

[illegible]**Thursday, July 22, 2021**

Read the rest of
Brooktrails
Over on Page 11

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Thanks to Team Rubicon

To the Editor:

Living in Brooktrails, I have spent thousands of dollars in an effort to clear and maintain my defensible space. After Snowmageddon, I had to start all over again. The majority of trees that fell onto my property, narrowly missing my house and truck, fell from the Brooktrails greenbelt. The cost of clean-up would be prohibitive.

Enter Team Rubicon, an international disaster relief non-profit that focuses on serving vulnerable and at-risk populations affected by disaster. Team Rubicon serves communities by mobilizing veterans to

continue their service by using their skills and experiences to help people recover from disasters.

Through the efforts of Mendocino County Fire Safe Council and Sherwood Firewise Communities, I was able to receive the services of Team Rubicon at no cost to me. The clearing of vegetation on and around my property by Team Rubicon has greatly reduced my stress level. I will be forever grateful to Team Rubicon, MCFSC, and SFC volunteers for helping me recover from the effects of Snowmageddon. Your service has been deeply appreciated!

Tracey Douglas, Brooktrails

Grange Pancake Breakfasts resume

Submitted by the Little Lake Grange

The Little Lake Grange is resuming its monthly Grange Pancake Breakfasts on Sunday, July 25, from 8 to 11 am. This weekend's breakfast is the first one since February last year!

"Join your friends at the Grange Breakfast! \$8 buys you a plate of the best "scratch" pancakes and local farm eggs to be found anywhere around.

Our tasty breakfast is a wonderful combination of comfort foods. Choose our

sourdough wholegrain, Hank's famous buttermilk pancakes, or gluten-free, plus Beeler's quality bacon, organic local farm fresh eggs, real butter, juice, and organic coffee or tea.

All for only \$8, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for children under 10.

We also can serve you extra sides of organic seasonal fruit for \$2 to \$3, or Amish organic maple syrup for \$1.

Little Lake Grange #670 is located at 291 School Street (2 blocks south of Commercial, 1 block west of Main Street).

Cannabis referendum deadline

Submitted by Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder-Elections Office

Mendocino County Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder, Registrar of Voters Katrina Bartolome, would like to update the public on deadlines for the local referendum petitions regarding recently adopted Chapter 22.18 of the Mendocino County Code, being circulated in our county.

Pursuant to Elections Code Section 9144, a petition protesting the adoption of an ordinance must be submitted to the county election official before the effective date of the ordinance.

The board of supervisors approved the ordinance adopting Chapter 22.18 of the Mendocino County Code on June 22, 2021. The ordinance will take effect 30 days after approval on July 23, 2021, 12:01 am.

Consequently, referendum petitions must be turned in to the Elections Office located at 501 Low Gap Road, Room 1020, Ukiah during business hours no later than 5 pm on July 22, 2021. All signatures for each petition must be filed at one time. No appointment is necessary to bring the petitions in.

Additionally, pursuant to Elections Code Section 103, if a voter signed a referendum petition and would like to withdraw their name from that petition, they must do so prior to the day the petition is filed with the elections official.

For additional information, please contact the Elections Office by calling 707-234-6819.

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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Willits Environmental Center sues county over cannabis facilities ordinance

Submitted by the Willits Environmental Center

On July 6, 2021, Attorney Rachel Doughty of Greenfire Law filed a lawsuit against Mendocino County in Mendocino County Superior Court on behalf of the Willits Environmental Center. The lawsuit challenges the legality of the recently passed amended cannabis facilities ordinance and the claim by the county that the cannabis facilities ordinance is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review because it couldn't possibly have any impacts on the environment.

"This amended cannabis facilities ordinance slipped through under most people's radar, while the public was concentrating on the new cannabis land use development ordinance," said David Drell, spokesman for the Willits Environmental Center.

The amended cannabis facilities ordinance has the potential to allow a whole suite of commercial cannabis tourist facilities and businesses at every cultivation site in the county by just paying for and receiving a business license from the county and complying with normal building code regulations. The applicant does not need to have a cultivation permit, but can get a facilities license with just an application under review by the county.

"Every rural neighborhood could find themselves faced with farm tours, cannabis lodging, non-storefront retail

sales, and farmers markets where cultivation sites exist in the county," Drell said.

Paired with the increased number of cultivation sites under the just-passed cannabis land use development ordinance (now subject to two potential referendums), these additional unexamined cannabis-related impacts on every neighborhood where commercial cannabis is grown could turn these rural residential neighborhoods into cannabis commercial zones.

"This amended cannabis facilities ordinance is a further assault on the county in general but

especially the non-cannabis-growing neighborhoods," Drell said. "The impacts of this commercial development with regard to things like water, wildlife, waste disposal, noise, traffic, and fire danger need to be studied with an environmental impact report [EIR] and the impacts need to be identified and mitigated to reduce the impacts to a level of insignificance.

"For the county to claim, based on no analysis, that there will be no impacts from this potential proliferation of rural commercial cannabis activities, and is therefore exempt from CEQA review doesn't make sense and is a slap in the face to the majority of county residents who were not asked if they wanted their neighborhoods turned into commercial cannabis business districts," concluded Drell.

Regional health officers urge residents to get vaccinated

Submitted by the Rural Association of Northern California Health Officers

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, while the unvaccinated are highly vulnerable to the Delta variant, declares the Rural Association of Northern California Health Officers. There's no more need to wait and see.

As the second summer of the pandemic unfolds, our region faces unique concerns. Some of our counties have among the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the state. Our region has consistently shown a lower rate of COVID-19 antibodies, meaning more residents are susceptible to the virus. In sum: we are vulnerable. We are entering a summer season that will be affected by the more contagious and more threatening Delta variant. And it is summer, with tourism in full force – both between counties in our region and travelers from all over the world.

A wide range of views about the virus and the pandemic itself exist in our region. The science about the COVID-19 pandemic has become much clearer over time. Despite this increase in knowledge, there are some strongly held beliefs about COVID-19 that have not changed. As your regional health officials, we view that as extremely concerning and would like to weigh in on some common vaccine myths. We no longer need to wait and see, because the science and the evidence are clear that these vaccines are safe, effective, and are protecting those who have been vaccinated.

Myth #1: "I have had the virus, so I won't get it again."

Reinfection is well documented. Infection with the virus creates an immune response for most people, but the response is not consistent from person to person. Some people have to get very sick to get a strong immune response, and some people have almost no symptoms when they are ill. The reality is that we cannot reliably predict who will mount a good immune response from natural infection.

Additionally, many people are assuming that they have had the virus already. But, if you did not get a confirmed test for the virus, research shows you have almost an 80% chance of not having had COVID-19 when you had COVID-like symptoms. The immune response to vaccination is much more safe, predictable, reliable, and shown to create more protective antibodies than infection alone.

Bottom line: The COVID-19 vaccines result in high levels of protection, while immunity from past infection is unpredictable.

Myth #2: "Getting the vaccine is worse than getting COVID-19. Plus, I'm young and healthy."

The vaccine causes a sore arm in most people. Some get other minor aches or feel like they have the "flu." These symptoms last a few days at the most and are thought to represent the reaction of our immune systems. If you are vaccinated, you might have some short-term symptoms, but there is a greater chance you won't end up in the hospital and you won't die from the virus. With rare exceptions, our local data show that the only people getting seriously ill from COVID-19 are the unvaccinated. State and international data is even more compelling with larger numbers to study.

Though quite rare, there have been cases of inflammation of the heart (myocarditis) and/or the lining around the heart (pericarditis) with Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, mostly in young men in their late teens and twenties. Most cases have been brief and self-limited, recovering on their own or with simple treatments like anti-inflammatories, with rare cases requiring hospitalization. In comparison, COVID-19 infection can and does cause severe myocarditis and pericarditis with the most striking cases associated with MIS-C (Multisystem Inflammatory

Syndrome in Children) and MIS-A (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults). There have been over 4,000 cases of this condition reported, mostly in the 12-20 year old age group, with 1-2% resulting in death. COVID-19 can and does kill children and young adults – and COVID-19 is now ranked as the 10th leading cause of death among children in our country.

Bottom line: COVID-19 vaccination is much safer, effective and predictable than the infection, regardless of your age.

Myth #3: "The vaccine is experimental – it was rushed into use."

The vaccines are relatively new technology, but hardly experimental. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine uses vector or "carrier" technology that has been studied and tested previously in a number of vaccines for almost 20 years, including Zika virus, influenza viruses, respiratory syncytial virus, HIV, malaria, and most recently, Ebola virus. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use messenger RNA technology (mRNA). The basic science around this has been studied for nearly a quarter of a century, with the biggest breakthrough discovered in 2005. The mRNA technology has been developed and studied for Zika virus, cytomegalovirus, rabies and influenza. Was production rushed – yes! Production drew on existing technology and was pre-paid so manufacturers were willing to build their facilities before knowing if the vaccine would be approved. A historic success!

Bottom line: The science used to create COVID-19 vaccines is decades old, is not experimental, and hundreds of millions of people who've received the vaccine are proof it is safe and effective.

Myth #4: "The vaccine will make me sterile."

There is no data to support this. Sperm counts in males have been reported to be normal both before and after vaccination. Women have delivered healthy babies after vaccination, even becoming pregnant between doses during trials. Birth outcomes are closely monitored, and to date there have been no unusual problems reported. In fact, during phase 3 studies of Pfizer's and Moderna's mRNA vaccines, 36 women became pregnant, half in the vaccine group and half in the placebo group with no difference in birth outcomes.

The fertility myth stems from the theory that antibodies against the coronavirus spike protein might attack proteins in placentas and sperm. This is not true. The proteins are immunologically distinct. Saying they are the same would be the equivalent of saying that two people share the same Social Security number because both contain the number six.

Bottom line: COVID-19 vaccines do not reduce fertility.

Myth #5: "The vaccine will mess around with my DNA. Somebody is trying to rewrite our genetic code."

There is not even a chance that this is the case. mRNA is a temporary copy of the information encoded in DNA molecules (in the nucleus) and then sent out from the cell nucleus to the cell machinery that makes proteins. The mRNA vaccine completely bypasses the nucleus, providing a template for the cell machinery, like a blueprint on a construction project. It is a one-way process, and when the mRNA is done with its protein building work, it is digested and recycled. It does not "rewrite" code in one's DNA.

Bottom line: COVID-19 vaccines can't change your DNA. Their only long-lasting effect is to protect you from COVID-19 infection in the future.

Myth #6: "We don't know what the long-term consequences of these vaccines are."

Read the rest of
Vaccinate Over on Page 4



Above, from left: Conductor Malakai Schindel informs the riders of the sights and history of the line. Mike Schlemmer and Jordan Reyes ride the Skunk Train with their dogs, Dante and Trixie. Young Cary March has a unique experience that will be remembered.

At left: Riders enjoy the beauty of the Mendocino County outdoors.

Below: The open-air car is the most popular place to ride, especially in the great weather.

At bottom, left: At Crowley, the sculpture of a bear who looks directly at the Wolf Tree is a selfie draw. At bottom, right: Many of the riders start the trip in the covered cars before moving to the open-air car later in the day.



All Aboard!

Lowered capacity on Skunk Train allows for more space to enjoy the beauty of Mendocino County's landscape

It doesn't smell like skunk anymore but the name perseveres in the local lore, and the lure of the trip through the beauty of the Mendocino County trees,

mountains and wildlife draws travelers from faraway places. The famous Skunk Train, a remnant of the early days of the logging industry which helped build the economy of the county in the 1800s and early 1900s, has become one of the must-see attractions of the area.

"We have operated on this line continuously, with almost 3 million hours of running time," Conductor Malakai Schindel told the riders over the PA system. "The open car is a converted 1956 Southern Pacific Freight Car. The concession car was built in 1923 and the rear coach was built in 1919. These coaches have been continuously operated for the last 100 years. We are rolling on tracks that were laid down in 1911."

With the COVID restrictions, only 77 people are allowed to ride the train, down from the normal capacity of approximately 120. This leaves plenty of room to roam the corridors of the rail cars, enjoy the concession stand, or take in the ever-changing landscape from the open-air car at the front of the train, right behind the engine.

Adults, kids, and some bewildered canines looked on in wonder and delight at the dizzying heights, the magnificent tall redwoods, and an occasional glimpse of the local wildlife, as the train snaked its way over the 1,700-foot summit and old trestle bridges, to the abandoned town of Crowley, and past the venerable ancient Wolf Tree.

"This is the only trip we're running out of Willits right now," explained Schindel. "It's a 16-mile round trip. We travel to the west side of the Willits valley. Then we enter the Noyo River Valley for a couple miles, traveling past some old-growth redwood trees and the old town site of Crowley which was abandoned in the 1930s.

"We see one of the oldest trees on the route at Crowley, the Wolf Tree," he informed. "The Wolf Tree is between 1,200 and 2,000 years old. It's considered one of the oldest trees in the forest. It's an old-growth redwood, a Sequoia sempervirens. It is unique in that it has been struck by lightning many, many times which has resulted in extremely odd-shaped branches on the tree."

At Crowley, which at one time, until the Great Depression, was a thriving town of approximately 1,500 people, the riders were allowed to step out and enjoy the outdoors, take selfies with the life-size bear sculpture which looks out on the Wolf Tree, and watch as the engine chugged down the siding to be reattached to the lower end of the train so it could pull the three cars back down the grade toward the starting point of Willits.

"For the longest time people would ask me, 'Why do you call it the Wolf Tree?'" mused Schindel. "We always assumed it was something scary because it's a really weird tree. I looked it up. The Swedish word for wolf 'varg' also means a large tree that shadows all the younger trees and drowns out all the light for the smaller trees.

"A lot of the loggers out here in those days were Scandinavian," he continued, "so it would be assumed that they used the word and the people that only had a limited understanding of the language only had the one meaning. They didn't understand that it also meant the second meaning so they translated it to mean 'wolf.'"

"For a while there were very few of these trees. They were cut down for the town of Crowley, which had about 1,500 people living here at the time. A lot of them were staying just in temporary structures, canvas tents with wooden floors. The wooden structures were built for the married workers.

Read the rest of
Aboard Over on Page 7



At left: The March family enjoys taking photos of each other on the train.

Below: Concessionaire Jordan Price from Fort Bragg serves riders in this very popular car.

Photos by Mathew Caine



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WHAT'S SOUNDS GOOD? I KNOW, EL MEX!

166 SOUTH MAIN ST

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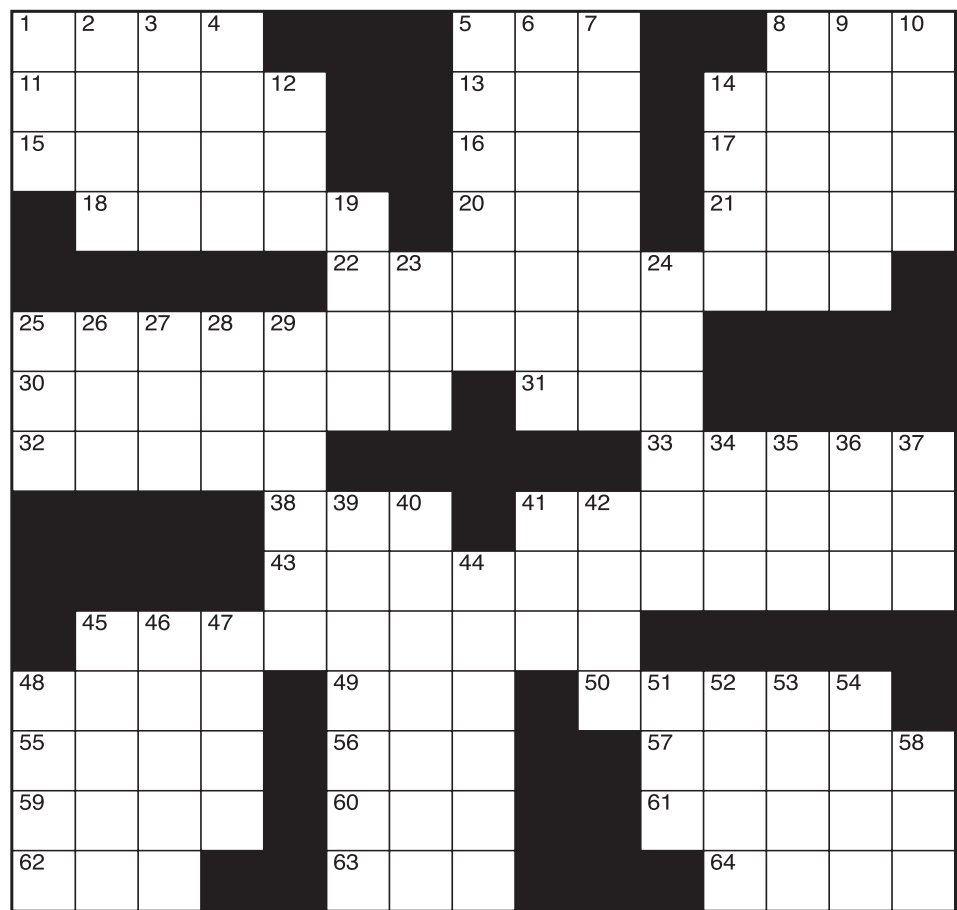
WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS GROUNDS
AUGUST 14TH, 2021
E COMMERCIAL STREET
WILLITS, CA
WITH SPECIAL GUEST

101 Trailer & RV Supply
WILLITS FARMERS MARKET
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| AMENDMENTS | FERTILIZE | MULCH | SOIL |
| BEAUTIFY | GREEN | ORGANIC | TILL |
| BLADE | LANDSCAPE | PEAT | WATER |



1. Language group with Iranian influence
5. No seats available
8. Health insurance organization
11. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
13. Defunct European economic organization
14. Dutch word for 'language'
15. Hard to penetrate
16. When you'll get there
17. Iranian city
18. Small fishes
20. Dry white wine drink
21. Turkish city
22. U.S.-born people
25. Synthetic resin
30. Major nerve in human body
31. Type of recording
32. Small drum
33. Alters
38. Genera's assistant (abbr.)
41. Venezuelan capital
43. Free of deceit
45. Member of Ancient Hebrew nation

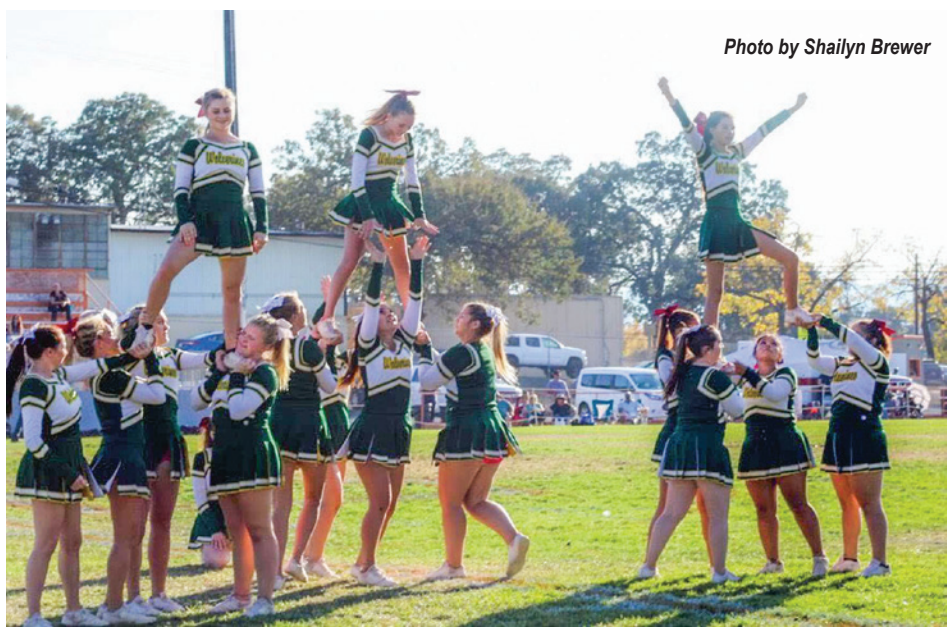
1. Father
2. Performed perfectly
3. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
4. Thin, compact object
5. One attempting to find something
6. No longer working
7. Egg-shaped wind instrument
8. Book of Genesis character
9. Volcanic craters
10. Brand of American automobile (slang)

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!

A large group of cheerleaders in green and white uniforms are performing a routine on a dirt field. They are arranged in a line, with some in the foreground and others further back. A person in a blue shirt is also visible among the cheerleaders. In the background, a scoreboard displays 'WILSON HIGH SCHOOL' and a time of 5:59. The scene is outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

Photos by Ree Slocum

A group of approximately ten students and one adult, likely a teacher, are sitting in a circle on a paved surface under a green metal shelter. They are all performing a similar stretching exercise, pulling one leg forward towards their torso. The students are dressed in casual athletic wear like t-shirts and shorts. The background shows a school building and more greenery.



A young girl with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue backpack and goggles on her head, is looking through a telescope. She is standing next to a large, open cardboard box. In the background, there are several green balloons against a clear blue sky.

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Above, left: Willits Otters train in the open water at Blue Lake on July 15.

Above, right: The Willits Otters visit Blue Lake: from left, Sophie Chavez, Eva Semisch, Mia Chavez, Alexa Williams, Aedan Lockwood-Chanelle, Nikolai Ritchley, Timothy Southwick, Carly Barbitta and Fisher Kuhn.

At right: Willits Otters Coach Robert Chavez, in the green kayak, watches his club swimmers while they practice in the open water.

At far right: The Otters practice their open-water technique at Blue Lake.



Above: A COVID-capacity crowd of riders lines up prior to boarding. At right: The ancient Wolf Tree has been hit by lightning over 100 times.

Photos by Mathew Caine

The rest of **Aboard** From Page 3

"That flat area, where the picnic tables are right now," said Schindel, "were the old tennis courts, built with white clay from Southern France. The clay came all the way from France, by tall ships, and over 32 miles inland to build the tennis courts."

The history of the county is deep and rich and always fascinating and the people who work on the Skunk Train hold much of this knowledge as part of their training and interest.

The moniker "Skunk Train," as may be imagined, is a throwback to the 1920s when each of the motorcars were self-propelled with gasoline engines. The additional pot-bellied stoves that were used for warmth, combined with the engines, created a pungent odor which the old-timers who lived along the route said reminded them of the odor of skunk.

"You could smell them before you could see them," as related in the Skunk Train website, www.skunktrain.com. The site also details the trips available from the western terminus of Fort Bragg. It also contains information about the recently installed railbikes as well as popular special-occasion trips, such as the Pumpkin, Easter and Christmas trains. From Willits, the Wolf Tree Turn train departs at 10:30 am (with an additional 1:30 pm train on Saturdays). Travelers would be advised to make reservations as these trips can often sell out. The Willits depot is located at 299 East Commercial Street.



Willits Otters hit open water

Submitted by Arora Chavez

The Willits Otters ventured out to an open-water practice at Blue Lake on Thursday, July 15. The change in practice venue was to introduce open-water technique nuances to the athletes such as spotting, stroke-rate variance, and drafting.

The water current, the choppiness of the water surface, and elbow-to-elbow swimming brings about an entirely new experience for traditional pool competitors. The morning-session athletes applied their rigorous summer

practices of circuit weight training and 3,000-yard practices to the waters of Blue Lake and they exceeded expectations in performance while having a great time.

After the morning practice, the Otters had free time to swim, play on surf and boogie boards and kayaks, with a lunch of hotdogs and chips.

A special thank you to the Williams Family for allowing the Otters access to the dock and cabin facilities. Their kindness and their support are greatly appreciated.

GO OTTERS!



Below: The WCT Performing Arts Academy students ride on a float created by Karen Mattson at the recent Willits Frontier Days Celebration – the float won first place for Best Mechanical / Imagination Float.

Photo by Gretchen Moore

Far right: Academy and Show Director Tim Fischer



"Oz!" – a musical performed by the WCT Performing Arts Academy – to run at Willits High School Auditorium July 30 to August 8

By Steve Hellman

"Oz!" – the musical production of this summer's Willits Community Theatre Performing Arts Academy – will be staged at the Willits High School Auditorium July 30 to August 8. Directed by Willits High School drama teacher Tim Fischer, the show features a cast of 26 children, ages 5 to 17, who completed the extensive academy-arts program – now in its fourth year.

While playwright Tim Kelly's script adheres to the L. Frank Baum classic, with the traditional characters, it also takes off on its own unique path. Performances will include original songs and music by Bill Francoeur.

Director Fischer says, "We're creating a version of the original 'Oz' with a new twist. It should be very exciting for the kids and the audience."

The production is bolstered by the professional talents of assistant directors Phaedra Swearengen and Heather Wilson, choreographer Ariel Herz-O'Brien, and vocal director Erin Mendoza. This year's academy kids, besides bringing their considerable talents to the stage, also had a substantial hand in painting the sets.

Starring in the show are Adagia Jordan Silveira as Dorothy, Lena Ferguson and Max Mueller as Toto the dog, Miranda Swearengen as Scarecrow, K'allana Arnold as the Tin Woodsman, Ember Hetherington as Cowardly Lion, Andante Joseph Silveira as Oz, Aria Eva Silveira as Glinda and Auntie Em, Seona Slater as The China Princess and Brodey Lamprich as the Wicked Witch of the West.

Appearing in supporting roles are Miles Mattson, Phoenix Hetherington, James Mattson, Gigi Mueller, Shaelin Ferguson, Lucy Button, Aurora Duley, Aliyah Duley, Alithia Gallups, Athena Slater, Kaya Reiter, Scarlett Berumen, Winter Geremia, Vance Ferguson, Cassius Lane and Finn Shipp.

Performances will be on July 30, 31, August 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Evening shows are at 7 pm, the Sunday matinees at 2 pm. All tickets are \$10 and available online at www.wctperformingartscenter.org, or at the door.

Regarding COVID protocols, all shows are open to all people, regardless of vaccination status. To ensure the safety of those present, masking is advised and requested. Temperatures will be taken upon entry and anyone displaying an unusually high temperature will be asked not to attend. Every other row of seating will be blocked off to ensure distancing, and seating is festival-style, so patrons can pick their own seats.

Music at Shanachie Pub

Some upcoming dates at the Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street in Willits; 459-9194. Visit "Shanachie Pub" on Facebook to keep up with the live music schedule.

their own, this group of accomplished players is not to be missed. The band is something traditional yet completely unique at the same time.

Lincoln Andrews, Kyle Madrigal and special guests.

The Meta, Saturday, July 31, 8 pm

The Meta is a band from Ukiah with a soft and sultry mix of folk, soul, jazz, western swing, and blues. They play a combination of acoustic and electric original music.

Members include Megan Miller on guitar, violin and vocals, Jean-François Buy on lead guitar and drums, and Anthony Esserman-Melville on bass and drums.

Ketracell, Saturday, July 24, 8 pm

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William Scott Forbes Band, Thursday, July 22, 7 pm

William Scott Forbes Band is a Northern California country and western band lead by Forbes, formerly of Jukebox Money, on electric guitar and vocals.

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Above, and below: Just some of the graduates who walked at the graduation ceremony held June 11, 2021 at Willits High School who have their photos posted online for download or ordering.

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photography by maureen (moore) jennison

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

structure right next to it, on the property," he said. Wilkes gave credit to the residents of that main structure for "doing a really good job of keeping the fire off," using hoses to protect the house.

The neighbor's house "took some pretty severe damage" from the fire, Wilkes said. "There's an alleyway that goes between. There was actually a wind last night, and the wind pushed the flames across the alleyway."

Firefighters were able to rescue some animals at that next-door property. "There were some animals in a neighboring structure," Wilkes said. "We made access to the structure and got the animals out."

Chief Wilkes also gave kudos to Little Lake's volunteer firefighters, and all the responding fire agencies and volunteers. "Ultimately, it was a great response," he said, with units from Little Lake Fire, Brooktrails Fire, Ridgewood Ranch Fire, and then mutual aid from CalFire.

Wilkes initially asked for a Type 1 engine out of Laytonville, too, "just in case," he said, but that request was cancelled. "I was worried about the wind," he said, but with the resources coming in, and "the good stop on the fire when we did," the Laytonville engine wasn't needed. "We're lucky in the Little Lake Valley — we do get some moisture recovery in the evening."

"Many hands make light work," Wilkes said. "It was nice to have all the responders — they made quick work of it."

Asked about the rescue of "a 7-year-old child" from the Locust Street fire that has been discussed on social media, Chief Wilkes said: "Little Lake Fire did not do a rescue last night, and I'm not aware of a child in the structure."

Little Lake Fire has responded to code enforcement calls about illegal burn piles at that Locust Street address in the past, Wilkes said, but although Little Lake is still investigating the cause of the fire, they know outside burn piles had "nothing to do with this call," he said, as firefighters know it started inside the accessory dwelling unit.

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

investigations confirmed that commercial cannabis cultivation was occurring in non-permitted structures, without a county cultivation permit or state cultivation license. The responsible parties voluntarily abated the cannabis plants being cultivated.

"June 28, 2021: 1000 block of Hearst Willits Road in Willits — 434 cannabis plants abated.

"June 29, 2021: 3800 block of Hearst Willits Road in Willits — 129 cannabis plants abated.

"June 30, 2021: 2000 block of Center Valley Road in Willits — 144 cannabis plants abated.

"July 2, 2021: 34000 block of Iverson Road in Gualala — 245 cannabis plants abated.

"Code Enforcement intends to take additional action as needed to achieve compliance with the non-permitted structures."

Also, in a July 13 update to a June 18 report about an illegal grow in the 3500 block of Laytonville Dos Rios Road, where "the responsible party refused to abate the 450 cannabis plants being cultivated" and was hit with some hefty fines, Code Enforcement News reports that:

"As of June 23, 2021, the responsible party

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For more info about Baby or to see the Mendocino County Animal Shelter's canine and feline guests, and for information about services, programs, events and updates about COVID-19 and the inland shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, visit: www.mendoanimalshelter.com. For information about adoptions, please call 707-467-6453.



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The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino is located at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. We are open Wednesday through Friday from 1 to 5 pm, Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, and closed Monday and Tuesday. You may also look at our available dogs and cats on our website, our Facebook page, and on www.petfinder.com. We currently are still open and able to do intakes, adoptions and fostering by appointment only due to COVID-19. If you have any question about our dogs, cats, foster program, or any other questions, you may call us at 707-485-0123 or email us at dogteam@hsimc.org.

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OBITUARY | Bill Barrass

William "Bill" Dale Barrass was born October 18, 1939 to Lloyd and Grace Barrass in Covelo. Bill spent his first 10 years on his family's cattle ranch east of Covelo where his grandparents settled in the 1920s. During those formative early years he enjoyed riding his horse and thrived in the ranch life.

The family then moved to Alta Loma in Southern California and started a chicken ranch. Bill attended Chaffey High School in Ontario, California, where he was involved in Future Farmers of America and served as president of that chapter. He went to many fairs with his animals and projects, winning numerous ribbons and medals. His FFA jacket remains in our closet.

It was at school in 1957 that he met Muriel. They graduated together in June 1957 and were married in Las Vegas in January 1959. They moved to Willits in 1960, where Bill was self-employed until he retired in 2002. Bill became an avid hunter and also greatly enjoyed fishing. During his lifetime he made



Baby.

so many wonderful good friends including those in Africa, Canada, New Zealand, and throughout some of our own Western United States. He will be missed by all of us.

Bill was predeceased by son Gary, in 2003. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Muriel ("Murt"); daughter Sherry (Dave) Oncale; grandson Jeffrey (Kim) Tuttle; and three great-grandchildren. A wonderful husband, he was also a great dad, and "Baba" to his grandson and great-grandchildren.

Per his request, there will be no services. Arrangements under the care and direction of Anker-Lucier Mortuary.

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The rest of Firehouse

From Page 1

construction work – “all the dirt work, all the groundwork, site work, demolition of the old building and removal of the house” – the total cost will probably be close to “our total bond measure, which allowed us \$7.2 million.”

“Is it still very expensive when you look at the big number?” he asked. “Absolutely, but we have to follow the DIR rules [California Department of Industrial Relations], public contracting rules.”

Compare, though, what the cost could be to build a firehouse if Little Lake Fire was beginning the project now instead of a little over a year ago.

Wilkes made just that kind of comparison, citing a March 2021 article in the Press Democrat about the cost for a new firehouse proposed in Santa Rosa, at the corner of Fountaingrove Parkway and Stagecoach Road.

“It’s a 10,763 square foot station. Ours is 11,000.... We’re talking about the same size,” he said. “The estimated cost of that Stagecoach site, including earth moving and a parking lot ... will be \$15.6 million.

“Really, it’s kudos to the public for building this when we did, because we really dodged a bullet,” he said. “I mean, the cost of this project could be astronomical moving forward from here.... It will blow your mind what construction costs are as we speak.”

Fire board member Skip Lucier agreed, offering for consideration some other relevant factors about the cost of the building.

“We went out to bid at the very beginning of the COVID breakout, and most times, when things like that happen, contractors bid very competitively because they’re afraid ‘this might be the last job I get for a year,’” he said. “And in many cases this was the last job, so it was very competitive that way.

“Secondly, I’d like to remind everybody that that’s a metal building. Metal buildings are way less expensive to build than block buildings or poured-in-place buildings,” he said.

“Third, we had Fred Russell, our project manager ... [who] was great for keeping costs in check.”

Chief Wilkes wanted the board to be clear on the cost because of some public misperceptions.

“Recently, through social media, we’ve found that there is a group that’s upset,” he said. “I’ve been asked multiple times in the public how we overran the cost of the project so far.

“Also, believe it or not, there are concerns over a gym being built in the building,” he continued.

“It’s not a gymnasium,” he said.

“In order to be an NFPA compliant firehouse [National Fire Protection Association] ... which is what our community deserves,” he said, “we have to provide for physical fitness for our firefighters.”

He described the “gymnasium.”

“It was not a large added expense to the project. It’s 300 square feet. The four walls were already there,” he said. “We have not purchased any kind of physical fitness equipment for the room. You can easily jump up and touch the ceiling.

“So, I stand by our decision to put that in the plans,” he said. “I would certainly love for anybody who has a question about that to come see us. We’ll take you on a tour, and we can walk through the gymnasium and take a look at it, and they can see for themselves.”

Editor’s Note: In Willits Weekly’s June 3 story, “Finishing Touches: Little Lake Firehouse nears completion as the interior takes shape and utilities are installed,” by features writer and photographer Mathew Caine, an incorrect figure of “close to \$9,000,000” was cited as the cost of the new firehouse.

Willits Weekly regrets the error.

The rest of COVID

From Page 1

isolation, 5 in county hospitals, and 6 in intensive care units.

Mendocino County Public Health published another update late Tuesday, showing 9 new cases of COVID, with 81 people in isolation, 8 hospitalized, and 4 in ICUs, totaling 93 confirmed cases of COVID-19. The daily case rate remained the same at 10.18 cases per 100,000.

Of the 81 people currently in isolation, 22 are in the North County: Willits, Brooktrails, Laytonville, Covelo, Dos Rios, Leggett and Piercy.

Neither of Mendocino County’s public health officers gave a COVID update to supervisors on Tuesday meeting, or at the board’s special meeting on Monday.

Public Health issued a press release late Wednesday afternoon, announcing a tentative COVID-19 update on Friday, July 23, at 2 pm, which can be viewed on the “Mendocino County Video” page on YouTube if either Dr. Andy Coren or Dr. Noemi Doohan are available, which is still not sure.

The purple tier, Tier 1, was the most restrictive tier under the old system. Areas were considered in the purple tier when they had more than 7 cases per 100,000. Mendocino County last went from the purple tier to the less-restrictive red tier on March 14, 2021, and then progressed to the even-less-restrictive orange tier on April 7.

Governor Newsom announced the state’s plans to stop using the Blueprint tiers that same day, April 7, and announced plans to fully reopen California as of June 15. If the state was still operating under the tier system, just some of the purple tier restrictions would include: Outdoor gatherings only with a maximum of three households; museums, movie theaters, restaurants and gyms can only open outdoors; retail can only be open at 25 percent capacity; and bars must be closed.

Mendocino County is just one of a number of California counties with recent COVID numbers that would have put them in the purple tier under the Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The San Jose Mercury News reported Monday that depending on which set of old rules was used, at least a dozen or as many as 29 California counties (of 58 total) would be in the purple tier.

The Mercury News also reported: “According to the California Department of Public Health, the virus is spreading statewide at a 7-day average daily rate of 6.3 cases per 100,000 people among the unvaccinated, but at a rate of 1.1 per 100,000 people among the vaccinated.”

Mendocino County Public Health posts new COVID data most weekdays, on the county’s COVID-19 page, www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus, and on the “Mendocino County Public Health” page on Facebook.

The rest of Committee

From Page 1

public hearings will be held before the board of supervisors to gather public input. Assistant CEO Steve Dunicliff said he thought at least six advisory committee meetings would be needed, in addition to the four board hearings, which committee members are expected to attend.

Staff had been concerned about getting the redistricting process finished by the December 15 statutory deadline, given that the county won’t likely get the census data until late October, much later than usual. In 2011, the citizens advisory committee was appointed in April, and had weekly meetings in different locations around the county through July 2011.

Originally at the board’s June 22 meeting, staff had recommended a staff-based advisory committee, due to the tight deadline, that would still have public hearings to gather public input. The county is also working on a redistricting website, that will offer information to the public about the redistricting process and how “to submit testimony or draft maps in writing and electronically.”

Staff will also be soliciting public comment through “press releases, public notices and robust civic engagement through community based organizations and other active community groups.”

Third District Supervisor John Haschak pulled the June 22 item from the consent calendar, meant for items without need for discussion, and pitched his colleagues for citizens being at least part of any advisory committee.

The redistricting committee will make recommendations; but the board of supervisors will make the final decisions on any new district lines required to properly balance the new population numbers in each of the county’s five supervisorial districts.

Board Chair Dan Gjerde suggested at the July 19 meeting that there might not be any need for major changes in district lines. “Seems to me our county’s population has hovered right about 85,000, 88,000 people for decades.... There may be limitations in terms of changing district boundaries, when you have so little population change in the county, because each district has to have the same population. And we have communities that are geographically

The rest of Brooktrails

From Page 1

General Manager Alaniz reported on the water situation in Brooktrails Township. “The reservoir is at 87%, and individual households are allowed no more than 9,000 gallons per month or 55 gallons per day per individual. Given the administrative role that we play and the discretion that we use in our office, we try to be reasonable in regard to individual customer’s families’ water usage. We send out letters [of concern] first, as different households may be coping with leaks that need to be addressed. Individual situations are handled on a case-by-case basis.”

President Williams asked if any of the directors had anything to report. Director Orth had a couple of things of significance to mention. He said: “A couple of weeks ago the steering committee of the Mendocino County Fire Chiefs Association met with the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors ad hoc fire committee and had a fruitful meeting. The forward motion of the committee was having the Mendocino County BOS consider hiring a Mendocino fire warden.”

The Fire Chiefs Association was scheduled to meet on Wednesday, July 14, Orth continued, “and discussion was to be focused on Service Area 3 which is part and parcel of the proposed fire warden position. We are looking to get support from them in working on the fire warden’s job description to their Strategic Planning committee. I just want to let the board and the public know that we are making forward progress in getting a fire professional as an advisor to the BOS – and that fire warden’s position will be a full-time position.”

Director Tyler-O’Shea noted that the Willits Area Cyclists held their second Trail Clean-up Day on July 11 and, though she wasn’t able to attend, she will have more to report at the next board meeting on July 27.

General Manager Alaniz said that an individual had requested to do a special presentation for the board regarding the cannabis referendum and, because of the inability to get a clear understanding regarding the time involved, the presentation may occur at the next board meeting on July 27.

Brooktrails residents William Turner and Ramona Waldman were in attendance and had concerns to present to the board. President Williams and the residents agreed that more information needed to be gathered and the presentations will be postponed until the next board meeting, Tuesday, July 27.

The board then voted to unanimously approve the Accounts Payable in the amount of \$239,996.16.

The other item on the agenda for the evening was “Consideration of Authorization Letter for Coastal Conservancy Vegetation Management Grant (sponsored by County/Firesafe Council).” General Manager Alaniz informed the board that this is a procedural request for a landowner authorization letter.

“Basically,” she said, “Firesafe Council and Mendocino County took the lead and applied for the Coastal Conservancy grant. The area that’s in question for the grant is a big chunk of uninhabited greenbelt with a couple of trails there. I am recommending that you approve that we grant the landowner authorization for the Coastal Conservancy Fuels Reductions Grant.”

Director Horrick made the motion to approve and Director Tyler-O’Shea provided the second. The board then voted unanimously to approve the authorization letter.

Director Orth further commented: “I wanted to speak to the fact that the state is coming up with quite a bit of grant funds, and that’s one of the reasons why we are trying to get a Mendocino fire warden in order to help coordinate the countywide efforts between the fire districts, the Firesafe Council, and the Conservancy and the various grant programs, to assure that Mendocino County captures as much of these grant monies as possible.

“The fact that Brooktrails is being used as a training ground and a film of that training is being produced for future use is a real benefit to our community. We are a “shovel ready project,” and by working together we are able to deliver for these projects and are able to move forward to attain our fair share of grant funds.”

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Danielle Barry
and her horse
Rebel.

Photo by
Maureen
Jennison

Ready to Run

Willits Frontier Days Junior and Willits local runs for Potter Valley Rodeo Queen

Submitted by Danielle Barry

My name is Danielle Barry, I am 17 years old, and I attend Willits High School where I will be a senior this fall.

I am a member of the California High School Rodeo Association in District 2, where I compete in pole bending, goat tying, and reining. In the upcoming season, I am planning on adding barrel racing and breakaway roping to my repertoire.

I have taken on the role of president for the Willits Future Farmers of America Chapter for the 2021/2022 school year and, through FFA, I enjoy showing my horses and my purebred Suffolk sheep.

After graduating from high school with the class of 2022, I plan to attend Feather River College to study horse training. Then later, to transfer to a four-year college where I will study to become a large animal veterinarian.

When I was a little girl, I used to watch the rodeo queen contestants compete for the crown, and some receiving the honor of being the rodeo queen. It has always been something I have looked forward to doing, and now I am ready to take on the challenge. I would love and be honored to represent the Potter Valley community and organization as their 2021 rodeo queen.

I would like to thank everyone ahead of time for the help and can't wait to see everyone at the rodeo, August 27-29 in Potter Valley. For tickets, please call or message me at 707-272-1340. Thank you.

POTTER VALLEY RODEO

2021 RODEO QUEEN CONTESTANT

DANIELLE BARRY

Friday, August 27:
Jr Rodeo Slack: 4 pm

Saturday, August 28:
Jr Rodeo Slack: 8 am
Parade: 11 am
Jr Rodeo: 1 pm
Axe Throw: 1 pm
Dance: 8 pm

Sunday, August 29:
Cowboy Church: 7 am
CCPRA & Local Rodeo Slack: 8 am
CCPRA & Local Rodeo: 1 pm

★★★

2021 Event Tickets:
\$8 presale
\$10 at the gate

Raffle Tickets: \$1 each

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TICKETS:
707-272-1340

★★★

AUGUST 27 - 29, 2021

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