flowers, right, are just some of the fun things to find and see on the Brooktrails Par Course trail. Below: The ferns, foliage, and babbling stream all make for a nice walk through the redwoods.



Photos by Maureen Moore

Serene Forest Stroll

Brooktrails Par Course offers abundant ambiance and enjoyable exercise opportunities for local community

Just off Birch Street in southwestern Brooktrails lies the Par Course, a lovely trail that is open to the public to walk and enjoy. There is off-street parking down a small road, on the left, just past Birch Drive when heading west towards the golf course off of Sherwood Road. Park there and start the loop that will take you past a lovely playground, old ball fields, over wooden bridges, and through the picturesque redwoods.

While the playground and the various apparatuses that line the trail are currently off limits and closed to the public due to COVID-19 concerns, the trail and the ambiance is available to enjoy now.

Recent work on the trail has left several sections with

Below, left: Thimbleberries grow wild on the sides of part of the Par Course trail. Below, right: There's plenty of space to enjoy walking on the trail while keeping space between to adhere to social distancing guidelines. At bottom, left: Brush has been cleared and logs stacked, allowing for lovely light to filter in through the trees. At bottom, right: The right kind of medicine as shown on this embroidered patch made by of Lost Forest Creations: "1000 mg of nature."



Supes approve 2020/21 budget

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

On Wednesday, the board of supervisors voted 5-0 to approve a final budget for fiscal 2020-21. Although CEO Carmel Angelo promised the board that she would be bringing the board an austere budget, as befitting a county that is at the beginning of a pandemic-driven financial downturn, in the budget that Angelo brought to the board, and which the board finally approved, the final numbers are not all that ugly.

Read the rest of
Budget
Over on Page 6

Supes reaffirm Doohan as health officer, with a raise

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

On Wednesday afternoon, the board of supervisors voted 4-1 to reaffirm that Dr. Noemi Doohan is the county's interim public health officer.

The affirmation came in the form of a fifth amendment to Doohan's standard employment agreement with the county. This agreement increases compensation for Doohan from a not-to-exceed figure of \$225,000 to a not-to-exceed figure of \$325,000

Read the rest of
Doohan
Over on Page 6

Cannabis ordinance clash set for June 16

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

At their Wednesday meeting, county supervisors agreed to put off until next week the discussion about the future of the county's cannabis cultivation ordinance which had been on this week's June 10 agenda.

The board has scheduled a special meeting for Tuesday, June 16 to take up the question.

Currently, two very different approaches to

Read the rest of
Ordinance
Over on Page 11

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and
thank you letters from our readers

\$1,000 scholarships

To the Editor:
We, Holli and Noel Woodhouse, are organizing a scholarship fund for at least one graduating senior from Willits High School's Class of 2020. Our goal is to raise \$1,000 for a deserving young person of color, with the hope that we can double that amount for a second scholarship.

Noel will be riding his bicycle from WHS to UC Davis via the Mendocino National Forest to raise funds for these scholarships (see details below).

This scholarship money will go to members of historically disenfranchised communities who continue to experience social and economic inequities in this country.

We are choosing to present these scholarships to people of color because we recognize their value as the core of our own local community and as human beings.

This is a nation built on the systematic exclusion and suppression of communities of color, and we want to work on dismantling that. We hope that these scholarships are able to benefit one or two WHS seniors who have worked very hard for their accomplishments and who have missed out on many special events and moments amid the coronavirus crisis.

To Donate: Visit gofundme.com/f/WH-POC-Scholarship

To Nominate a Senior: Send a detailed paragraph to woodhousebuilt@gmail.com explaining who your nominee is and why you are nominating them. Please include the name, phone number, and email address of yourself and the nominee. You may also send a direct message with this information to Noel or Holli via Instagram or Facebook.

The money we raise is intended as a "no strings attached" scholarship, meaning the recipients are free to use the money in any way that will benefit them, and it does not have to go toward higher education.

To Follow the Ride: Noel's bike trip will begin on Thursday, June 11; we will continue to post updates and information on his progress throughout the ride. You can follow Noel on Instagram and Facebook: @noelwoodhouse

A message from Noel

Twenty-one years ago, I graduated from Willits High School and, buoyed by my white privilege, a booming economy, reasonable tuition fees, easily accessible financial aid, high-paying summer job as a construction worker, and some truly amazing local scholarships, I headed off to UC Davis.

Now, I am riding my bike from WHS to UCD the long way around, up and over one of my favorite places – the Mendocino National Forest. By publicizing the ride, I intend to raise money for at least one scholarship for a graduating person of color from the Willits High School Class of 2020.

On March 16 of this year, over 100 seniors at WHS were informed not to come into school that day nor for the foreseeable future due to the shelter-in-place order relating to COVID-19.

You could probably pinpoint March 16, 1999 as

the beginning of all the fun for me and my friends from the class of '99. The class workload began to lighten. The weather just got nicer and nicer. I enjoyed every moment of a very successful WHS tennis season, a team built by and jam-packed with my closest friends. I ditched class and drove out to the river a couple of afternoons to cool off. I took a pretty girl to prom. I stood up on the stage of the WHS auditorium and said a few words of appreciation for my soccer teammates, friends, and family at "Senior Sob Night."

Daily, I laughed 'til I cried just sitting in the quad or hanging out by the lockers with my friends. I nervously interviewed for, then received multiple generous scholarships from our community. At graduation, in front of a huge crowd, my name and accomplishments were read, and I walked across the grass of the field I had played so many memorable soccer games on.

Obviously, the WHS Class of 2020 and those of so many other high schools were quite randomly robbed of those opportunities and memories. By the time they had adjusted to "distance learning" and worked their asses off under tough circumstances to ensure they would have the chance to partake in some modified approximation of a graduation ceremony, their celebration was (rightfully) overshadowed by a country on fire, a country, once again, fed up and infuriated by a long and ugly history of racism and the ongoing destruction of black and brown bodies.

I love Willits. And I also recognize that racism lives here. We, mercifully, don't see it expressed as brutality and murder at the hands of the police. It expresses itself, more subtly, but still very clearly, in our neighborhoods and local institutions.

I hear racist words and ideas regurgitated out of the mouths of some of my students every day. Much of my time as a teacher is spent simply calling out this type of language, correcting it, and keeping that conversation happening all semester long and beyond. I've definitely seen bolder and more open displays of racism in our town in the last few years, and I know many others have experienced it firsthand.

The graduating seniors from the Class of 2020, with all their individual hopes and plans, step out into a very uncertain landscape. Going straight to a four-year university isn't the no-brainer it once was, and really seems more like a miracle for those able to take that path. What will college even look like this fall amidst a global pandemic? What sort of job opportunities will exist in this crumbling economy? And, as a black or brown person stepping out into a racist society that has been emboldened by leadership, what dangers await?

With all that said, ultimately I don't worry about these kids. Because I know them. I coached them. I taught them. Under normal circumstances I see them and share laughs with them every day. They are strong. They are smart. They shrug off hardships and take any opportunity to laugh. Their eyes are wide open to the world around them, and they are not afraid. They will thrive. They will forge ahead and craft a better future. This scholarship is just intended to give them a little boost in doing so.

Thank you for your support!

Holli and Noel Woodhouse, Willits

Willits Senior Center Lunch

Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Meals

Available 12 to 1 pm, outside the Willits Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road; \$5 per meal, Monday through Friday.

Home Meal Delivery

Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery; \$5 per meal, Monday through Friday. Delivered throughout Willits.

Thursday, June 11: Pasta Carbonara

Friday, June 12: BBQ Spareribs

Monday, June 15: Bacon Swiss Crispy Chicken Sandwich

Tuesday, June 16: Biscuits & Country Gravy

Wednesday, June 17: Meatloaf

Thursday, June 18: Chili Rellenos Casserole

Friday, June 19: Steak Dinner

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

COVID-19 Relief Fund offers individual assistance to inland county residents

Submitted by the Community Foundation of Mendocino County

Two and half months ago our community came together to protect the most vulnerable from the devastating effects of the pandemic by collectively sheltering in place. We knew the impact would be far and wide, and it was important for us at the Community Foundation of Mendocino County to continue to help our community thrive.

Together with our donors, whose intentions were in perfect alignment with ours, the COVID-19 Relief Fund was created to help community members throughout Mendocino County struggling during the crisis, and some of our lead donors wanted to make an impact in inland Mendocino County.

We are fortunate to be able to partner with North Coast Opportunities, our longtime fire recovery partner, to provide individual assistance to those in need. As a result, struggling families have a centralized source where they can apply for much-needed support.

Wanting to ensure equitable access to this funding, we knew it was important to help bring other non-profits into the process, so they could refer their clients in need. One of these partners is Ukiah Vecinos en Acción, a Latino coalition acting as a bridge between agencies and the Latino population. By including them in this process we allow UVA clients to feel safe applying for help through NCO.

As a result, 64 percent of applicants for individual assistance to date in inland Mendocino County are Spanish speakers, the majority unable to get unemployment or stimulus checks because of their citizenship status.

To date NCO has granted \$16,169 to 23 families in Ukiah, and \$18,058 to 23 families in Willits. The vast majority are renters falling substantially below the federal poverty level. As we write, 63 applications are under review from all regions including Ukiah, Willits, Laytonville, Round Valley, Anderson Valley, and the coast.

A single mother of three young children in Ukiah was working 40-hour weeks, until the schools closed and she no longer had childcare. Forced to significantly reduce her hours, with grocery expenses skyrocketing, she is struggling to make ends meet. She is ineligible for unemployment since she is technically still employed.

By working with the NCO case manager, rent was mailed directly to the landlord to cover the shortage, and the family was signed up to receive fresh groceries from the Mendo Lake Food Hub on a regular basis. Through these partnerships, we were able to support this family to stay afloat during their most dire moments.

Likewise, a large family living on a

Read the rest of Assistance Over on Page 15

Help KLLG help Willits

KLLG Radio's emergency generator has a protective cage and is ready for use during a power outage or other local emergency. However, KLLG, low-power radio for Willits at 97.9 FM, has been informed that we need to upgrade our software for our Emergency Alert System.

We can obtain this required upgrade on sale for \$400 before the end of June. Please go to our KLLG.org website and make a donation for this necessary technology.

In the design phase this month we have:

• A dog care program: "Living with your Dog," by Shannon Furr

• Wolfgang Ronnefeldt's on-the-air "Dreaming Workshop"

• Radio plays in cooperation with the Willits Community Theatre

• "Authors Spotlight" has new excerpts to be broadcast and several interviews completed now that the shelter-in-place restrictions are loosening.

Remember that if you or your organization is offering an online class, meeting, or internet entertainment, please send information for public service announcement use to psa@kllg.org.

– Submitted by KLLG Radio

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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EST. 2013

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Above, from left: A makeshift video studio space was created to broadcast this year's Sober Grad celebration. Boxes labeled with names helped volunteers organize the checks and prizes into each recipient's gift bag. The Willits Community Center is usually filled with celebrating graduates, but this year, it was just the green screens and a few Sober Grad volunteers.



Above, from left: Eric Colvard and Julissa Flores were the two graduates who received the \$1,000 super mega prize checks this year. Willits Police Chief Gregory Allen went on camera during the broadcast to offer Willits Police Department's thanks to Sober Grad. Kim Smith of the City of Willits made a cake for Angi Edgar, Joyce Waters and Ruth Dell'Ara, who will all be retiring from Sober Grad after decades of party planning. Flowers from Flowers by Annette were presented to the retirees. Sober Grad's Davina Sentak helped pull seniors' names from the prize bucket.

Sober Grad Drive-Thru

Class of 2020 gets amended version of traditional graduation night party

Even though this year's Sober Grad party itself might have been cut short, the list of prizes and gifts were right on par with the previous 34 years: Plentiful! Usually, the Willits Community Center is full of games, activities, music, lights and food to lure graduates to stay put and not go out drinking or partying on the night of graduation. Several deaths on graduation night decades ago led to the creation of this special free event allowing grads a great alternative event and a chance to make it to their futures.

This year, however, was different! Shocking, right? Regardless, it did not disappoint. Instead of the usual fanfare, this year, the only set-up inside the Willits Community Center was a few green screens, some computers and video cameras, a few tables and boxes, and a handful of volunteers.

Willits Sober Grad's Joyce Waters and Rachel Cash played newscasters, talking to the cameras through the group's live YouTube broadcast. The duo read names aloud of winning students whose names were drawn from various categories for a multitude of prizes. Names were drawn by Davina Sentak and Jennifer Andrews, handed to Waters and Cash to announce, and then handed back over to Linda Matz, Ruth Dell'Ara and Angi Edgar to record, fill out checks, organize, and distribute into the awaiting bags.

Heidi Ahders and her daughter, Keely, worked the recordings and video cameras and switched back and forth between the live broadcast and a slideshow of senior photos during downtime.

Despite this being everyone's first time doing much of the above process and having a few technical difficulties, the event went relatively smoothly overall, much to everyone's delight.

"We heard many positive remarks about the visual aspect of the broadcast," said Waters. "Heidi Ahders

Read the rest of Sober Grad Over on Page 15

At right, above: Several members of the 2020 Sober Grad planning crew included, back row, from left: Rachel Cash, Jennifer Andrews, Angi Edgar, Joyce Waters and Ruth Dell'Ara. Kneeling in front: Heidi Ahders, left, and Davina Sentak, right. At right: The three retirees received armloads of gifts including a bouquet of flowers from Flowers by Annette, platters from Jan Hoyman Studio, and quilts made out of 30-plus years of old Sober Grad T-shirts from the trio's collections. Below, from left: Recipients of the Ventura Perez award received their certificates in "You Make a Difference" folders. Willits Mayor Gerry Gonzalez presents the retiring group with plaques after reading a proclamation from the city council. Grads, including Kayla Jo Williams, drove up to receive their goody bags through the window of their cars.



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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

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OUTDOOR ADVENTURE WORD SEARCH

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| CANOE | FRESH AIR | PARK | TRAVEL |
| CLIMBING | GARDEN | ROAD TRIP | TREK |
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CLUES ACROSS

- American composer
- Very fast aircraft
- Workplaces
- A mount on a surface
- Small freshwater fish
- Double-reed instrument
- Canadian flyers
- Famed astronomer
- Smooth, shiny fabric
- Profited
- Conspiracy
- Infections
- Chum
- Secondary school (abbr.)
- Resistance unit
- Sound unit
- Ancient city of Egypt
- Crease
- Polished
- For goodness _!
- College basketball tournament
- Scorches
- Describe precisely
- Thick piece of something
- Frocks
- Indicates near
- Senior enlisted
- US Army member
- A note added to a letter

- A nose or snout
- Clumsy
- Satisfied to the fullest
- Display of strong feeling
- Popular awards show
- Cuisine style
- Expresses pleasure
- Monetary unit of the Maldives
- Utah city
- Fight
- Messenger ribonucleic acid
- Body part
- Suspiciously reluctant

CLUES DOWN

- Fruit of the service tree
- At some prior time
- Mongolian city _ Bator
- Strongboxes
- Russian river
- Gurus
- Horse mackerel
- Pearl Jam's debut album
- Confines
- First month of Jewish ecclesiastical year
- Famed Idaho politician
- Prevents from seeing

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

June 1 to June 7

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 154 incidents in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

June 1

- 9:52 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 200 block of Shell Lane.
- 9:56 am: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 1200 block of South Main Street.
- 12:25 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 500 block of South Main Street.
- 1:17 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
- 2:33 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 21000 block of Baechtel Road.
- 3:34 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.
- 3:56 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 1000 block of South Main Street.
- 5:42 pm: Officers initiated a missing person investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
- 9:45 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of North Main Street.

- 12:26 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of South Main Street.
- 3:19 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 700 block of Central Street.
- 9:40 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Brookside Drive.
- 9:56 am: WICKSTROM, Noel August (52) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Franklin Avenue. He was arrested pursuant to 422 PC (Criminal Threats) and 404.6 PC (Inciting a Riot).
- 10:06 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 25000 block of Sherwood Road.
- 1:03 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of Barbara Lane.
- 1:39 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 500 block of South Main Street.
- 2:00 pm: BANTA, Jessi Lee (22) of Willits was contacted in the 600 block of South Main Street following a disturbance. She was arrested pursuant to 273.5 PC (Domestic Corporal Injury), 273.6 PC (Violation of a Protective Order), and on misdemeanor charges of domestic battery.
- 3:11 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person in the 1300 block of Poppy Drive and issued a warning.
- 3:43 pm: Officers responded to a report of panhandling in the 100 block of East Barbara Lane and issued a warning.
- 3:58 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
- 7:30 pm: Officers responded to a report of harassment in the 100 block of Hawthorn Court.
- 9:37 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 500 block of South Main Street.

June 2

- 12:26 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of South Main Street.
- 3:19 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 700 block of Central Street.
- 9:40 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Brookside Drive.
- 9:56 am: WICKSTROM, Noel August (52) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Franklin Avenue. He was arrested pursuant to 422 PC (Criminal Threats) and 404.6 PC (Inciting a Riot).
- 10:06 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 25000 block of Sherwood Road.
- 1:03 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of Barbara Lane.
- 1:39 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 500 block of South Main Street.
- 2:00 pm: BANTA, Jessi Lee (22) of Willits was contacted in the 600 block of South Main Street following a disturbance. She was arrested pursuant to 273.5 PC (Domestic Corporal Injury), 273.6 PC (Violation of a Protective Order), and on misdemeanor charges of domestic battery.
- 3:11 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person in the 1300 block of Poppy Drive and issued a warning.
- 3:43 pm: Officers responded to a report of panhandling in the 100 block of East Barbara Lane and issued a warning.
- 3:58 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
- 7:30 pm: Officers responded to a report of harassment in the 100 block of Hawthorn Court.
- 9:37 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 500 block of South Main Street.

June 3

- 10:05 am: Officers initiated a hit-and-run vehicle collision investigation in the 200 block of South Main Street.
- 1:19 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1500 block of South Main Street.
- 2:05 pm: Officers responded to a report of
- 5:16 am: Officers initiated a hit-and-run vehicle collision investigation in the 100 block of Barbara Lane.
- 10:09 am: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 100 block of Brookside Drive.
- 6:53 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious subject in the 1700 block of South Main Street.
- 6:59 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity near the intersection of Central Street and Trudy Lane.

June 4

- 1:18 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of School Street.
- 2:11 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity near the intersection of East Hill Road and Baechtel Road.
- 7:42 am: SANDERS, Rhonda Rennee (59) of Willits was contacted in the 1100 block of Magnolia Avenue. She was arrested pursuant to 273.6 PC (Violation of a Protective Order) and 11377 H&S (Possession of a Controlled Substance).
- 3:50 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 200 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.
- 8:38 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity near the intersection of East Oak Street and Railroad Avenue.
- 9:27 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 200 block of Margie Drive and issued a warning.

Willits Weekly | June 11, 2020



Back to 'Normal'
Some Willits businesses begin the next phase of opening, while others hang back

With updates in the shelter-in-place orders allowing more kinds of businesses to reopen or open more fully throughout the county, Willits businesses have been adapting again in recent weeks.

The order that took effect on May 24 allowed in-store shopping and limited dine-in service in restaurants – with restrictions – and after a business had self-certified it was meeting health requirements.

Many businesses were up to speed with the protocols for being partially open already, as they had been offering to-go and curbside pickup service, which it made it a bit easier to open to the next phase.

It was wonderful to walk around town and notice more orange and red "OPEN" signs in business windows. The feeling downtown was more "normal" – yet, don't forget your mask (required for entry into stores) and remember to maintain social distancing. In some shops, masks, hand sanitizer and gloves are still offered.

As of June 1, the hours have expanded for Mazahar Boutique and Willits Enchanted Toy Shoppe. Now they're open six days a week, Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. Owner Sara Mann explained they are still offering curbside service, too. They require customers entering the shop and employees to wear masks. They have a hand-sanitizing station with cotton gloves to use when you want to browse in the store.



Above, left: At their sanitizing station, Sara Mann of Mazahar Boutique and the Enchanted Toy Shoppe, donned one of the cotton gloves they're offering customers to wear as they browse items in the shop. Above, right: Dahvi Hooper, one of the owners of 101 Burgers & More, said their restaurant is small, so they'll continue offering take-out instead of in-house dining, in order to keep customers safe from the virus spreading. Below: At El Chicano Restaurant, known for its original family recipes from Oaxaca, a booth is cleaned up and sanitized after customers have dined.

Photos by Ree Slocum



Above: Off the Cuff clothing store is open for curbside pickup; call 707-841-3001. Far left: Buttercups Children's Boutique is open and offers an array of children's items from infant through school-aged. At left: El Mexicano uses arrows to help customers maintain social distancing when walking in the restaurant.

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In fact, at \$335 million, the 2020-21 budget is about \$14 million less than the 2019-20 budget of \$349.36 million. When one adds in internal service funds and funding for special districts, the 2020-21 budget is actually about \$2 million more than the 2019-20 budget.

The total budget, including all funding sources, for 2020-21 is \$378, 612,169; the same "bottom line" budget number for 2019-20 was \$376,894,867.

After the vote was taken, Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde expressed his thoughts upon completion of the budget-making process.

"It is a remarkable achievement, to have a balanced budget for a fully functioning Mendocino County government, in these dire times, and it's amazing that we're actually not dipping into reserves at this point, yet, given the fact that this is Year 2 of the salary increases. So, good work everyone," Gjerde said.

On Tuesday morning, as the board was taking up consideration of the budget, CEO Carmel Angelo expressed her feelings about where the county is. "I'm not saying that we look wonderful," Angelo said. "I'm saying, we look good. We are stable, and we will make it through the year."

Angelo's assessment is born out when one looks at the revenue predictions for the Budget Unit 1000 series. That's the revenue streams that bring "discretionary money" into the county, which is the money that the board of supervisors allocates at its discretion.

In fiscal 2017-18, the county auditor estimated that the county would have Budget Unit 1000 revenues of \$64.5 million. The following year, that number was \$66.8 million, followed, in fiscal 2019-29, by \$73.8 million. For the upcoming fiscal year, county Auditor Lloyd Weer is estimating Budget Unit 1000 revenues of \$75.2 million.

In the draft 2020-21 county budget, Angelo and her staff included a chart titled "Net County Cost Summary Table" that shows spending for 53 departments, divisions and branches of county government in 2019-20, and compares that spending with proposed spending in next year's budget. To a numbers freak, the numbers are interesting.

For example, the Clerk of the Board's Office was allocated \$594,041 in 2019-20; but \$547,156 in the upcoming year; the board of supervisors was allocated \$878,046 in the prior year, but \$829,585 in the upcoming year; county counsel's office was given \$724,580 in 2019-20 but \$875,035 in the upcoming year; Information Services was budgeted \$3.4 million last year and \$3.55 million for next year, the Sheriff's Office was budgeted \$14.2 million last year and \$14.47 million in the coming year; and the jail was budgeted \$9.78 million in 2019-20 and \$9.97 million in 2020-21. The total for these 53 departments and branches was \$66.84 million in 2019-20 and \$65.28 million in 2020-21.

A good chunk of the reduction in spending can be found in the sprawling Health and Human Services Agency, which generally cut all departmental and division budgets by roughly 15 percent between March and June of this year.

For example, the mental health budget went from \$24.38 million to \$23.2 million; the Mental Health Services Act budget went from \$5.57 million in March to \$4.89 million in June; spending on substance use disorder treatment went from \$3.057 million in March to \$3.013 million in June; outlays for Public Health went from \$15.6 million in March to \$14.34 million in June.

The Department of Social Services suffered a similar fate. In March, the department was looking at a budget of \$81,754,672; in June, that number had been whittled down to \$74,054,700.

In wrapping up the final budget, the board of supervisors did some adjustments of their own. The allocation to the Fire Safe Council of Mendocino County was increased from a proposed \$25,000 to \$100,000. County support for the Cannabis Unit was increased by an additional \$190,170, which will be enough to hire another 2.5 staffers. When those staff are successfully hired, the unit will have a total of eight employees.

Sheriff Matt Kendall told the supes he is working on plans to build a court room on the second floor of the county jail, in a room called the Donovan Room. Kendall said doing this will save between \$360,000 and \$480,000 a year in transportation costs, just in moving inmates from the jail to the courtrooms in downtown Ukiah and in Fort Bragg. Kendall says he has gotten agreements from the presiding judge that if the Donovan Room is converted, that the court will use the facility. The supervisors seemed pleased and impressed with the sheriff's initiative.

A potential dark cloud is that both the board of supervisors and the executive office staff are assuming that the final budget that was approved on Wednesday is not, in a sense, the final, final budget. For that, all the major players are looking forward to late August or early September, when the auditor and executive office staff will bring forward a first quarter budget review.

At that time, they will check to make sure that their revenue estimates, both for money coming to the county from the public and from the state and federal governments, are on track. It appears that county staff and the supervisors may be looking to that first quarter budget review a little more ardently than they have in past years. But for now: the 2020/21 budget has been approved. It is due to be adopted on June 23.

for the term of the contract. The contract ends on December 31, 2020.

Under the new contract, Doohan agrees to work as interim public health officer for Mendocino County for 15 hours a week, at a rate of pay of \$125 an hour. By the terms of the contract, any work done by Doohan that requires more than 15 hours a week will need to be approved by either Health and Human Services Agency Director Tammy Moss Chandler or by Departmental Operations Center Manager Bekkie Emery.

At a press conference that was held on Friday, June 5, Doohan was asked what parts of her job would go undone if she were only working 15 hours a week.

Doohan said all necessary work would be done, either by herself, or by team members. She praised the team she has assembled and mentioned Emery and James Flaherty, MD as taking on a great deal of the work, and as doing that work effectively and tirelessly.

She said she would be focusing on interacting with county CEO Carmel Angelo, with Deputy Executive Officer and Public Information Officer Sarah Dukett, with Flaherty, and with the county counsel's office.

"I started off working 90 hours a week," Doohan said. "I got that down to 70 hours. Now – and this is the first day of it – I've gotten it down to 15. I think we can do it."

In the 4-1 vote, only Second District Supervisor John McCowen voted against the contract amendment. McCowen said he was voting in the negative column as a protest against what he termed the county's "uncontrolled spending" on COVID-19.

HHSA Director Tammy Moss Chandler told the supervisors that up to 75 percent of Doohan's salary would be reimbursable by FEMA, and that other portions of it would be reimbursable through various grants secured by the Public Health branch of the HHSA.

On June 5, Doohan told the press the county will continue to look for a full-time health officer. She also said, as of June 5, the county had received no new applicants for the job "that have been considered." The county's Department of Human Resources has been posting the job since December.

In May the county hired Joseph Iser, MD, former public health officer for the Southern Nevada Health District, to fill the position. However, after news of the hiring touched off a flurry of public comment, the board of supervisors cancelled the hiring of Iser.

Most recent COVID data

The Wednesday, June 10 COVID-19 update on the Mendocino County Public Health Facebook page reports that the county has had 36 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Three of these 36 cases are now deemed to be to be a result of "community spread," with 26 cases put down to "close contact" with somebody with COVID-19, and seven cases attributed to "work/out of county travel."

Three new cases were reported this week, two are in the Ukiah area and one in the northern coastal area of Mendocino County.

As of the Wednesday update, 32 people who have had the disease have recovered, four are in isolation, and none are currently hospitalized. There have been 6,822 tests for the virus performed on Mendocino County residents.

New health order coming

A new shelter-in-place health order is on the way, one that will open bars, gyms, hotels and movie theaters, according to Public Health Officer Doohan.

Doohan was in Ukiah on Tuesday and spoke to the supervisors from the board chamber on Low Gap Road. The supervisors were meeting remotely, via the internet, as they have been doing on a nearly weekly basis since March 20.

Doohan referred to a new direction given last Friday, June 5, by Governor Gavin Newsom, in which Newsom said that numerous Stage 3 facilities could open.

According to Doohan, the governor has said that bars, wineries, brew pubs, hotels, campgrounds, gyms, schools, summer camps, and family entertainment centers may now open, with restrictions in place to halt the spread of COVID-19.

According to state guidance found on the California Department of Public Health website, the term "family entertainment centers" refers to such places as bowling alleys, miniature golf parks, batting cages, arcades, and movie theatres.

It does not allow certain amusement or entertainment centers to open where it is more difficult to socially distance. The document said that the types of entertainment centers that may not open yet include amusement, theme or water parks and ice skating or roller skating rinks.

Doohan said she is planning to draft a new shelter-in-place order that will reflect these openings. She said the new health order, which will be her eighth iteration of the shelter-in-place order since March 18, will be released on Friday, and will take effect that day, June 12.

Doohan explained to the supervisors she will be putting restrictions into the next phase of reopening in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. She mentioned that the state guidance stated that movie theaters may only open to 25 percent capacity. She said she is seriously considering imposing a closing time of 8 pm on bars.

For hotels and motels, Doohan said she is worried about people who may be found to have contracted the disease while they are visiting Mendocino County, and would therefore be compelled to shelter in place in the hotel or motel where they are staying.

"My biggest concern about opening up the hotels is, what do hotels do when they have someone who gets COVID-19?" Doohan said. "I am imagining that we will have to make them keep some rooms unoccupied, so that they can provide shelter for those who come down with the disease."

Doohan said she is considering imposing a "66 percent" rule on hotels, meaning that they have to keep a 33 percent open occupancy in their establishment so that sick people can isolate and their contacts can quarantine "in place."

Doohan said she was more than surprised by Governor Newsom's direction to move the state to Stage 3. "I was shocked," Doohan said. "I didn't think it was going to happen this soon."

Sheriff's office eradicates 16,670 pot plants in Covelo actions

Submitted by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office

On June 8, between 6:29 and 6:31 pm, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Dispatch received four separate 911 calls coming from the Covelo area. Callers reported what sounded like a "shootout" that was occurring near the intersection of Crawford Road and Biggar Lane. Reports ranged from 40 to 200 shots being fired, as callers described what sounded like semi-automatic and fully automatic rifle fire.

Members of the Round Valley Indian Reservation Tribal Police also responded to the scene, arriving first, around 6:41 pm. When Tribal Police arrived they observed one male, with a rifle, fleeing the scene on foot in a southbound direction. Tribal Police were eventually able to detain two individuals and located one rifle. Witnesses reported numerous armed Hispanic males fleeing the scene on foot as law enforcement responded.

Sheriff's Office patrol deputies arrived and contacted Tribal Police. Members of the California Highway Patrol also responded to the scene to assist with the incident. The scene was determined to be a very large marijuana growing operation at the south east corner of the intersection of Crawford Road and Biggar Lane.

The property consisted of an approximately 10 acre parcel, held in trust by the federal government as part of the reservation system. The property had no real fixed dwellings but had 38 "hoop houses," which are greenhouses used to cultivate marijuana, as well as several camp sites with recreational vehicles and or tents used by those cultivating marijuana.

The responding officers were able to initially detain four Hispanic males who indicated they were only working in the marijuana grow, but denied knowledge of [or] involvement in the shooting. Deputies noted what appeared to be in excess of 10,000 marijuana plants as well as evidence confirming at least 50 or more rifle rounds having been discharged recently on the property.

They noted one greenhouse had many rounds fired into it, and one vehicle had numerous rounds fired into it. There appeared to be evidence that rifles, handguns and shotguns had possibly been discharged at the location.

Deputies then contacted the Mendocino County Sheriff's Investigations Unit to request assistance. The Mendocino County Marijuana Team, discovering that the cultivation activity was not permitted, authored a search warrant for the location. This team was assisted by the Mendocino County Detective Unit and the Mendocino County Major Crimes Task Force in the service of the warrant.

Upon service of the search warrant, investigators located a total of seven firearms, three rifles and four handguns, including two AR15 style assault rifles with high-capacity magazines, one with a suppressor attached.

A total of 12,022 marijuana plants, ranging from 6 inches to 6 feet in height, were located and eradicated. Two additional suspects, both Covelo residents, were identified and detained.

The investigation determined this garden might have been grown in a similar method to others recently found in the Covelo area, with federal trust properties being leased by tribal members to non-tribal members for the sole purpose of conducting large marijuana growing operations.

Most of the persons detained appeared less than cooperative, and no one admitted direct knowledge as to who had been responsible for the large discharge of firearms.

Investigators found no evidence or indication that any person had actually been shot. However, this area is a residential neighborhood with neighbors being less than 200 yards away on all sides of the property as well as roads on two sides that have a high frequency of traffic at the time the shooting was reported. There is no safe way to discharge a firearm at this location.

Four men were arrested, booked, and then cited for cultivation of marijuana and possession of marijuana for sale: Rosalio Pena (AKA Armas Severiano), Ruben Hernandez Najera, Osvaldo Garcia Campos, and Angel Maria Ramirez.

The case remains under investigation, and the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office is requesting anyone with information on this case to please contact the Sheriff's Office tip line at 707-234-2100 or the WE-TIP line at 800-782-7463.

June 3 eradications in Covelo

A June 5 press release from the Sheriff's Office described two eradication operations on June 3 at two separate properties on Hulls Valley Road in Covelo.

The Sheriff's Office, the press release reports, has been receiving numerous complaints regarding illegal marijuana operations in Covelo area during the past several months. "Complaints were made about several large, unpermitted, growing operations in the Hulls Valley area, approximately 9 miles north of Covelo. The complaints included the discharge of firearms on a regular basis, leading to safety concerns from residents in the area."

The first search warrant for a remote piece of vacant tribal land on Hulls Valley Road found nobody at the property. Deputies located and eradicated 1,507 marijuana plants and seized a loaded .22 caliber rifle.

The second search warrant was served at another Hulls Valley Road property a half-mile away. Four Hispanic males were detained, two additional suspects were detained, and "four additional Hispanic males fled the location on foot into the thick brush and were not apprehended." No arrests were reported in this June 5 press release.

Deputies found 14 greenhouses and one outdoor grow which were "being watered by an unlawful water diversion from a nearby creek."

The search also revealed a loaded AR-15 rifle, two loaded handguns, and several high capacity magazines.

"At the conclusion of this investigation," the press release concludes, "a complaint will be filed with the DA's Office related to felony charges of conspiracy and illegal cultivation of marijuana against those identified. The suspects could face additional charges of possession of illegal weapons and illegal water diversion."

Glen Muller

Glen Harlan Muller lived in Willits for the last 40 years. He was born January 12, 1926 and passed away May 10, 2020.

Glen had several different occupations. As a youth he worked on the farm in South Dakota. He did construction work, and owned a cafe. Because of a sports injury he couldn't go into the military, so he joined the U.S. Merchant Marine, which took him to Japan and the Philippines. He put himself through college by doing odd jobs such as data entry, Nabisco factory worker, and tow truck driver.



He settled in as a teacher, and later an elementary school principal in the Saugus, Newhall area of Southern California. It was there that he met his "Lovely Lady" Barbara Atwood Beckman.

Glen was adventurous. He went down the Rogue River in a rubber raft, more than once – rode motorcycles to Mexico with friends, and also as a honeymoon. After he and his wife retired they bought a catamaran and sailed to Mexico. They also took a river boat down the Sacramento River, where he and Barbara were eaten alive by mosquitos. He enjoyed road trips to visit family.

He is survived by five children, 16 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. His family has described him as brilliant, strong, stubborn, determined, hardworking, heart of gold, generous, witty, and a great storyteller. He always had high expectations, especially for those he loved. He had a passion for teaching, and his grandchildren learned so much from him. He also loved sports, and his favorite team was the Golden State Warriors.

The saying he will be remembered by is, "If that's the worst that happens to you, you'll live an old and happy life." And that is exactly what he did. He will be sorely missed.





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Lily Phoenix

Lily Honora Phoenix was born October 28, 1948 in Brooklyn, NY and passed away on May 14, 2020.

As a small child, Lily, her sister and mother moved to RI to live with their grandmother, Honora Fenton Lynch, who helped raise Lily and her sister for several years and greatly influenced Lily's life. Honora had a celebrated contralto voice and loved to dance; she was taciturn but unafraid to state her opinions.

Growing up, Lily played the French horn and modeled her hair on movie stars. She loved the Beatles, ice cream, moss green, hairspray and chiffon. She made straight A's, typed 110 wpm, earned a National Merit scholarship.

After college, Lily worked for a record company, a theater group in London, in Boston's Harvard Square in a stationary shop, and in Taos, NM, for an art magazine. She moved west for the harmonic convergence in 1987, buying her home in Willits in 2002. She legally changed her name to Lily Honora Phoenix as an adult to honor her grandmother and herself as a woman reborn from the ashes of an old life that no longer fit. She never married or had children, but there were always cats.

Lily was an avid patron of local artists. She also studied Middle Eastern and Flamenco dance as well as being a student of Dumbek and Conga drums. Later she attended Zumba and ballet barre classes with great enthusiasm. Lily was a dancer through and through. She loved to move in all the ways that a body could explore. She considered the dancing community her family.

After retiring, Lily devoted more time to cat rescue operations and spent her last six years doing volunteer work at the library and the Food Bank. Her other community was in cat rescue. She helped feed and care for the feral cat colonies in Willits and Brooktrails. She spent a lot of her love, time, energy and money doing this.

Lily was political and passionate, well-read, articulate, and had a sharp wit and brilliant mind. Her absence is deeply felt, and she will be sorely missed. A memorial is TBA.

Terri Nichols

Terri Louise "Bell" Nichols, (aka "Oma"), of Ukiah, and former long-time resident of Willits, passed away May 31, 2020 at the age of 71. She was born in Glendale, Arizona to Clyde Wilson and Agnes Helen Bell on October 09, 1948.


Terri enjoyed riding Harleys, the fellowship of her biker clubs, and Cruisin'. "Oma" lived her life fully and wholly in the way she wanted, and never let anyone tell her she had to do it any other way.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, her mother, and many brothers and sisters. She is survived by her daughters, Teari Smith and Tina Fruge; grandsons: Stephen and Jeff; granddaughters: Tawnie, Megan and Jessie; and great-grandchildren: Jakai, Miles, Tymberlee, Allie, Parker and Charlie Marie.

A celebration of her life is planned for June 13, 2020 at her daughter's home in Willits.

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





Sheila Eileen Gray

October 29, 1940 – May 24, 2020

Sheila Eileen Gray passed away in the early morning hours of May 24, 2020. She was born to Don and Madeline Murphy on October 29, 1940 in Los Angeles, California. She attended Catholic school during her childhood and graduated from Mater Dei High School in 1958. Her faith was very important to her. She served as a Reader and the first female Eucharistic Minister for many years at St. Anthony's Parish in Willits.

Sheila met the love of her life on July 4, 1961. On their second date he asked her to marry him. She responded that she hardly knew him and to give her 30 days. Exactly 30 days later he asked her again and she said yes. They were married on December 30, 1961. They had 3 children and she was a wonderful Mom and mentor to them. They were happily married for almost 59 years and she was his rock.

She was his biggest cheerleader in the pursuit of his dream job as a Police Officer. When there was a move involved to further his career she was all for it. She loved her role as a Law Enforcement wife and threw her entire being into it. She worked for many years at Microphor Inc. but her happiest job was assisting Dad in his Private Investigator business. She loved helping him and typing up his reports adding her amazing writing skills to his.

Sheila's proudest achievement was her volunteer work. She was involved in Kiwanis and was always a constant in that organization. She began her volunteer career at Howard Hospital in 2005 and donated 4,727 hours. She held many positions on their board including President several times. She loved being involved in the hospital and made many long time friendships.

Everyone that met her felt her caring loving nature. She had a wicked sense of humor that was loved by all. Nobody that met her could forget her amazing laugh.

She is preceded in death by her Father Don Murphy, her Mother Madeline Murphy, and her brother Rory Murphy. She is survived by her husband, Clarence; and her children, Christie Weberski (Chip) of South Lake Tahoe, Julie Packard of Redbluff, California, and Patrick Gray of Willits. She is also survived by her 7 Grandchildren, 3 Step Granddaughters and 3 Great Grandchildren. Her Sister Kathleen Henslick of Oklahoma and many Nieces and Nephews.

Rest in Peace, Mom, you are no longer in pain and we will miss you forever. Don't worry we will take good care of Dad for you.

Rosary and funeral Mass will be held at a later date, when large gatherings are allowed.



Below, left: The procession following the graduates out of Willits High School and down Main Street felt like a victory lap for the Super Bowl winner, with decorations, festivities and merriment shared by grads and attendees alike. Below, right: Willits High School Principal's Secretary and Registrar Amanda Maciel, left, and WHS Vice Principal Marian Lohne smile from inside the pressbox, where they announced the names and accomplishments of graduates as they entered and drove around the track.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Above, from left: Some graduates showed up to the Maize Field ceremony in cool old cars like Ariel Reyes in this orange truck. The panoramic view around the football field was a sight to see during the unique graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020 with cars circling the track and recorded speeches. Rachel Hagemann is decked out in leis and graduation cords. The way to take a cool grad photo: Sit on the roof of the truck and smile like Brandon Schmidt. Roman Wiegand smiles for the camera in his cap and gown. At left: Elaborate displays were fashioned on many truck beds, including this one for Logan Simms. Below, from left: Graduates Patricia Carrillo, Lucas Branscomb and Nayeli Rodriguez smile for the camera in front of the Class of 2020 latticework.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Above: Dillon Longmire smiles under a balloon arch in the back of a pickup truck.

Photo by Mathew Caine



Above: Cars move around the driveway at Baechtel Grove Middle School during their graduation ceremony.

At right: BGMS teacher Chrissy Golding shows a supportive sign to passing students. Far right: BGMS Principal Maria Munguia brings each graduate a special gift.

Below, right: Cars line up and wait their turn to reach the balloon arch. Below, far right: BGMS' Dean Mackenzie Erickson announces each student as they come to the front of the ceremony space.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Above: The WHS graduation procession makes its way down Main Street.

Photo by Mathew Caine

Off to High School

Baechtel Grove Middle School celebrates 8th grade promotion

Instead of taking their place on the bleachers at Maize Field at Willits High School like decades of eighth-grade graduates before them, this year, students celebrated the completion of their final year at Baechtel Grove Middle School from their vehicles, in a parade, in front of the BGMS office.

The line of vehicles was impressive to ensure all of the graduates received a moment in the spotlight on Thursday, June 5, with balloon- and tinsel-clad cars stretching all the way around the block surrounding Baechtel Grove, wrapping most of the way down Walnut Street towards Main Street, next to the railroad tracks by Remco.

Maureen Moore
Graphics & Photography
maureen@willitsweekly.com

Each student drove into the school's horseshoe driveway, and was allowed to come out of the car and stand in front of the balloon arch, receive a goody bag from Principal Maria Munguia and have their achievements, interests and awards announced by BGMS Dean Mackenzie Erickson. They exited the driveway past a row of cheering teachers, holding signs and yelling congratulations as their students drove by. The event lasted for about an hour and 15 minutes.

"Ms. Erickson was amazing about what she said for every student," praised Munguia. "They had been asked to create a slide for themselves [by the eighth-grade chairperson] as an assignment, some chose not to do it, so she said what she knew about them."

The bags included medals for different subjects for those who received



"Excellence in" that subject; AVID students received "Unlimited Possibilities" pins and a certificate of participation and a letter from the principal; a certificate of promotion; WEB Leaders received pins for being part of the program; BGMS yearbooks for those who purchased them; and gift cards to Scoops Frozen Yogurt & Deli and Pizza to Go from the eighth-grade parent group. Some teachers, including Mr. Moratti and Ms. Meinecke, put cards in their students' bags, and other teachers put theirs in the mail.

"The Eighth Grade Drive-Through Promotion Celebration was a huge success," said Principal Munguia. "Parents thanked us for all the decorations, the statements made about each student, and all the teachers' encouraging posters. Eighty-two of the 87 students participated; many decorated their cars with

Read the rest of
BGMS Over on Page 15



Below, from left: BGMS teacher Andrea Larson "thanks the Class of 2020 for the memories!" The balloon arch made for a festive photo backdrop for each graduate. Each student got to wave at their teachers as they left the school's driveway.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Commencement Procession

WHS Class of 2020 graduates parade down Main Street and enjoy every minute

Like Caesar's centurions returning from a successful campaign in Gaul, the Willits High School seniors of the class of 2020 rode triumphantly down Main Street in their metallic chariots, to applause, encouragement, and homemade signs extolling and recognizing their accomplishments in a unique and extremely challenging year.

Every senior class is to be congratulated for making it to the culmination of 12 long years of study, enduring countless hours in the classroom, and persevering through the trials and tribulations of maturing into adulthood with its numerous responsibilities. They all look to the future in order to meet the tests of life.

This year's class of 2020 is special. They have endured unique challenges. They completed their courses remotely over the internet, lost the ability to interact with teachers and their peers in a traditional manner, adapted to a trimester system, and missed out on playing sports, but yet they somehow persevered and triumphed over this adversity with resilience. And in the process they learned much about themselves and their abilities.

One of the most iconic motifs of the high school years is the graduation ceremony and all the activities associated with it: prom, Sober Grad, yearbook signings, etc. The class of 2020 was in danger of losing all of these trappings of the transition from teen years to young adulthood.

But the students' parents, teachers, administrators, local businesses, and many others were determined to not allow these to

At right: Savannah Southwick waves and calls to friends along Main Street. At right, below: Sequoia Jones rides her Harley on the back of the truck. At right, bottom: Pastell Fischbach stands by her decorated truck in her graduation cap and gown.

At far right: Marissa Gutierrez' dad holds a bouquet and balloons to congratulate his high-school graduate. At far right, below: Samantha Haydon gets some support from her pup, Chase.

At bottom: Graduate and scholarship winner Taylor Pardue waves to the crowd.

Photo by Mathew Caine

be lost to their sons and daughters. Many people came together to provide lawn signs, signs of appreciation and recognition, delivered to the graduates' homes.

Two-sided banners with the graduates' photos were placed high on poles for all to see, which they will be able to take home and keep as a remembrance of their youth and accomplishments.

And then, through the extraordinary efforts and creativity of parents, staff and administrators, a plan came together that was so bold and innovative that it may, in part, become a mainstay of all future graduations.

"You gather input from a lot of different sources," said WHS Principal Michael Colvig about the planning process, "and from that you figure out what's possible. Then [WUSD superintendent] Mark Westerburg communicates that to the health officer to figure out what they can approve."

The plan was to create a "drive-in" graduation ceremony, which the students, with their parents and family driving, would attend in pickup trucks, park around the football field, and hear the traditional speeches. Then, with the seniors riding on the back of the trucks, they would parade through town to showcase the graduates and allow and encourage the residents to show their appreciation. It was to be a

Read the rest of
Procession Over on Page 15





Willits Rotary raises \$15,342 for local food distribution nonprofits

Willits Rotary Club President Jenny Senter had an idea to help out three local nonprofits helping to feed people who had lost their jobs, were furloughed, or became underemployed during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders. For some people unable to work, feeding their families had become a challenge.

In order to raise funds for this Community Fund Drive, the Rotary Club set up a GoFundMe page with a \$6,000 goal, and put the word out on Facebook and otherwise.

The people and businesses of Willits, as they are known to do, came across with a grand total of \$15,342 to help out their neighbors. The checks were presented on Monday, June 8, to Willits Community Services and Food Bank, the Willits Senior Center, and Willits Daily Bread.

Senter is grateful for the support of the people of Willits in making this a successful fundraiser. "Willits Rotary Club is so blessed to have a wonderful community of supporters for our recent Willits Community Fund Drive fundraising campaign," Senter said. "We have been so amazed, in these difficult times, with the generosity of the community and former community members.

"Without the individual and organization donations, both large and small," she said, "we would not have been able to donate \$5,114 to each of the organizations that feed our community, Willits Community Services and Food Bank, Willits Daily Bread, and Willits Harrah Senior Center.

"I join with every Willits Rotarian in thanking you all for your donations."



At top: Willits Rotary Treasurer Bear Kamoroff, left, and Willits Rotary President Jenny Senter, right, present a check to Willits Daily Bread Director Cindy Savage and volunteer Jacob Savage.

Above: Rotary President Jenny Senter presents a check to Senior Center Director Richard Baker, as Rotary Treasurer Bear Kamoroff looks on.

At right: Treasurer Bear Kamoroff, left, and President Jenny Senter, right, present a check from the Rotary's fund drive to the Willits Food Bank's Dan Beebe.



Adventist Health donates funds to support critical community organizations during the pandemic

Submitted by Cici Winiger, for Adventist Health

COVID-19's spread and the shelter-in-place orders have had a significant impact on individuals, families, businesses and our economy. Many not-for-profit, locally based organizations that provide irreplaceable support services to their communities are among the hardest-hit financially. That's why Adventist Health in Mendocino County donated \$20,000 to support other community organizations in Mendocino County doing important work during the COVID-19 crisis.

"Many of these organizations provide critical services, such as shelter and food for those in need," says Roseanne Ibarra, Community Integration director for Adventist Health in Mendocino County. "We are thankful for the work that these organizations do in our community, and we want to help them continue their work, particularly during this uncertain time."

"During this health crisis," continues Ibarra, "it is essential that families have a safe location to shelter in place. Ford Street Project, located in Ukiah, provides shelter to homeless families. Willits Daily Bread is another essential community partner, offering warm prepared meals to the hungry. Adventist Health extends our support to strengthen our community."

Adventist Health awarded \$10,000 to the Fort Street Project in Ukiah to help support their work in providing housing to families experiencing homelessness. Willits Daily Bread also received \$10,000 to help support their work in providing meals to those in need. Instead of serving a sit-down meal as they always have, Willits Daily Bread has adapted to the pandemic by placing a self-serve table in front of the building where visitors can help themselves to food.

Cindy Savage, director of Willits Daily Bread, says that the number of people they serve has grown significantly since the start of the pandemic. "I'm feeding an average of 50 [people] or a little bit more daily, and for this time of year, it's not normal. Usually we go from 35 to 40 in the middle of the month, and the end of the month will be more," she explains.

Savage says they have been adding more healthy options to the meals they serve, such as salads, and fresh fruits.

As the need grows, Savage says, they are continually grateful for the donations so they can continue helping others. "We are grateful for the generosity of the community and organizations such as Adventist Health, especially at a time like this."

Savage says aside from the increased demand, they are also spending more on packaging since they can't serve in the dining room, just yet. "The population we serve are in the high-risk populations, so we want to make sure we are ready and it's safe for everyone when we resume normal services."

"It is critically important that these community services and programs remain viable during – and after – the COVID-19 health crisis," says Jason Wells, president for Adventist Health in Mendocino County. "If there's anything that this challenge has made us realize, it's that we are more connected than ever and that we have a powerful and resilient community that comes together when it matters most."

"Adventist Health is committed to being there for our community by supporting organizations doing this work, and doing so is true to our mission of inspiring health, wholeness and hope."



Above: Volunteers for Willits Daily Bread, including Annalee Olsen, left, Director Cindy Savage, center, and Jacob Savage prepare food to be distributed to those in need.

LEGAL NOTICES

WW269

CITY OF WILLITS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE TO BIDDERS

PROJECT NO. 2020-01

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sealed bids for:

The work shown on the project plans entitled:

CITY OF WILLITS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT PROJECT PLANS

for:

2020 Slurry Seal & Pavement Preservation Project - Project No. 2020-01

This project includes slurry sealing, striping, crack sealing, and traffic control for various streets within the City of Willits for an amount not to exceed \$210,000.

IN

City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California &

The work described in specifications books entitled:

CITY OF WILLITS - BID BOOK &
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS
CITY OF WILLITS - PROPOSAL PACKET
CITY OF WILLITS - AWARD PACKET

for:

2020 Slurry Seal & Pavement Preservation Project - Project No. 2020-01

IN

City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California
will be received by a designated representative, of the City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California, until the hour of 2 p.m., June 17, 2020, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud in the City Council Chambers, of the City of Willits, located at 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, California.

CITY OF WILLITS: s/Cathy Moorhead,

Deputy City Manager/City Clerk

DATED: 05/20/20

Publication Date: May 21, 2020

LEGAL NOTICES

WW272

Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F00276

The following person is doing business as Tango, 158 South Main Street, Willits, CA 95490.

Registered owner: William Bryan Mann, 2520 Buckeye Road, Willits, CA 95490.

This business is conducted by an individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.

Statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on May 15, 2020.
/s/ William Mann

Publication dates: 06/11, 06/18, 06/25, 07/02/2020

WW268

Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F00263

The following person is doing business as Sage Healing, 10 Brookside Drive, Willits, CA 95490.

Registered owner: Cassie Lynn Mansfield, 10 Brookside Drive, Willits, CA 95490.

This business is conducted by an individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.

Statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on May 4, 2020.
/s/ Cassie Mansfield

Publication dates: 05/21, 05/28, 06/04, 06/11/2020

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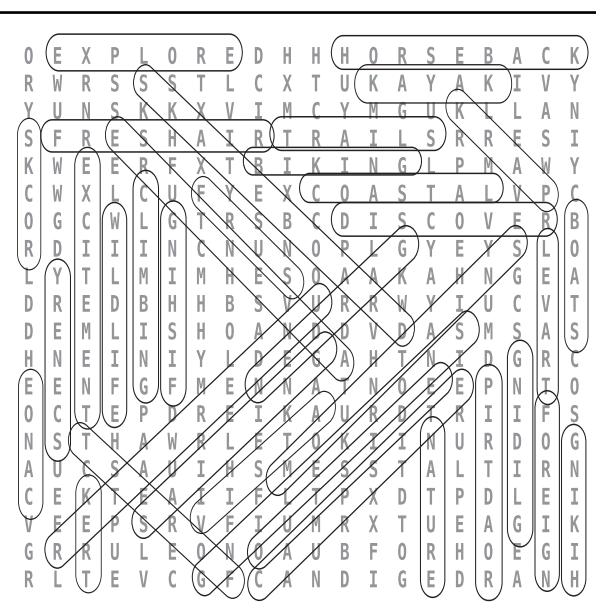
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The rest of **Ordinance** | From Page 1

changing the cannabis ordinance have been proposed.

One is being championed by Third District Supervisor and board Chair John Haschak. Haschak is proposing a liberalization of regulations that are applicable to Phase 3, the so-called "non-legacy" phase of the county's three-phased cannabis program.

Under Haschak's proposal, area limits for outdoor growing of cannabis under a Type 1 permit would be expanded from 10,000 square feet to 22,000 square feet in Agricultural zoning districts (with an administrative permit), in Upland Residential zoning districts (with a major use permit) and in Rural Communities zoning districts (with a major use permit).

Outdoor Type 2 permits would see their cultivation area expanded in Phase 3 from 10,000 square feet to anywhere between 22,000 square feet and 1 acre in Agricultural zoning districts (with an administrative permit) and in Rural Communities zoning districts with a major use permit.

Haschak's proposal also makes adjustments to medium indoor permits and medium mixed-light permits, for Tier 1 and Tier 2 growing sites, in the county's Phase 3 or non-legacy program.

Haschak's proposal also makes a few significant changes to Legacy (Phase 1) cultivation on Upland Residential, Range Land and Agricultural zoning districts.

For Type One legacy grows, the allowable cultivation area will be doubled to as high as 22,000 square feet in Agricultural zoning districts (with an administrative permit), in Upland Residential zoning districts (with a major use permit) and in Range Land zoning districts (with a major use permit).

Type 2 outdoor growing operations would be allowed to cultivate pot on up to 1 acre of land, if the cultivation site was in an Agricultural zoning district and if the cultivator had secured an administrative permit.

The cannabis proposal brought forward by Second District Supervisor John McCowen would actually eliminate the on-the-ground regulatory function of the county, and would turn that part of regulation over to the state.

In a staff report written by McCowen on May 19, he explained what he wants the county to do. "Mendocino County would no longer issue permits for cannabis cultivation per se, but would issue zoning clearances, administrative permits or use permits regulating land use pursuant to the Zoning Code with environmental review (CEQA) taking place on a site-specific basis (instead of regulating how cannabis is grown, the county would focus on where it is grown)," the proposal reads.

"As a condition of the land use permit from the county, the applicant would be required to apply for, obtain and comply with a state permit to cultivate cannabis; applicants for state permits would be deemed to be in good standing by the county; applicants would no longer apply for a cultivation permit from the county, pay application and renewal

fees, navigate the complexities of two different permit programs with different definitions, interpretations and permit types," McCowen wrote.

"Repeal of 10A.17 and regulation of cannabis through the Zoning Code with site-specific environmental review may streamline the current cumbersome process by removing potential conflicts with the California

Department of Fish and Wildlife that have kept the county program (and applicants) in an extended state of limbo," McCowen wrote.

As of May 4, 2020, after three years of operation, the county's cannabis unit had received 1,429 applications for Phase 1 cultivation permits. It has issued 337 permits, with 110 of those having expired, and 98 expired permits having been renewed. A total of 858 applications have been placed on hold, waiting for approval from one or more state resource agencies.

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

said. He also said he knew a lot of restaurant owners "who are asking their employees to come back to work, but they're not, because they're making more money staying home."

The Book Juggler and Main Street Music and Video have both decided to wait until the shelter-in-place orders are fully relaxed before they open their businesses back up for lingering and browsing the shelves. Main Street Music is still taking orders for pick-up, and The Book Juggler offers curbside pickup and delivery inside city limits.

The City of Willits unlocked the gates to the Willits Skate Park on June 1. There were about a half-dozen people whizzing around doing

tricks when Willits Weekly visited Saturday. All were happy the park was open, and they could freely enjoy themselves again.

One of the riders, Daven, is going to be a Willits High senior next year. "I rode bikes here when I was 4 years old. I started coming back when I was 12, and I've been coming ever since," he said. He's gotten quite proficient at doing tricks. When he took a break, he said, "I come here because this is my happy place. If I'm sad or having issues somewhere else, the skate park's a good way to let those things go. You don't come here to be upset. You come here to be happy and push your limits and ride," he disclosed.

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Freezer Empty? We can help!

Due to health concerns in Mendocino County, John Ford Ranch will be taking meat box orders (not individual package orders) for pick-up: Rancher's Choice Box - 50 pounds: steaks, roasts, and ground beef. Still \$325 (\$6.50 per pound). Hamburger Box: 25 pound box of hamburger in 1 or 1.5 pound packages: \$150. Natural ranch-raised grass fed beef, no hormones or antibiotics. Call 459-5193 to arrange pick-up. Leave a message, and we'll call back.

The Fruit Group

Apricots \$33 lug, eating nectarines & peaches \$32 lug. June 11 & 18, from 8:30 to 10:30 am. Brenda 459-9335 or thefruitgroup95490@yahoo.com

Lost Hearing Aid

Lost hearing aid, possibly around J.D. Redhouse or Mendo Mill. Reward offered. John: 459-0460.

New Mini Storage Units in Willits

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Mendocino Counts!

\$5 Help Your Community \$5 - the 2020 Census brings our federal tax dollars home. Mail in your 2020 Census form now! Or fill it out online at: www.my2020census.gov. More info at: www.mendocinocounts.org

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Space for RV's and Trailers: \$425 per month, includes water & garbage. Close to Safeway in Willits. Call Tony (707) 510-5895. See at "http://www.oakvine.net/tp"

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Stay Safe

I'll be back to help you with your Alterations and Sewing Needs when it is safe to do so. Barbara the Seamstress

Virtual Spiritual Exploration

To learn more about classes and topics that may interest you visit: https://www.meetup.com/Lake-Mendocino-Counties-Spiritual-Explorers/ Join us on Zoom or via telephone Wednesday evenings, 7 to 8 pm, June 3 through July 29, 2020. Questions? Please call Joy at (952) 999-2288.

Willits Food Bank open

Willits Community Services & Food Bank is still distributing food, following COVID-19 safety provisions, to hungry families and individuals in the Willits area, with an increase in numbers served. The front office at 229 E San Francisco Ave is closed to the public, but the back door area is open for food distribution on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4:30 pm. "For those with room to plant surplus organic greens, carrots, squash, melons, beans, peas and more to share with the food bank, thank you!" Info: 459-3333; financial donations to WCS can be mailed to 229 E. San Francisco, Willits CA 95490.

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SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

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11:00 a.m. - Worship
Awana: Tuesday, 6:15 p.m.
Info? 707-459-1905
www.agapebiblechurch.com

Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church
803 Coast Street
P.O. Box 489, Willits
707-303-5456
Morning Worship - 10:30 a.m.
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
Adult Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.
Coffee Fellowship - 10:30 a.m.
Worship Service & Children's Church - 11 a.m.
Mid-week Bible Studies
Potluck every 2nd Sunday
Alan Klier, Lead Pastor
459-3106

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
61 W. San Francisco Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Father Aaron Bandanadam
Mass times:
Saturday confessions - 4:45 p.m.
Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Mass
9:00 a.m. English
10:30 a.m. Spanish
We welcome All Walks of Faith

St. Francis Episcopal Church
1 North Main Street, Willits
707-459-3066
Church Services/Communion & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.
Healing Prayer 3rd Sunday
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Bruneau

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
399 W. Mendocino Avenue
707-459-5714
Sabbath School - 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.
4th Sabbath of every month family potluck at the school.
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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

Miracle Brooke

Brooke came to us last year after joining a Brooktrails community meeting. Some nice people brought her to us, sure that someone had been missing her. But no one came forward. Then Brooke got really sick, and we found out that she has FIV which did not cause the illness but made her more susceptible and harder for her to recover. She had the most severe URI that caused her to nearly lose her eyes. Thanks to our friends at East Hill Veterinary Clinic, we finally found a miracle treatment that saved her eyes and her life. Brooke has spent some months in a foster home to rest and fully recover, and now she is back to find her forever home.

Brooke loves to play and enjoys attention and cuddles. She can live with other kitties with a slow introduction. Are you the happy ending to her story?

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County 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: Call 707-485-0123 for information or any questions. Visit "Humane Society for Mendocino County" page on Facebook to see available dogs and cats, and visit www.mendohumanesociety.com to learn more.

Black Angus

Meet Angus! A very handsome, black mixed-breed guy! He's brand-new to us, and we can't wait to find him a home. Angus has recently been neutered, so he is now ready for a forever family! He is 3 years old and about 58 pounds of love and happiness! It's hard not to love a Lab: He's smart, inquisitive and active. What more could you want in a sidekick? If this handsome guy catches your eye, you can make an appointment to meet him soon. Don't wait!

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County 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: Call 707-485-0123 for information or any questions. Visit "Humane Society for Mendocino County" page on Facebook to see available dogs and cats, and visit www.mendohumanesociety.com to learn more.



Happy Princess

Princess is an exuberant, happy dog. She loves to play with toys and enjoys the company of people. Princess needs a guardian who has time to spend with her - having fun and working on training. Princess is very excited to meet and play with new dogs. She has a very rough and rowdy play style, so a new canine friend with the same energy and play style would be a great match for her. Princess is a year old and weighs in at a svelte 51 pounds.

While Mendocino County's covid-19 order is in place, the Mendocino County animal shelters in Ukiah and Fort Bragg are closed to the public, but you can still adopt and foster a dog or cat! To learn more about available pets, visit www.mendocinoshelter.com/. If you are interested, call Amy at the Ukiah shelter at 467-6453 or Jennifer at the Fort Bragg shelter at 961-2491 / 961-2526 with any questions.



Willits Swimming Pool Information

Summer 2020

For more information: 707-456-4122 or 707-459-5778

Swim Lesson

To ensure the safety of our student and staff, we will only be offering individual Swim lessons—1 student to 1 instructor

To comply with County of Mendocino Health Orders

- All Lifeguards will wear face coverings while swimmer under 12 are not required
- Mandatory temperature readings for all staff, swimmers and parent/guardian at check-in
- The pool will be following socially distanced requirement
- Proper sanitation for any shared equipment/spaces
- Swimmer must bring their own goggles, caps, and towel
- Swimmer must be dresses and ready to get into pool. This includes sunscreen.
- Swimmer should change clothes and shower at home
- **Swim Lesson will be drop off and pick up**

*Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people

Registration for swim lessons will be taken over the Phone 707-456-4122 or 707-459-5778

on the Following Days Starting on June 8:

Monday-Thursday

7:30am to 10:00am & 3:00pm to 5:00pm

The fee for each session is \$50.00

No drop-ins

No make-ups & refunds for missed days

Swim Lesson Sessions

The City of Willits offers a variety of American Red Cross swim lessons for individuals of all skill levels. Swim Lessons are held for **2 week sessions**. Registration is required one week prior to the designated session. **Openings are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.**

| | Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday | Thursday, Friday & Saturday |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Session I | June 15 – June 27 | Session IV July 27 – August 8 |
| Session II | June 29 – July 11 | Session V August 10 – August 19 |
| Session III | July 13 – July 25 | (No Thru, Fri, & Sat. Session for Aug. 10-Aug. 19) |

| Morning Sessions | Afternoon Sessions | Morning Sessions |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 9:00am - 9:45am | 12:30pm - 1:15pm | 9:00am - 9:45am |
| 9:45am - 10:30am | 1:15pm – 2:00pm | 9:45am - 10:30am |
| 10:30am - 11:15am | 2:00pm - 2:45pm | 10:30am - 11:15am |
| 11:15am - 12:00pm | 2:45pm - 3:30pm | 11:15am - 12:00pm |
| | 3:30pm - 4:15pm | 12:00pm - 12:45pm |

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Septic & Water Systems - Site Development
Roads - Water, Soil & Rock Delivery

24900 N. HWY 101 IN WILLITS GARMANCONST@GMAIL.COM

The rest of Projects From Page 1

to process building permits, complete building inspections, review planning related permits, building licenses, etc.," said Duley.

"So services haven't been interrupted due to the COVID-19 situation. Although the way we interact with the public and review information and receive information ... we have had to adapt our regular practices. But just so the public's aware, we are available to help with any types of projects or questions that folks have."

One of the larger projects he spoke about was the California Conservation Corps campus that is going to be built near the south end of town. He said construction is expected to begin in 2021 and be completed by 2023, and will consist of 64,000 square feet of new buildings.

"It's expected that 120 permanent Corps members will become part of our community and living on that campus as well as associated staff," noted Duley. "Even 150 people is a 3 percent increase to our population, so this is certainly an exciting project for the city."

He added that it is planned to be a "zero net energy development, meaning all the anticipated energy used for that facility will be offset by renewable energy systems on site."

Duley said that the city was recently awarded a grant to upgrade the solar energy system at Willits City Hall.

While the project is still in the design phase, Duley said that once completed, it should give the city some cost savings, as well as hopefully provide some more backup power should there be an outage or shutoff.

"We're also meeting with Tesla next week," he added. "They have some potential funds available for some battery systems that would further offset energy costs for a variety of city facilities. So we're continuing to explore those types of opportunities to recognize some cost savings for the city."

Duley wasn't certain if the upgraded solar system will be able to provide full backup power to City Hall and the Community Center in the event of an outage, but City Manager Stephanie Garbrant-Sierra said that PG&E had also committed to give the city a large generator as well as \$500 per day for use during any public safety power shutoff.

She noted that the generator power should enable the building to be a "community resource center" in Willits during a PSPS.

Duley said that for the first quarter of 2020, local cannabis businesses reported a little over \$80,000 in tax money, which the city and Little Lake Fire Department will be receiving thanks to the excise cannabis tax measure that Willits voters passed.

He added that the city was continuing to receive interest from new potential cannabis business applicants, and they were expecting new applications to come in soon.

The council approved a contract with the consulting group KSN Inc. "to develop a flood emergency response plan and associated training program for city staff."

Duley said the contract will be fully funded by a \$196,000 grant the city received to help with the flood emergency plan as well as dam inundation.

Duley also reported the city was continuing to try and seek out those who could potentially develop more housing in Willits.

"Our effort to reach out to experienced housing developers and secure their interest in developing appropriate housing and projects in Willits is continuing to lead to discussions with experienced developers," he said.

"We were able to send off a response to a well-known group earlier this week, and let them know about some opportunities in Willits as well as some projects that we're currently processing related to housing."

North Coast Resource Management Vice President Todd McMahon gave an update to the council about progress in the city's plan to obtain a conservation easement on its watershed property south of town. NCRM was hired by the city to help with the project.

"What we found is that there are 25 parcels on the watershed and two different zoning types," said McMahon. "All of them have different allowable uses. What's important ... is that all of them have at the minimum the ability to put one residential development on each parcel."

He explained that the large amount of development possibilities of the land could benefit the city financially, since conservation groups the city will be seeking to partner up with for the easement generally pay to prevent development and preserve land.

However, he said that the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have hit these groups hard.

"Conservation groups are in pretty desperate shape at the moment, and not a lot of funding is coming in," said McMahon. "And resources are getting reallocated that fund a lot of these kind of things."

"And so we're going to get this report done, and then we're probably going to need to sit on it for a minimum of two or three months," he continued, "until the economy engages again, and people are interested in putting money forward for a project like this."

Also at the meeting, Garbrant-Sierra said she had recently volunteered at one of the local COVID-19 testing sites, and was encouraged by the turnout and what seemed to be a shift in attitude by some towards testing.

"We tested over 300 people, and it was very successful," she said. "We've had people volunteer for testing who would not have a few weeks ago, so that was wonderful."

She added that many from Willits and Brooktrails came to be tested, and she encouraged more to continue to use the free county testing site at the Ukiah Fairgrounds, pointing out that more negative test results could enable businesses and facilities to open more quickly.

Councilmember Madge Strong said she had looked into the possibility of testing the city's wastewater effluence for the presence of COVID-19. She said it would cost around \$1,200, but she may have found someone who would donate the money.

The council directed Garbrant-Sierra to continue to pursue getting the local wastewater tested.

In a June 10 email to Willits Weekly, she gave an update saying, "it hasn't been done yet, but we think that we found a way to do it."

The rest of Approves From Page 1

a seven-person commission. But, in this instance, agricultural sector Planning Commissioner Greg Nelson recused himself because of a conflict of interest, Fifth District Commissioner Diane Wiedemann was absent, and Second District Commissioner Madelin Holtkamp recused herself on the advice of the county counsel's office.

Nelson also recused himself from the May 21 vote.

As the commission was about to take up the issue on June 4, Holtkamp said she had been advised by the county counsel's office that in comments she had made during the May 21 planning commission meeting, Holtkamp had exhibited bias and had demonstrated that she did not have an open mind toward the cell tower project.

"It was felt by the attorneys that my comments at the last meeting made it seem that I was not impartial, and so they would like me to recuse myself in this particular case," Holtkamp said. "I of course don't have trouble with the meetings in general, but in this one case, I must."

The third surprise was the way that the 4-0 vote took place. After consideration of the item, a vote to approve the use permit was taken, which failed, 3-1. Voting in favor of the cell tower were timber industry sector Planning Commissioner Randy Jacobszoon, Fourth District Commissioner Scott Perkins, and First District Commissioner Marilyn Ogle. Third District Planning Commissioner Alison Pernell voted against granting the use permit.

But then Deputy County Counsel Matthew Kiedrowski advised the commission that planning commission rules indicate that a majority of the full, seven-person commission is needed to approve a use permit. Kiedrowski pointed out that a majority of the full, seven-person commission would be four votes, and therefore that four affirmative votes would be needed to approve the permit.

Kiedrowski pointed out that federal law provides that there is a time limit to the approval of cell tower use permits, and that, in this instance, the time limit for approval was June 20, 2020, which was the day before the commission's next scheduled meeting. Therefore, Kiedrowski said the commission needed to reach a final decision on that day, June 4.

Kiedrowski went on to say that if the now four-person commission failed to approve the cell tower unanimously, the use permit would fall into a default category called "deemed approved," which would mean that the cell tower would go forward and would be built, but without any of the conditions which the planning commission had built into the permit being applicable.

Kiedrowski advised the commission that in the event that the cell tower would be "deemed approved," the public would have no clear rights of appeal.

After hearing those words, Commissioner Pernell asked if she could change her vote. She was told that she could. A re-vote on the cell tower use permit was taken, which passed unanimously.

Pernell said that, while she still opposed the project, she would vote for it, so there would be a unanimous vote, which would ensure that the commission's 34 conditions would be part of the permit if the project went forward, and which also would provide the public with a means to appeal the planning commission's decision to the board of supervisors.

The momentum at this meeting with those who supported the project could have been attributable in some part to an analysis of the correspondence that was done by AT&T and Epic Wireless personnel.

According to Nick Tagus, a technical expert from Epic Wireless, a company that has contracted with AT&T to install numerous cell towers as part of AT&T's "Connect America" program, the average distance from the tower for residences belonging to people who opposed the project was 7 miles. The average distance from the tower of the residences of those who supported the tower was 2 miles.

"The closer you get to this cell tower, the more support for it there is," Tagus said.

Another possible reason for the change in the planning commission's vote was a letter from AT&T Legal Counsel

The rest of Zoom From Page 1

plans, plus wildfire and emergency evacuation preparedness and safety tips. More details below.

At the request of the County of Mendocino and funded with a Caltrans grant, the Mendocino Council of Governments hired Category Five Professional Consultants, Inc. to develop a Public Outbreak Plan, a Fire Vulnerability Assessment, and a Wildfire Emergency Evacuation Preparedness Plan. At the onset of the project, a Technical Advisory Group was formed comprised of technical experts and community stakeholders including local fire chiefs, law enforcement, government and tribal representatives, and the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council. Planning that occurred is as follows:

Public Outreach Plan

The goal of this outreach initiative was to understand the community's concerns regarding a wildfire threat and an emergency evacuation, increase the community's awareness of the wildfire risk, encourage residents to take steps to protect themselves, their family and property, and improve their knowledge of evacuation planning.

John di Bene, who wrote on June 3, that many of the reasons adduced by planning commission staff as to why the cell tower should be turned down, would not fly.

"An application cannot be rejected whether health concerns are raised explicitly or indirectly through some proxy such as aesthetics," de Bene wrote. "A federal court in California has explained that in light of the federal preemption over regulating radio frequency emissions, such concerns may not be considered as substantial evidence whether raised directly or if other concerns are raised to mask fears over health effects from radio frequency emissions."

Commissioner Scott Perkins summarized the reasons that he was in support of the tower. "The California Public Utilities Commission reports that only 75.2 percent of Mendocino County households have internet speeds of 6 megabits up and 1 megabit down," Perkins said. "This ranks seventh to last among California counties."

"Cellular towers like this one can provide download speeds greater than that amount, giving a greater number of county households access to reliable internet.

"For what it's worth, I'm connected right now via a hot spot to my cell phone because I do not have high-speed internet available at my house. Without this cell service, I would not be available to participate in this meeting," Perkins said.

"The Economic Development and Finance Corporation, in their 2019 economic development summit, identified access to internet as a top factor in limiting economic growth in Mendocino County. The Little Lake Fire District wrote that the project would be an important infrastructure partner in emergency response.

"The sheriff's office wrote that the project ... will help with public safety communication and information distribution during times of crisis," Perkins continued. "The First Responder Network wrote that, not only will this project serve the needs of our community but will also serve the thousands of first responders that have already adopted First Net in California, that may respond to our next emergency," Perkins said.

Commissioner Pernell stated why she would not support the project. She mentioned some of the findings that planning staff had cited in order to justify the recommendation for denial which the commission had unanimously voted to endorse at the May 21 meeting.

Those reasons included a finding that the project was in violation of the county's wireless guidelines, which state, "wireless communications facilities shall be sited and designed to minimize adverse impacts on communities, neighborhoods, vistas, and natural resources."

Pernell mentioned that staff had concluded the project was in violation of the General Plan Development Element Community Character Policy DE-85, which states, "viewshed preservation shall be considered when development is located in a highly scenic environment, adjacent to or atop a ridgeline or hill, and in similar settings."

She also mentioned staff's finding that the project violated DE-205, which states that "above-ground utilities [shall be] located and designed to minimize visual impact and clutter."

In the voluminous public correspondence on the project, many people who wrote cited concerns over the health impacts of the project, and many pointed out that Federal Communications Commission standards for electromagnetic frequency radiation are both obsolete and misguided, in that they refer to standards which protect the skin against burning, but do not address damage to cells, organs and physiological systems within the human body, as well as biological systems outside the human body.

However, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 prohibits governmental bodies from denying permits for the construction or the operations of cell towers based on health concerns over radio frequency emissions, if those emissions meet FCC standards.

In this case, a study by Waterford Consultants included in the staff report stated that the radio frequency emissions from this cell tower were only about a .12 percent of FCC permitted levels.

fire-related threats as well.

The planners developed 35 preparedness recommendations and an action plan that identifies the responsible agencies, funding sources and target completion dates. These completed plans bring Mendocino County significantly closer to reducing their wildfire risk to residents and property while also providing clear and concise guidelines for first responder agencies when an emergency evacuation is needed.

Public invited

On Monday, June 22 at 10 am, the public is invited to join a Zoom Public Forum where CFPC in conjunction with MCOG and local public safety officials will share the planning that has occurred, in addition to wildfire and emergency evacuation preparedness and safety tips.

Please visit the Mendocino Council of Governments website, www.mendocinocog.org, for participation options, or use the following link with Password 924390:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87209580733?pwd=eWJ4OVZCbGcrS1I4SnZmM3F0VHovQT09>



Local businesses show support for Willits Charter School grads

Submitted by Jennifer Lockwood, director, WCS

We are so incredibly fortunate to live in a city where the community came together to make sure our 2020 graduates knew deep down that their community cared for them. Each of our Willits Charter School 2020 grads were presented with a gift bag with their diploma, filled with a wide array of gifts from our community.

Our graduates were nothing but smiles when they opened their gifts. A special thank you to all who donated to the gift bags: Monkey Wrench Men's and Women's Wear, Main Street Music and Video, J.D. Redhouse, Tango, Katie Arlich and The Painted Peony, Brie Jones, Thomas Gallups Carl's Classics, Jessica Clark, The Book Juggler, Hayley Christensen, Nikki's Custom Creations, Valerie Burke and Salon 707, Cior, Erin Vaccaro, Kyle Vandagriff and the Good Ol' Barbershop, the Inland Mendocino Mask Makers, and Printing Plus.

I would also like to thank Stephanie Barbita and all of the people that donated to the banners. Stephanie was able to quickly raise the funds necessary for the charter school graduates to be alongside the Willits High School and Sanhedrin High School graduates. Special thank you to the folks at WHS and those who donated for the organization of the beautiful banners, and to The Book Juggler for posting our graduate posters in their window.

Thank you to Willits Charter School's very own Monica Grossman who procured all of the gifts and watched as every graduate opened them. We are so proud of our WCS grads and wish you all the best on your next ventures in life. It's time for us to let you fly!



Above, left: Many individuals and businesses donated the gifts inside these bags that were given to Willits Charter School graduates.

Above: Willits Charter School graduate Mason Smith opens his gift bag.

Anti-Racist Discussion Group Forming

In response to the epidemic of violence against people of color, I am forming a (socially distanced) group with people who want to explore "white fragility." White fragility is a condition that makes it difficult for white people to talk about our own racism and implicit racial bias. We will use the NYT bestselling book, *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo as a guide for our discussions. If you are interested in joining this free group, call Robin Goldner at 459-3236 or email: rgoldner@pacific.net.

Temporary Hours

Monday - Saturday
8am - 6pm
Sunday - Closed
Until Further Notice
Curbside pick up available

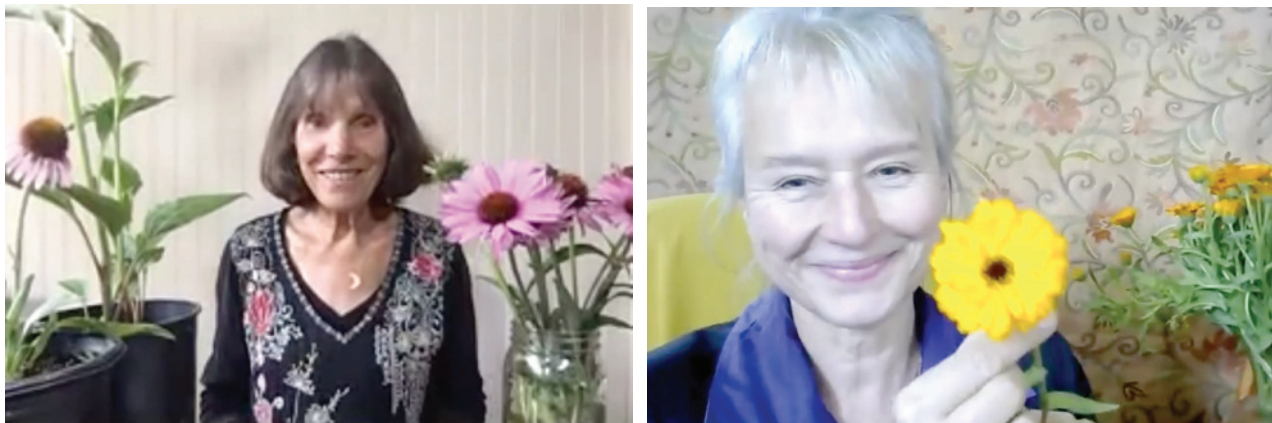


Home Meal Delivery
Call 707-459-6826 to Schedule Available Monday thru Friday Cost - \$5 per meal Delivered throughout Willits. Please call to set up delivery.

Drive Thru & Walk Up Meals
Available 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm 1501 Baechtel Road \$5 per meal, Monday-Friday

Menu - June Week 2
Thursday, June 11
Pasta Carbonara
Friday, June 12
BBQ Sparebits
Accepting donations to aide us in feeding seniors Sheltering in Place
— Please Visit —
www.willitsseiorcenter.com

Transportation For Seniors
Call 707-459-6826 to Schedule Pick up and Drop Off for: Grocery Shopping Banking Doctor's Appointments



Online Calendula Festival shares free herbal education, resources

Submitted by the Mendocino County Herb Guild

On June 7, the Mendocino County Herb Guild hosted their 2nd Annual Calendula Festival online! As festivals around the country were being cancelled due to the health crisis, the Herb Guild decided that this was a critical time for sharing free herbal education and resources.

The Online Calendula Festival ran from 10 am to 6 pm on Sunday, June 7 and had 177 unique online participants enjoying eight 30-minute presentations.

Topics include everything from "Growing Medicinal Herbs" with Donna d'Terra, co-founder of the Mendocino

County Herb Guild, to "Herbal Medicine Making" with Yvonne Mayshark, co-owner of Trillium Herb Company in Ukiah.

Moderator Claudia Wenning spent a portion of the festival explaining the history and medicinal uses of calendula officialis. The online attendees were enthusiastic in their questions and comments during the live question and answer sessions with each presenter.

The festival featured an online marketplace where local vendors were featured on the Mendocino Herb Guild website, and attendees were encouraged to shop during the breaks between the presenters.

The festival was a great success and fostered community connection during a time of great social distancing. The Herb Guild is grateful to all the hearts and minds that helped make this festival a reality. If you missed the festival, please stay tuned for the recordings of the presentations to be available at www.MendocinoHerbGuild.com.

Above, left: Donna d'Terra's Calendula Festival talk was on "Growing Medicinal Herbs: The Hows and Whys, with a Focus on Echinacea."

Above, right: Festival moderator Claudia Wenning gives an online talk on calendula officialis.

At left: Yvonne Mayshark demonstrates "Herbal Medicine Making: Infused Oils and Vinegars" as part of the online festival.



The rest of **BGMS** | From Page 8

congratulations for their students for a job well-done! Overall, it was very impressive for the first time ever having been done."

BGMS 8th grade graduates

JuaquinAlejandresBravo,AlejandraAlemanVelasco, Elena Arkelian, Jesse Arms, Isabella Beauseau Rodriguez, Narianny Bertolino, Jackson Blum, Kylie Bozzo, Johanna Cabrera Lopez, Lily Caine, Angel Calderon, Josue Calderon Gil, Karina Cardona, Justin Carter, Diana Chavoya, Hannah Chidester, Justin Coleman, Alysa Colvard, Hazel Cooke, Vann Davis, Shaelynn Diaz, Yareli Diaz Santamaria, Kooper Dockins, Cruz Dzul Erickson, Dayana Estrada, Gunner Globe, Alexander Gonzalez Rodriguez, Chelsea Hage, Alisha Hamilton, Camden Hendry, Jonathan Hernandez, Yessenia Hernandez Zuniga, Jordan Hodges, Aidan Holder, Diego Hughes, Robert Husarek, Steven Husarek, Nevaeh Jones, Tru Jones, Nicole Keough, Walker Klee, Haley Kvasnicka, Charley Lamprich, Tristan Mann, Brayden Manus, Aidyn McFadden, Clayton McGaw, Jose Mendoza, Ingrid Mendoza Garcia, Vanessa Mercado Mendoza, Jeffrey Moorhead, Shylar Noel, Barbara Nunez, Mason Oljtenbruns, Unity O'Neill Riddle, Roger Patereau, Milagros Patino Martinez, Anthony Porritt, Jasmine Preissler, Carson Quinliven, Christian Ramirez, Ricky Ramirez, Mason Rescina, Mariah Rodriguez, Kahlia Rodriguez Lane, Isaac Rose, Damaris Ruiz Fuentes, Logan Sanderson, Daniel Sauers, Robert Sayad, Kenneth Sherman, Andante Silveira, Joseph Smith, Sidney Smith, Skyler Smith, Catherine Spackman, Kaylen Thom, Maria

Tomas Mendoza, Emma Walraven, Maya Waters, Aeon Webber, Kadince White, Tanner White, Shane Whitelaw, Kamryn Wilkes, Kara Wilkes, and Maci Yokum

Principals List and Honor Roll

6th grade:

Danielle Agenbroad, Lisa Arkelian, Lucas Bozzo, Ryan Carter, Gage Chavan, Edgar Chavez Hernandez, Shania Dalton, Chance Fales, Salisa Garcia, Porter Garman, Donald Glenn, Ana Gomez, Gloria Gutierrez, Jazmarie Henson, Monica Hernandez, Alyssa Herrera, Isabell Hincker Tye, Corey Hunolt Rockey, Synthia Jara, Gracie Jennison, Adeline Jones, Sarah Kale, Wyatt Klee, Jesus Llamas Calderon, Adrian Lopez, Jesse Lopez, Garrett Lyon, Madison Manus, Arin Martin, Cruz Martinez Nunez, Gavin Mcfadden, Sydney Mell, Estrella Mendoza, Alexandra Mendoza Paniagua, David Mendoza Santamaria, Elizabeth Meyer, Yumalay Meza, Wyatt Molina, Angelica Montoya Garcia, Marco Nieto Sanchez, Kelly Nunez Lopez, Jason O'Grodnick, Kaiden Oliver, Angel Ramirez, Rickey Ramirez, Alexandra Ramos, Abbygayle Rayburn, Maxamillion Reichert Sistos, Sanchez Revuelta, Jayden Schlegel, Adrian Senteno, Jayden Sossaman, Garin Stephens, Aiden Vazquez, Dominick Walker, and Justin Zapanta.

7th grade:

Noe Alfaro Erotico, Ashlyn Alvarez, Tristian Bennett, Ethan Blum, Hunter Britton, Hayden Bullington, Cristian Camargo Nunez, Marely Carrillo-Olmedo, Mara Castaneda, Mia Chavez, Maia Collins, Clayton Cooley, Emma Cullens, Breanna DeNeef, Kason Dondero,

The rest of **Procession** | From Page 9

moveable feast of a celebratory procession.

"It's important that they can look back in 10 years," added Colvig, "and say this is our class and what we accomplished, what we did. It's pretty unique."

There were minor procedure challenges – it was the first attempt at this nontraditional presentation – but the night was near perfect. The students loved the adulation and the final chance to interact, although from a needed distance, with their friends, with whom they had shared years of their lives.

"It was awesome," raved Lucas Branscomb. "I had an absolute blast. The school really did a great job. Seeing the whole town come out to celebrate left me speechless."

"It was amazing to see how our community really came through and had so much love and support for the graduates," shared Jaeva Cash, valedictorian. "We have a unique

experience that will be remembered."

"Our truck ceremony and parade was amazing," said Savannah Southwick. "It made me feel very nostalgic as I passed by all of my old teachers from middle and elementary schools. There we were, right in front of adulthood and saying goodbye to our childhood and the classmates we grew up with. I'm so thankful for our small community. This graduation will always be one to remember!"

Micah Stamps commented: "It was amazing seeing everyone from the town gathered in such a way during such rocky times. It would be awesome if this became a town tradition."

"The support from the community and family and friends was amazing," stated McKenna Buckingham. "Being all together one last time was a great ending to quite the odd year."

"I couldn't believe so many people came out to support our class," remarked Brieana

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

local reservation was struggling to make ends meet when working became too dangerous for the high-risk elders in the home. By reaching out to NCO for individual assistance, the family was able to receive help with their utilities and groceries.

By awarding a grant of \$165,000 to NCO, we are able to provide individual assistance to those facing the greatest hardship as a result of this crisis. Well-versed in a plethora of resources, the NCO case managers are able to strengthen our impact by connecting those in need with other resources as well, including the Mendo Lake Food Hub, CalFresh, and more.

Making an impact on inland communities was important to all of our donors, and especially Jim and Arlene Moorehead, the Savings Bank of Mendocino County, the George and Ruth Bradford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the DeLucia Family Fund, the MLH Fund, the Ted and Wilma Westman Fund, the J-Olivanti Fund, and the Pearson Family Fund, which is why they joined as significant donors in our relief efforts. They know the needs of their neighbors, and believe in supporting the community they love. By giving to the COVID-19 Relief Fund, they have made an incredible impact to individuals in inland Mendocino County.

The Community Foundation was formed to provide donors a way to enrich the Mendocino County communities they care for. Through the generosity of our COVID-19 Relief Fund donors, we have been able to open up these incredible resources to those in greatest need. To date we have awarded a total of \$200,000 countywide for individual relief. We are grateful for the partnership of NCO, UVA, and all our regional non-profits, to ensure our ability to support vulnerable residents, as well as lead donors who make this work possible.

To learn more about the COVID-19 Relief Fund, visit our website at: www.communityfound.org/covid-19

COLUMN | MCOE: A Perspective on Education

Recognizing our own bias

By Michelle Hutchins, Mendocino County superintendent of schools

Since late March, our county has come together to focus on health and safety issues related to pandemic guidelines and interventions. However, the troubling events surrounding the death of George Floyd also demand our attention and thoughtful response as a community.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond responded to the death of Mr. Floyd by calling on communities across the state and nation to take action to dismantle institutional racism and inequities in public schools.

We each have a role to play to combat police brutality and the responses to it that lead to more violence and tragedy, like those in Minnesota and Georgia. This is a call to action to educate friends, neighbors, colleagues, and children, to voice our outrage regarding injustice, and to demand respect for every human being, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status.

In Mendocino County, those of us in education and law enforcement participate in ongoing cultural competency trainings to identify and understand the structures that support racial profiling and to hold ourselves to a higher standard through anti-bias training to promote respectful, inclusive, and equitable practices.

Thousands of individuals in Mendocino County have been trained to recognize bias in themselves and in others, and to work toward eliminating bias with their voices. It is time for us to use these tools to act.

Now is the time for us all to join together to do our part. Peaceful protests showing solidarity in our commitment to "be the change" are critical. There is no room for the violent and destructive behavior currently occurring across the United States.

The first step we can take is to educate our children and to raise our voices on their behalf. As adults, we are horrified to see the violent and unnecessary media footage. Imagine how

Cheyenne Dusky, Cassie Esquivel, Danielle Estrada, Jeremiah Foster Langley, Torin Fraser, Wyatt Hinton, Robin Kendrick, Aidan Latimer, Roanin Lawrence, Samantha Lazaro, Giovanni Leon, Hailee Lopez, Thaddius Maddox, Lakyla Medina, Mariana Mendoza, Amy Mendoza Paniagua, Krystina Ojeda, Dacian O'Malley, Jayden Osejo, Aaron Perez Reyes, Kacey Rountree, Ryder Scarborough, Caleb Sossaman, Alison Southard, Natasha Steel, Alexandra Suarez, Vincent Taylor, Annie Thomen, Ayden Thrillkill, Gage Whaley, Aleli Zuniga, and Ashlyn Zynda.

8th grade:

Elena Arkelian, Jesse Arms, Isabella Beauseau Rodriguez, Narianny Bertolino, Jackson Blum, Kylie Bozzo, Lily Caine, Angel Calderon, Josue Calderon Gil, Karina Cardona, Diana Chavoya, Justin Coleman, Alysa Colvard, Hazel Cooke, Shaelynn Diaz, Yareli Diaz Santamaria, Cruz Dzul Erickson, Dayana Estrada, Gunner Globe, Alexander Gonzalez Rodriguez, Camden Hendry, Jonathan Hernandez, Robert Husarek, Nevaeh Jones, Tru Jones, Nicole Keough, Walker Klee, Haley Kvasnicka, Charley Lamprich, Brayden Manus, Clayton McGaw, Jose Mendoza, Ingrid Mendoza Garcia, Vanessa Mercado Mendoza, Barbara Nunez, Unity O'Neill Riddle, Roger Patereau, Milagros Patino Martinez, Anthony Porritt, Carson Quinliven, Carson Quinliven, Christian Ramirez, Mason Rescina, Mariah Rodriguez, Kahlia Rodriguez Lane, Damaris Ruiz Fuentes, Logan Sanderson, Kenneth Sherman, Sidney Smith, Skyler Smith, Catherine Spackman, Kaylen Thom, Emma Walraven, Aeon Webber, Kadince White, Shane Whitelaw, Kamryn Wilkes, Kara Wilkes, and Maci Yokum.

Evans. "It made the experience amazing."

Rachel Woods said: "Last night was very nice and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I really felt appreciated."

"I loved how the community came together for all of us," shared Sequoia Jones. "It felt like history was in the making, and I was a part of it. It warmed my heart to know how much our community cares and supports us. I will always remember my graduation. I don't think anything could top how cool it was, and how much fun I had."

Beneath the laughter, celebration and smiles, there were tears at the way the town came together to salvage the final hours of high-school life for the Class of 2020, tears at seeing the joy on the faces of the seniors, and tears about all the possibilities opening up for the graduates' as-yet-to-be-seen futures.

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

did an amazing job, especially considering it was her first live YouTube broadcast. She is one of those people who gets excited about a technical challenge and everything that is possible. I'm glad we were able to do it. Even though we learned a lot from doing it, we hope to never have to repeat it. Back to the real parties please!"

Once the drawings concluded, grads were encouraged to come through the parking lot at the community center to pick up their stuffed gift bags. They were able to come by between 5:30 and 7:30 pm in their cars and were handed their bags, congratulated by the volunteers, and offered encouragement not to go out and drink and party to celebrate.

To be eligible to win prizes, grads first had to sign in during the open period from 8 am on June 1 until noon on June 3. Usually, grads have to sign into the party and stay at the community center until 4 am to be eligible, but without the actual party, the sign-in window gave grads an accountability opportunity to show their commitment to Sober Grad, and gave them the chance to get prizes.

"We had 86 grads signed in," said Waters. "About two-thirds of them received \$70 checks because they had earned at least one credit through the year, and the other third received \$50 checks."

Students who helped out by donating their time and energy to helping fundraise for Sober Grad had their names thrown in the pot more and more, giving them extra opportunities to win, and some of those students' bags were filled to the brim with awards.

Some students also received 2020 Ventura Perez Memorial Merit Awards, including: Jessica Buzzard, Eric Colvard, Joseph Denier, John Foucault, Dillon Longmire, Ariel Reyes, Nayeli Rodriguez, Micah Stamps, Lillian Turner, Mercedes Villegas, and Jasmine Wear, who each received \$150; Lucas Branscomb, Jessica Brown, Ethan Ferguson, Marissa Gutierrez, Sequoia Jones, Odalys Lara Lopez, and Zoe Schoonmaker, who each received \$250; and McKenna Buckingham, Jaeva Cash, Rachel Hageman, and Emerald Waters, who each received \$500.

Two lucky students, Eric Colvard and Julissa Flores, also received the coveted \$1,000 checks this year.

In addition to celebrating the graduates, three integral members of Sober Grad were also celebrated as they are retiring after this year and passing the torch along to a new group.

Joyce Waters, Angi Edgar and Ruth Dell'Ara will be handing the ropes to Davina Sentak, Heidi Anders, Rachel Cash and Jennifer Andrews for the 2021 event. The group worked as a whole this year, not anticipating this would be a crazy year for all involved, but it seems all the more appropriate that in this transitional time, the new group will get a new start with perhaps a new plan, whatever that may be, for the Class of 2021.

The trio was surprised on screen with a bouquet of flowers from Flowers by Annette, a custom-made bowl from Jan Hoyman Studios, a cake made by Kim Smith at the City of Willits, and quilts made by Cash which were constructed of many previous years of Willits Sober Grad commemorative T-shirts.

Willits City Mayor Gerry Gonzalez read a proclamation from the Willits City Council noting their appreciation for the women and presented them with commemorative plaques. Willits Police Chief Gregory Allen also came on screen to thank Sober Grad and present Waters, Edgar and Dell'Ara with a gift of appreciation.

Willits Weekly offers our congratulations to the Class of 2020, and thanks to Joyce, Angi and Ruth for a great party and their amazing contributions to Willits Sober Grad and our community of kids.



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