

[illegible]

Donations Accepted Edition No. 363

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Forrest Glyer
Reporter
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Read the rest of
Council
Over on Page 9

Mike A'Dair
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Read the rest of
PG&E
Over on Page 4

**By Detective Sergeant
L. Espinoza for MCSO**

Read the rest of
Check up
Over on Page 11



Above, from left: Walnuts replace the more traditional ingredient – pine nuts – in this pesto recipe. Just the chopped basil, garlic and walnuts look good to top a plate of pasta. A Cuisinart food processor makes quick work of emulsifying in the butter and oil. Below: The final luscious product: basil pesto with walnuts and parmesan cheese.



**Photos by
Maureen
Moore**

Those with a green thumb, or those who frequent the Willits Farmers Market alike can all join in the basil-filled celebration of the season by making a batch of delicious pesto. This recipe comes from Cassandra Andich, who adapted it from one in “The Silver Palate Cookbook.” Add 2 cups of basil, 4 large garlic cloves, and 1 cup of shelled, toasted walnuts into a food processor. Run the processor to chop and combine. While processor is running, slowly stream in 1 stick of melted butter and 1 cup of olive oil, letting the processor emulsify the mixture together. Add 1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese, a heavy pinch of salt,

– *Maureen Moore*



Above: Basil leaves start to emerge from the center of the growing stalks. At left: The first three ingredients in this pesto recipe: garlic, basil and walnuts. Below: While hand-chopping can do, there's nothing like a food processor to make pesto easily.



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Read the rest of
Cases
Over on Page 11

Joanne Moore
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Schools
Over on Page 4

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Read the rest of
Contract
Over on Page 11

Sen. McGuire introduces SB 629, the Press Freedom Act

Submitted by the Office of State Senator Mike McGuire

Freedom of the press is one of the foundations upon which America was born. That said, those freedoms are under attack here in 2020.

Intentional attacks or detainments of reporters and members of the press in the United States in 2020 have increased significantly, particularly during the nationwide anti-racism protests, according to the US Press Freedom Tracker, the Freedom of the Press Foundation, and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

During recent protests reporters have been hit by rubber bullets, struck with batons, sprayed with tear gas, and detained, all while performing their critical role of documenting and informing the public of current events.

Senator Mike McGuire introduced SB 629, which will enhance and extend access and protections to members of the media who are attending demonstrations in order to gather vital information.

"Members of the press risk their personal health and safety each time they attend protests or rallies to get the public the information they need and deserve. Rubber bullets, tear gas, and even detainment cannot be the new norm for an essential pillar of our nation's democracy. California must lead the way to ensure the right of the press and the First Amendment are protected and held to the highest standard," Senator McGuire said.

SB 629 – the Press Freedom Act – will ensure that journalists are protected as they perform these critical roles when covering demonstrations, marches, protests and rallies. It will prohibit law enforcement officers from obstructing, detaining, assaulting or otherwise preventing the press from fulfilling their constitutional mandate in reporting on these events by making it a misdemeanor for any peace officer to do so.

Recent police action demonstrates that these statutory protections are critical to ensure our democratic system has access to newsworthy information to inform the discussion on the crucial issues that California and the nation face.

During protests throughout California in May, numerous reporters were injured during incidents with law enforcement.

For example, a reporter for KCRW, a Santa Monica NPR affiliate, was reporting at Beverly Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue when she was hit by a rubber bullet. She was holding her press badge above her head at the time.

A Buzzfeed News reporter was detained by the Santa Monica Police while documenting a protest.

AKPIX CBS affiliate reporter was detained by law enforcement while reporting on protests in Oakland.

A San Diego Union-Tribune reporter was shot with pepper balls while he was documenting protests in La Mesa.

While California law allows reporters and members of the press to enter natural disaster emergency areas for the purpose of gathering information, these protections do not expressly extend to protests. SB 629 provides these protections.

The legislation is supported by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, the California Broadcasters Association, California Black Media, Impremedia, Ethnic Media Services, and the First Amendment Coalition.

The legislation is co-authored by: Senators Hertzberg, Hill, Wiener, Gonzalez, Portantino and Skinner and Assemblymember Wicks.

SB 629 will be heard in the Assembly Public Safety Committee in the coming weeks.

Willits Teachers Association: Distance learning until safe return possible

Dear Willits Unified School Board members and Superintendent Westerborg:

On behalf of the more than 100 educators of the Willits Teachers Association, we are writing to express our concerns for the well-being of all members of the Willits Unified School District, including teachers and staff, students and their family members, and by extension, the members of our whole community, should we return to school in person this fall (with some returning as early as Monday).

This past spring, when schools were closed as our state banded together to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus and the accompanying over-taxing of our medical system, which we saw tragically play out in New York, we rallied behind one message: keeping our students and educators safe.

At that time, we had zero cases in Mendocino County, but our superintendent wisely kept campus closed, as his "biggest concern ... [was] the health of our adult staff," emphasizing "the impact from the virus can be harsh and we have a small number of substitutes available."

Rising to the challenge, teachers put in incredible effort learning new methods to keep students learning, engaged, and nurtured throughout the crisis learning period, all the while longing for a return to pre-COVID schooling.

However as much we wish otherwise, returning to campus this fall will not remotely resemble pre-COVID schooling, nor will it approach the same level of learning and engagement except with the help of technology. Instead of a "normal" school day, it will be masked, socially distanced learning, with daily struggles to sustain the most basic precautions for dealing with an airborne virus.

Introducing a complex regimen of new rules, practices, and environmental instructions would be of questionable effectiveness, even if followed perfectly; furthermore, it will take the focus away from content learning and skill building. Instead of dynamic group work and project-based learning, classes will be conducted in lecture or call-and-response format; we know this is not how students learn.

While our teachers are prepared and eager to implement new technologies in their classrooms to keep the learning collaborative and student-centered, how much better to do this virtually, if an in-person class would already be relying on virtual learning methods?

Our 1,800 students go home to nearly 1,000 different families, making up over a third of households in the areas of Willits and Brooktrails alone. We are seeing a rise in positive cases in Mendocino County, from 33 cases after the first eight weeks of school closure, to 146 cases 10 weeks later, and new cases rising daily.

How many cases will we be at when school reconvenes in another five weeks? How many more five weeks into the school year? To bring back any number of students to campus would mean risking first-hand exposure to a third of our community, and second-hand exposure to the rest, essentially negating the many months spent sheltering in place trying to reduce our risk.

Surely this is why the CDC called in-person classes the "highest risk" scenario for schools. The illness of a student, staff, or family member as a result of a return to school would have lasting deleterious effects on the mental health of any student traced to be the vector; the death of a teacher, student or family member would certainly wreck us to the core as a school and a community for a long time to come.

With hours of reaching out to our members through phone, surveys, and online discussion, the WTA is confident that our teachers are united in support of a return to virtual schooling this fall, until our county sees a decline in new cases over a 14-day period, and fewer than nine cases in a 14 day period, as recommended by current public health guidelines.

As indoor business operations shut down around California this week once again, at the recognition that an hour inside a room with 10 or 20 people risks an overloaded healthcare system in the not too distant future, how can we send children to spend upwards of five hours of their day in the company of 15 to 45 students from other families with their own networks of socializing, work and exposure to the virus?

Our rural hospitals "...run with what we absolutely have to have to survive," according to Howard and Ukiah Valley Hospital president Jason Wells, and are absolutely "not prepared for surges" from increasing COVID cases.

Our county's first death took place out of county precisely because of this deficit in critical care: We depend on Sonoma and Bay Area hospitals which at the moment are at capacity and have already caused those school districts to return to school virtually this fall.

Before March, no board member could have anticipated the difficult decisions you would be making in just a short amount of time; similarly, the harm of reopening schools this fall may be difficult to fathom before it hits us all. We urge you to first, do no harm, and second, allow for the best method available for student-centered learning, which is to opt for a virtual return to school in the fall.

Thank you for including our voices among the many other messages you are hearing right now. Navigating the pressures of state and federal funding, CDC guidance from those with expertise in this global pandemic, and the reality of escalating cases and inadequate medical system capacity in our county, we are certain that nothing will be of higher priority than the health and safety of your teachers, friends, neighbors, and especially the children and families of our schools.

We wish you clear thinking and a sense of accountability as you follow your conscience in this matter, knowing that the fate of many are entrusted to the decision-making power of five people.

– *Willits Teachers Association, July 15, 2020*

Willits Senior Center Lunch

Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Meals

The Willits Senior Center is continuing to provide drive-thru, walk-up and delivered meals, now that inside dining has been shut down again by the state. Call 459-6826 for more info.

Drive-thru and walk-up meals are still available 12 to 1 pm, Monday through Friday. Pickup is outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. All Senior Center meals are currently \$5.

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, July 16: BBQ Chicken

Friday, July 17: Hot dogs

Monday, July 20: Ground Beef Tacos

Tuesday, July 21: Chili Mac

Wednesday, July 22: Pulled Pork Sandwich

Thursday, July 23: Baked Ham

Friday, July 24: Asian Chicken Wrap

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



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.

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Willits Weekly

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Above, from left: Eli Mosher secures the steam tractor on the flatbed. The moving crew rests victoriously; from left: William England, Joe Smith, Bruce Patterson, Eli Mosher, Beda Garman and Troy James. Roots President Troy James operates the Gehl that was utilized to move the Best steam tractor.

Far left: The steam tractor is finally seated in place on the flatbed trailer.

At left: Beda Garman helps to line up the machinery.

Below: Beda Garman drives the Best steam tractor across town to Baldo Locomotive Works.

Photos by Mathew Caine

Preserving the Past

Roots of Motive Power moves 15-ton steam tractor across town for restoration

The crew from Roots of Motive Power loves to get their hands, hair and clothing full of

Mathew Caine

Features Writer
mathew@willitsweekly.com

grease, soot and rust, and a mixture of other materials that most people call "dirt," while tinkering about with the restoration of bulky, powerful and historical relics of the glory days of steam-driven technology. Wednesday nights have been designated as the time

when they get together at Baldo Locomotive Works and bring these behemoths back from the brink of extinction.

They spend their time assessing the machines' viability, finding the flaws, and setting about to machine the parts that need replacing, rebuilding, patching or painting. Their goal is to make the machines run again in the manner in which they were originally designed or to create a teachable piece for inclusion into the Roots Engine House Museum.

Since 1982, Roots of Motive Power, "a loosely organized group of friends in the timber industry who shared a love of local history and the antique machinery that shaped it," per their Facebook page, has been tinkering, playing with, restoring, and exhibiting these dynamic relics. The machines represent a time in California history when steam was the main source of powering the

Read the rest of

Roots

Over on Page 6

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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

9			7	5				3
	3				6		5	2
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PUZZLE
ANSWERS
ON
PAGE 9

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!

ITALIAN MENU WORD SEARCH

A	R	D	C	B	S	A	D	R	U	I	T	O	O	B	L	N	B	E	D
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B	E	N	L	A	N	E	P	N	T	N	O	C	M	L	E	U	M	E	I
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ANTIPASTI	CANNELLONI	ORZO	RAVIOLI
ARANCINI	CAPONATA	PANCETTA	RISOTTO
ARRABBIATA	CARBONARA	PANE	SALAMI
BRACIOLE	FARFALLE	PASTA	SARDE
BRANZINO	GNOCCHI	PESCE	SCAMPI
BRUSCHETTA	LINGUINE	PESTO	TORTELLONI
CACCIATORE	MARINARA	PIZZAIOLA	VITELLO
CALAMARI	MINSTRONE	PROSCIUTTO	ZITI
CALZONE	MOZZARELLA	RAGU	ZUPPE

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CLUES ACROSS

- Sound unit
- Trim by cutting
- Small buffalo
- Ancient manuscript
- Look angry or sullen
- Glum
- Northern Zambia peoples
- Central
- Collector of birds' eggs
- Misbehavior
- Top of the line
- Political action committee
- Have already done
- Al Bundy's wife
- Entertainment channel
- Holiday (informal)
- The common gibbon
- Legendary actress
- Seasoned sausages

- Bluish greens
- Ridiculed
- Three-dimensional arrangement
- Emerged
- Type of protein
- Denmark natives
- Leak slowly through
- Expression of sorrow or pity
- Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- Artistic dancing
- Plenty
- Act leisurely
- Serve as a warning
- Admired lovingly
- Leftover oil from distillation process
- Company officer
- Egyptian unit of capacity

- One transmits information
- Middle layer of an embryo
- Form of 'to be'
- Cairo Regional Airport
- Partner to cheese
- Sample
- A shirt may have none
- Public gatherings
- Disallow
- Overnight suitcases
- French river
- Where boats dock
- Top of a pot
- Type of drug
- City along the Rhine
- Animal disease
- They go in martinis
- A way to break away
- Intermediate ecological stage
- Baby term for father

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

July 6 to July 12

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled **183 incidents** in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

July 6

9:01 am: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 1400 of South Main Street and issued a warning.

9:33 am: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 800 block of Railroad Avenue and issued a warning.

10:19 am: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

4:53 pm: Officers responded to a report of a sexual assault in the 100 block of East Commercial Street.

8:22 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of School Street.

July 7

1:24 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of School Street.

8:32 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of South Main Street.

9:40 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

12:10 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

6:01 pm: CLEARWATER, Samaya Nicole (36) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of South Main Street. She was arrested pursuant to 243 (B) PC (Battery on a Peace Officer), 148 (A) PC (Resisting Arrest), 647 (F) PC (Public Intoxication), 1203.2 PC (Violation of Probation), on felony charges of threat of injury made to an officer in performance of their duties, and on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct (alcohol).

10:42 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

The rest of PG&E From Page 1

On July 7, Deputy CEO Darcie Antle told the supervisors the county had spent roughly \$12 million on its response to the pandemic. In addition, county Auditor Lloyd Weer has estimated that county revenues would be down about \$2 million for fiscal 2019-20, and the same amount for fiscal 2020-21, meaning that, at this point, the county looks to be down about \$16 million as a result of the virus.

On July 14, Antle told the supervisors the county will likely receive \$8.9 million from the federal government's CARES program. Antle also predicted the county will receive \$4 million from the State of California's realignment backfill program. In addition, the county is in a position to receive more than a million dollars from FEMA.

Supes approve Redwood contract

The board approved a six-month contract extension with its mental health "administrative services organization," Redwood Quality Management Company, on Tuesday. RQMC has been providing mental health services for the county for children, since 2016, and for both adults and children, since 2017.

The contract was somewhat confusing. At first glance, compensation went from \$18.9 million to \$27.7 million. But on second glance, it was a year-and-a-half retroactive contract, going from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020.

Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director Jenine Miller told the supervisors the

The rest of Schools From Page 1

we will need to make building-specific plans for situations that may occur. Our goal is to provide the safest environment we can and give parents options. If we had to start tomorrow, our data is trending the wrong way and the guidelines are locking down more not less, so we would be on home instruction."

Westerburg also invited those interested in giving information to board members about the issue to send comments via

county is preparing a request for proposals for some organization (possibly, but not necessarily RQMC) to act as administrative services organization for the county's mental health services. That RFP has been written and due to be released in the next couple of weeks. Miller said the contract which the supervisors approved included a six-month extension of contracted services, so that the county would have a mental health provider over the upcoming period, when it is trying to secure a provider for the next contract period.

Miller said the extension period took into consideration the results of budget cuts made by the State of California, reflecting the hit that the state has taken from COVID-19. She said the contract reflected a 5 percent cut to payments for medical services, a 15 percent cut to administration costs, and a 15 percent cut to Mental Health Services Act programs.

Cannabis ad hocs terminated

During the July 14 meeting, the board voted unanimously to terminate all three of its cannabis ad hoc committees. Gone are the cannabis cultivation ad hoc (John Haschak), the economic development cannabis ad hoc (Dan Gjerde and Ted Williams) and the regional strategy ad hoc (Haschak and Williams.)

The board deferred creation of a single cannabis ad hoc until some future date, perhaps as early as July 21, maybe on August 4, and almost certainly before September 1.

markwesterburg@willitsunified.com.

The Zoom meeting can be joined by clicking on the link on the first page of the agenda. The agenda is available at www.willitsunified.com. On the home page, go to explore, school board, board agendas, then current agenda.

The meeting can also be streamed on the YouTube channel of the "Willits Unified School District."



Photos by Mathew Caine

Above, left: The old signs should be coming down soon on the southern approach. Above, right: The old wooden bridge up Sherwood Road still stands for now. At left: As seen from First Gate, the new bridge is open to vehicles. Below: The wooden roadbed of the old Rows Creek Bridge, built in 1965.

Sherwood Bridge

Rows Creek crossing gets much-needed upgrade to two-lane concrete structure

Nothing manmade lasts forever. Rustic structures, although beautiful to behold and reminiscent of earlier days, do not always function optimally in the present. There is always a balance to be struck between what residents are used to and what is useable. Progress, at times, comes at an aesthetic cost. Such is the case of the Rows Creek Bridge on Sherwood Road, approximately 5.6 miles northwest of Willits, just before First Gate.

Five years ago, a proposal was made to replace the vintage 1965, 70-foot-by-20-foot wooden one-lane bridge with a more substantial concrete structure. Construction of the new 100-foot-by-33.5-foot bridge that allows for two-way traffic is almost complete and is functionally allowing vehicles to traverse.

In addition to replacing the old bridge, which has yet to be dismantled, the roadway is being straightened to "avoid the sharp reversing curves located on either end of the bridge and increase

the roadway approach curve radius," according to the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study published in 2015 (a 317-page report). Although the new bridge is in use, work remains to be done on the roadway.

As is the case with any county, state or federal project, several years of environmental impact studies and agency approvals were required prior to the start of construction, including from the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Transportation, and the Mendocino County Planning Department.

Additionally, several studies were required: an Archeological Survey Report, Natural Environment Study, Hydrology and Design Hydraulic Study, Wetland Delineation Report, Initial Site Assessment, Draft Foundation Report, and Farmland Impact Assessment Technical Memorandum.

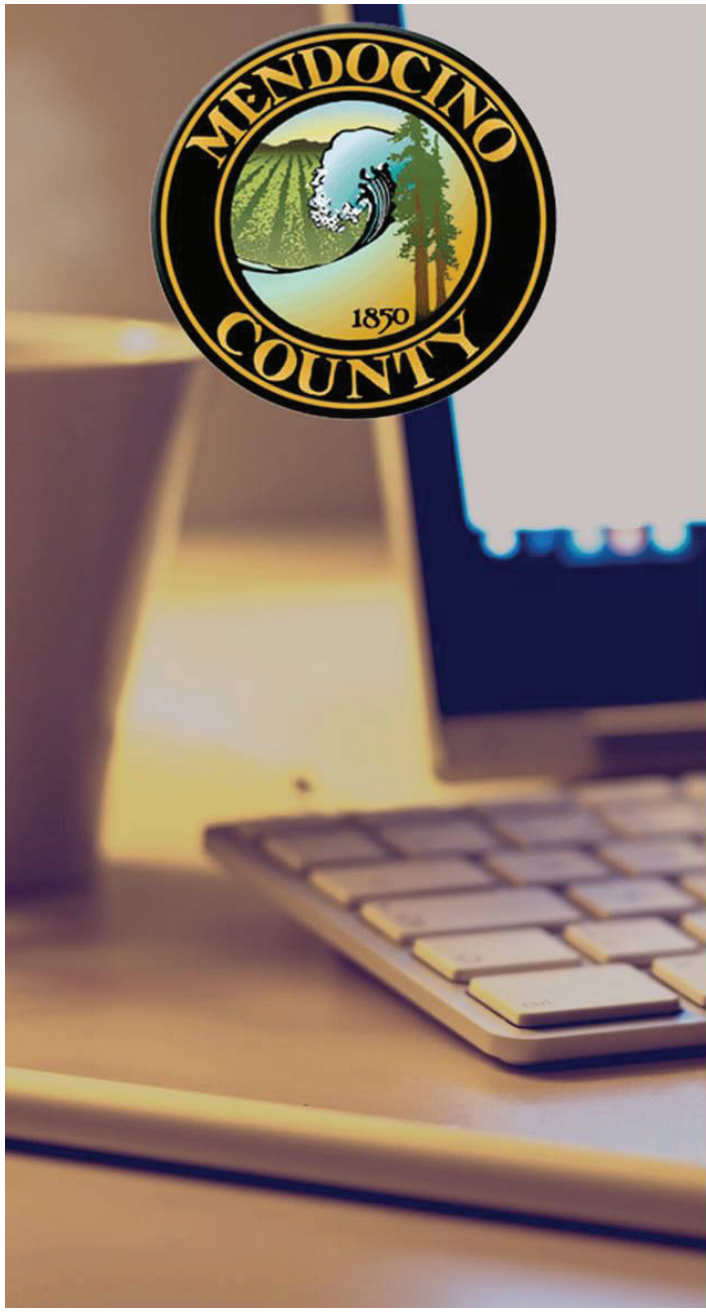
Once all the requirements were satisfied, the federal government was able to fund almost all of the construction costs of an estimated \$2.4 million (2015 estimate), less than the cost of retrofitting the bridge, which had been determined to be "not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places."

Per the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, the bridge, "signed as a single-lane bridge, Bridge 10C-0123 no longer meets the safety and functional needs of the public who use Sherwood Road." The federal program encompasses about 130 such structures in Mendocino County, in various stages of study or construction.

The project, led by the Mendocino County Department of Transportation, is an example of the complexities involved in a seemingly simple construction, one that replaces the familiar, if not always entirely viable, rustic original, with a more modern, longer-lasting version. It's a trade-off of the aesthetic, upgraded to the higher-function. It is a difficult but sometimes necessary balance.



At left: Not rustic but still fairly attractive and more permanent. Above: The new Rows Creek Bridge is open, although some roadwork is still needed.



Mendocino County
Weekly Update
on COVID-19

Friday, July 17, 2020
at 5 PM

This week's COVID-19 Update will be a Town Hall Meeting with Congressman Jared Huffman, Senator Mike McGuire, Assemblymember Jim Wood and Health Officer Dr. Noemi Doohan.

It will be streamed live on Congressman Huffman's Facebook Page at facebook.com/RepHuffman

Mendocino County will also be streaming this meeting on Facebook and YouTube.

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Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m.
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At right: Roots President Troy James stands next to the massive wheel of the Best steam tractor.

Far right: The Best steam tractor is hauled on the flatbed in the first try.

At right, below: Jelani Hall, Troy James, Joe Smith and Alexis England take a moment after moving the Estep marine engine into place in the Roots Engine House.

Photos by Mathew Caine

The rest of Roots

From Page 3

machinery that enabled the locomotive and logging industries that built the cities and businesses of the past.

Among the founders are Chris Baldo, current trainmaster and past president, Gene Roediger, Jimmy Yokum and Ken Smith. Today, they maintain a plethora of steam donkeys, locomotives, steam shovels, and other tools of the steam era.

Their current projects are the restoration of an historic dining car and a Best steam tractor, a 15-ton logging monster built in 1903 that was capable of pulling 40 tons of logs across a flat field with its 110-horsepower engine.

In order to have the "Wednesday Nighters" restore the Best to its full capacity and beauty, it had to be relocated from Roots of Motive Power, in its location next to the County Museum, to Baldo Locomotive Works at Blosser Lane and Robert Drive.

As the engine is not currently functional, a crew of hearty Roots members – including President Troy James, Eli Mosher, Joe Smith, William England, and Bruce Patterson, with the help of Boda Garman and his flatbed – pulled, pushed, strained and cajoled the piece of machinery up onto the flatbed.

Once that was done, they discovered that in order to attach the cab to the flatbed trailer, they would have to take the Best back off the flatbed and turn the trailer around so that the steam tractor would sit on it in the other direction. Finally, with much dexterity, determination and experience, they were able to move it across town and unload it at the BLW.

Not to quit there, the crew, a couple days later, moved their latest finished project, a huge four-cylinder Estep marine engine back to the Engine House Museum, with the help of Kevin Bouthillier's crane and flatbed and Willits Redwoods' two large forklifts. It was an energetic but ultimately rewarding week.

On the Best steam tractor, the walls of the old boiler have been weakened over years of use, necessitating a new one be built from scratch. It is estimated to be a two-year project to completely restore it, but when finished, the crew of Roots will be able to operate and demonstrate it in the yard to delight and educate the children and adults of Willits.

The Best was obtained from the Oakland Museum



Above: Troy James and Boda Garman work to secure the tractor to the hauler. Below: The Gehl, operated by Troy James, hauls the Best steam tractor into position.



Far left: The Estep four-cylinder engine is in its new home in the Roots Engine House.

At left: Joe Smith checks the position of the Best steam tractor after it is moved to Baldo Locomotive Works, where it will be restored.

At left: The Best steam tractor, a 15-ton machine, is capable of hauling 40 tons of logs.

Photos by Mathew Caine



pho•tog•ra•phress [uh-tog-ruh-friss]

noun: Maureen Moore: a person who creates fabulous photo moments

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Congrats Odalys Lara-Lopez

The Willits Chamber of Commerce is proud to congratulate Odalys Lara-Lopez as the recipient of the first annual Willits Chamber of Commerce Lynn Kennelly Memorial Scholarship.

"We are especially proud as Lara-Lopez is the first to receive the Lynn Kennelly Memorial Scholarship honoring our late executive director, a very special Willits lady who was so energetic for presenting our scholarships to accomplished and deserving Willits graduates," said Chamber Director Ron Moorhead.

Lara-Lopez is pursuing a career in nursing while attending Mendocino College in Ukiah.

The Willits Chamber of Commerce could not be prouder to present her with our 2020 Lynn Kennelly Memorial Scholarship.

– Willits Chamber of Commerce



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Willits Weekly | July 16, 2020 Phone: 707-459-2633, 707-972-7047 Email: willitsweekly@gmail.com Mail: P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490 Pg. 7



Art Fix

Willits Center for the Arts to open doors July 31 for gallery viewing on weekends

Submitted by Willits Center for the Arts

The Willits Center for the Arts will open its doors on Friday, July 31. All safety procedures will be implemented. You will be greeted with hand sanitizer. Only six people in the galleries at one time, and masks are mandatory. No formal opening will take place. We are simply opening the doors on weekends for you to get an art fix.

It will be five months since we have been open. We have maintained the building and bills throughout the pandemic with the help of generous citizens from Willits and the surrounding area. We will also offer rental space for the Great Room on a limited basis.

The first show to open since the craziness began will feature ceramics by Ileya Stewart and paintings by Peter Onstad. These two talented Willits artists promise both beautiful and thoughtful creations. As mentioned, there will be no formal opening. The doors will be open 11 am to 5 pm, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The Willits Photography Club will be showing new work in the upstairs Great Room. This collection of art photographers is something you don't want to miss.

To celebrate your art center's 20th anniversary, an online art auction will be held. More about this as we approach October, when the auction will take place.

Please join us on weekends to stroll through the galleries and see what imagination can create.

The Willits Center for the Arts, at 71 East Commercial Street, can be reached at 459-1726. For more information, visit www.willitscenterforthearts.org.

At top, from left: An intricate sculpture by ceramicist Ileya Stewart. This oil painting by Peter Onstad is titled "The Magpie." "Self Portrait" by Peter Onstad can be viewed Friday, Saturday or Sunday at the Willits Center for the Arts starting July 31.

Above, at left: "Untitled" by Bay Area abstract expressionist Peter Onstad.

Below: Sculpted ceramic work by Ileya Stewart will be on display at the WCA this August, including this heart-shaped vase.

At bottom: A delicate white flower envelops this custom ceramic vase by Ileya Stewart.



The rest of Cases

From Page 1

week. CEO Carmel Angelo also told supervisors at the July 14 meeting she believes the county is heading toward being placed on the statewide COVID watch list, which will mean additional restrictions.

On Monday, California Governor Gavin Newsom ordered that many freedoms recently granted to businesses with the loosening of the COVID health orders be rescinded. As a result, all over the state, indoor dining at restaurants and indoor tasting at wine tasting rooms is forbidden. Bars, pubs, movie theaters, zoos, museums and cardrooms are closed. Patio dining and take-out are still allowed for restaurants, and outdoor tasting is still allowed for wineries and tasting rooms.

In Mendocino County, at least, for the present, some freedoms are still allowed here that are not being allowed in other counties where the impact of the pandemic is more pronounced. In this county, for the time being, indoor worship services are still allowed, gyms and fitness centers are still allowed to be open, and some personal services, such as nail salons, hair salons and barbershops, are still allowed to operate.

Mendocino County Public Information Officer Sarah Dukett said if the county gets put in the watch list, that those relaxed restrictions would be removed. There will be no indoor worship services, gyms and fitness centers would be closed, as would nail salons, hair salons and barbershops.

Dukett said Wednesday morning that Interim Public Health Officer Noemi Doohan, MD was currently drafting a new public health order that would reflect Mendocino County's status if the county is placed on the watch list.

Case numbers

As of press deadline on Wednesday the COVID-19 data dashboard had just been posted. According to that July 15 update, the county has had a total of 165 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of that total, 98 cases had recovered; 60 were in isolation; 7 COVID-19 patients were in local hospitals, at least 3 at Adventist Health Howard Memorial, but none were in intensive care units; and 1 death from COVID-19 in Mendocino County has now officially been reported.

The demographic information on the dashboard reports that 97 of the 165 cases are among people of Hispanic descent; 33 among Caucasians; 13 among American Indians; 15 decline to report their ethnicity; and 7 are "other."

Looking at the disease from a regional perspective, 116 cases are in the Ukiah valley; 27 are from the north county; 11 are from the north coast; 9 are from the south county and 2 are from the south coast.

Looking at the data updates over the last week, in the north county region, cases have grown by 8 over the past five days. On July 10 there were 19 cases from the north county. On July 13, there were still 19 cases. But on July 15 there were 27 cases from the north county.

Looking at the disease as broken up into age cohorts: 5 cases have been among people between the ages of 0 and 5; 10 cases between ages of 6 and 12; 17 people between the ages of 13 and 18; 58 people between the ages of 19 and 34; 37 people between the ages of 35 and 49; 21 people between the ages of 50 and 64; and 17 people who are 65 or older.

There have been a total of 13,360 tests done in this county. As of Wednesday evening, the results of almost exactly a tenth of those tests, or 1,363 tests, were still pending.

Heading for the watch list?

COVID cases in Mendocino County have been increasing over the past three weeks, and more rapidly over the

past five days. On Tuesday, when the county's COVID case total stood at 146 cases, Mendocino County Departmental Operations Center Manager Bekkie Emery said that the county had, over the previous three days, added 33 cases to its Friday total of 113, as it received confirmation of 11 new cases on Saturday, 8 cases on Sunday and 14 new cases on Monday. Eleven new cases were added on Tuesday, and 10 more on Wednesday.

During the July 14 board of supervisors meeting, Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams asked county CEO Carmel Angelo if the recent spike in cases meant that it was likely that state health officials would "shut down" the county.

Angelo did not answer Williams' question exactly, but she said: "I think, if our numbers continue as they are, which is over our attestation numbers as far as how many positives a day, and there appears to be a fragility to our health care delivery system, I believe we'll make the watch list, yes," Angelo said.

"We're headed that way. I think we all know that. The way the numbers are going, it doesn't really matter what we do – and we're doing everything we can – the numbers are increasing. We're headed for the watch list, yes," Angelo said.

Angelo said on Tuesday that a contract with a potential new, fulltime public health officer, a local physician, would be placed on the board of supervisors' agenda on July 21. Dukett said Wednesday that if the board votes to hire the new health officer, there would likely be a transition period between Doohan and the incoming person.

Currently, Doohan is limited by her new contract to working just 15 hours a week for Mendocino County. Her current contract with Mendocino County is through December 31, 2020. The contract states that, in the event that a new public health officer is hired by the county, Doohan would be available as a consultant.

During the Tuesday supervisors' meeting, Second District Supervisor John McCowen asked Operations Center Manager Emery what the main driver of the spike was. Emery said it was gatherings.

"We have had multiple cases that have come through from informal gatherings," Emery said. "There was a gathering on the Fourth of July that we received notification on yesterday, that had multiple people at it in attendance. It was reported as being in excess of 25 individuals in attendance. And the individual tested positive, and was tested on the fifth."

"It is a significant concern for us. We are monitoring, and trying to ensure that we are putting everyone in quarantine. The challenge we run into on these types of situations is, not everyone is available to share who was at these gatherings. They're gathering with ... they don't even know all of the names of.... It is a huge challenge for us in trying to contain the virus when people, in taking these steps, put other people at risk," Emery said.

Another challenge noted by Emery is the delay in getting test results back. As the disease has spread, and as testing has become more available in California, many of those tests are being sent to Quest Diagnostics in San Juan Capistrano. Emery said that Quest is being inundated with tests, and that it is now routinely taking them 10 days, and more, to return results to counties.

This delay in getting results makes it difficult to slow the spread of the disease, as the county cannot act to put people who have been contacts of those infected by the coronavirus in quarantine, until the county knows the test results of those who may have been infected.

The rest of Contract

From Page 1

supervisors Ted Williams and John Haschak voted against it.

As on the numerous occasions when it has come before the board of supervisors in the past, the question of whether to use Wildlife Services became an issue that brought forth strong statements from both proponents and opponents.

Proponents to the program characterized it in harshly negative terms. "Scientific research demonstrates that nonselective removal of non-offending animals can destabilize populations and lead to increased breeding and pup survival, and ultimately to increased conflicts," said Project Coyote Executive Director Camilla Fox in her testimony before the board of supervisors.

"The use of strangulation neck snares and other indiscriminate and cruel devices frequently employed by Wildlife Services is morally and ethically indefensible, as well as being completely unnecessary when more effective nonlethal methods and models exist," she said.

Carol Misseldine, an official with the Washington, D.C. office of the Humane Society of the United States, referenced a Power Point presentation that was given to the supervisors during the board meeting. It was given by USDA California North District Manager Derek Milsaps, and it painted the work done by Wildlife Services in a positive light.

Misseldine pointed out that Milsaps' presentation highlighted the fact that Wildlife Services no longer uses "some of the crudest killing methods" in California, "but they only stopped using these methods in California because they have been forced to by law," Misseldine said.

"Wildlife Services continues to use these sadistic methods in other areas of the country. Public dollars should not be used to support this immoral and secretive agency," she said.

Willits resident Paul Truette, who had been on the Mendocino County Fish and Game Commission for 10 years, said that most of the statements made by opponents to Wildlife Services were untrue.

"I've heard arguments about gruesome exercise and anti-science, sadism, pain and suffering, slaughtering of apex predators, and indiscriminate killing," Truette said. "I'm not really sure what that's all about, because Wildlife Services just got done with a fantastic presentation, that USDA is 95 percent non-lethal. So where is the data [that shows that] this practice of lethality happens?"

"I'm looking at the data that we have fundamentally been looking at from the opponents to Wildlife Services, from Project Coyote and the other groups: They're not

The rest of Check up

From Page 1

offenders who are currently on Mendocino County Court ordered probation or California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation parole.

During the compliance checks, starting at 8 am on that Monday, seven registered sex offenders were contacted in both the Ukiah Valley and the 24000 block of North Highway 101 in Willits. The registered sex offenders were checked for compliance to confirm their place of residence and to ensure they were in compliance with their court-ordered probation or CDCR parole conditions.

Of the seven registered sex offenders checked, two were determined to be out of compliance.

Brian Hurtado was identified as being on CDCR parole and as a registered sex offender. He was contacted in the 24000 block of North Highway 101 in Willits, and during the contact, suspected methamphetamine was found in his possession (a violation of 11377 of the Health and Safety Code).

Additional items were located in his possession, which were determined to be a

based on facts. We have a CEQA document that says on page 110, that the professional who did this study said that the lethal usage of this was less than significant. So I'm asking, where are the facts of this lethal program?" Truette asked.

Mendocino County Farm Bureau Executive Director Devon Jones attempted to shed some light on the matter when she pointed out that information found on the California Fish and Wildlife website indicated how many depredation permits for various wildlife had been issued over the past few years.

Jones said that in 2017, 21 permits for black bears had been issued, and 12 bears had been killed. In 2018, six permits for black bears had been issued, and one bear was killed.

In 2018, 13 permits for mountain lions had been issued, and four lions were killed. In 2019, 10 permits to kill a mountain lion were issued, and four lions were killed. Jones said that for the two years including 2016 and 2017, 421 wild pigs were killed in Mendocino County.

Prior to taking action on Tuesday, the board of supervisors last took action on the Wildlife Services question on December 17, 2019, when it approved the environmental impact report for the Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program and directed the then-ag commissioner to prepare a 5-year contract with Wildlife Services.

Then Project Coyote and the Mendocino Non-Lethal Alliance sued Mendocino County, claiming that the EIR was fundamentally deficient.

When asked on Wednesday if something had happened behind closed doors to allow the county to move forward, Second District Supervisor John McCowen said he believed that the Project Coyote / Non-Lethal Alliance lawsuit against the county was still pending. "As far as I am aware, I am not aware that anything [regarding that lawsuit] is moving forward," McCowen said.

Laytonville resident Jon Spitz said the groups' lawsuit against the county was indeed still pending, but that COVID-19 had slowed the courts down. "It's a civil suit," said Spitz. "We're not gonna be in court until December."

Asked what he thought about Wildlife Service's claims that they are 95 percent non-lethal, Spitz was dismissive. "It's a lie," he said. "Their kill rate is more like 50 percent. And this is something that the Wildlife Services guy [Milsaps] said in his presentation. Because if they do trap the animal, what can they do? They can't transport the animal. That's against state law and it should be. So, their first option is to kill the animal because it's easy for them to do it. And this is not even to talk about the suffering of the animal, which for me is the main thing," Spitz said.

suspected violation of his CDCR parole terms and conditions. Based on the information, Hurtado was arrested for the possession of methamphetamine and a parole hold was issued.

Hurtado was booked into the Mendocino County Jail for the listed violations, where he was to be held in lieu of \$75,000 bail.

Personnel also conducted a compliance check of a 40-year-old male in the 24000 block of North Highway 101 in Willits, who was identified as being on CDCR parole and being a registered sex offender.

During the contact it was believed the 40-year-old male was in violation of his CDCR parole terms and conditions. At this time, this person remains out of custody as further investigations are needed.

At the conclusion of the further investigations into the possible parole term violation, a report will be forwarded to the Mendocino County District Attorney's Office and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for review and consideration of charges.

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Tom Schott

Mendocino County's legendary forester, Thomas E. Schott, died on July 4, 2020 in Willits, after living with esophageal cancer for six years. He was 68.

He was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, but spent most of his early years in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He graduated cum laude from the University of Minnesota's College of Forestry in March 1974.

Tom worked for four different federal agencies: U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Tom moved to Mendocino County, California in 1974. He soon met his wife of 41 years, Shirley Schott, who survives him. He is also survived by two sons, a granddaughter, a sister, a brother, aunts, numerous cousins, a niece and two nephews.

Tom worked as a soil conservationist and lead for the Tomki Watershed Project under the employment of Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD). Tom spent many years working for NRCS as an area forester and District Conservationist.

He received awards from the EPA and USDA for his watershed restoration work and is well known by landowners throughout Mendocino, Lake and Sonoma Counties.

In 2004, Tom transferred within NRCS, to Riverside, California, where he was the Emergency Watershed Protection Coordinator of the multimillion-dollar, multi-year Southern California Watershed Restoration Project.

Tom retired in 2008 and returned to Mendocino County in 2011, working part-time as a forestry consultant and a forester for the MCRCD until January 2019.

For years he mentored new conservation employees. He was well-versed in all phases of local conservation issues. He was called "The Wizard", "Mr. Conservationist", and a "Steward of the Earth" because of his rich background and understanding of conservation problems and his abilities to explain complex issues clearly to land-owners, politicians and upcoming scientists. Current landowners still ask about Tom and rave about his knowledge and personal character.

Tom's colleagues and friends describe him as: trustworthy, intelligent, kind, optimistic, gentle, humorous, caring, and energetic. Everyone will miss his contagious laughter.

Beyond his forestry career, Tom was a wonderful family man while serving his community on the Board of Willits Community Services, acting in plays at the Willits Community Theater, and attending St. Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church. Tom and his family raised seven guide dog puppies over the years.

Due to the current pandemic, there will be no public ceremonies honoring Tom's life at this time. For anyone interested in making a donation in Tom's name: His favorite causes were the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, Willits Daily Bread, and Guide Dogs of the Desert.

"We have lost a great conservationist as well as a great human."



Comet Neowise shining over Willits.

Photo by Matt Holzhauer

Comet Neowise

Thanks to Willits photographer Matt Holzhauer for this local photo of the beautiful Comet Neowise.

"The photo was taken at approximately 4:45 am on July 7, at the northern end of the Willits bypass," Holzhauer said. "The comet should no longer be visible in the mornings but is now visible one hour after sunset. To see it, I recommend looking due north and bring binoculars. To the naked eye, it will look like a fuzzy ball of white light with a tail expanding upward.

"Also, try to find a mountain-top location or a location with a clear line of sight to the northern horizon, as it's still pretty low in the sky."

Holzhauer also offers this advice: "For photographers using a DSLR, I recommend long exposures based upon the type of lens you're using and high ISO's, usually between 3600-5000 depending on your equipment!"

OBITUARY |

Laura Powell

Laura was born in Geneva, Illinois, on December 9, 1950, to parents Tim and Inez Coman. The family moved to California in 1958. Laura was a graduate of Homestead High School in Cupertino. She loved the woods and moved to Willits in the 1980s. Laura was generous, compassionate, and hard-working. She waitressed for many years before her retirement.

She passed away at her home in Willits on June 29, 2020, with her husband, Ken, and their children, Brian and Megan, by her side. Laura dearly loved her family. She also leaves her son Keith, her grandsons Spencer, Maddax and Donovan, and her siblings Terry and Cathy.

Laura met life's challenges with resourcefulness and a keen sense of humor. She will be missed by many friends and extended family. May she rest in peace.





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