

[illegible]

Donations Accepted Edition No. 371 **Thursday, September 17, 2020**

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

That is a gain of 29 cases

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

Thursday, September 17, 2020



... but smoke plumes, too

Above: Looking northeast over the Allman ranch in the Willits valley shows the Willits W and the plume of smoke from the August Complex West billowing from behind. Below: A wider view from the intersection of Reynolds Highway and Hearst-Willits Road shows additional plumes from the August Complex.

Photos by Maureen Jennison



Mathew Caine
Features Writer
mathew@willitsweekly.com

Read the rest of
Aftermath
Over on Page 6

Photos by Mathew Caine



Forrest Glycer
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Joanne Moore
Reporter
joanne@willitsweekly.com

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

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and
thank you letters from our readers

A big hurrah

To the Editor:

A big hurrah for the Baechtel Creek Inn for taking in so many fire evacuees ... and their pets. It was fabulous to see so many people who were not forced to separate from their beloved family members. Jan was fabulous, as were all the folks who work there.

Debra Lesslie, Willits

When the chips are down

To the Editor:

Day One of the Oak Fire: I received a call from my dear friend, Delores Pedersen at City Hall, telling me that she was simply checking to make sure I was OK and if I needed anything, to be sure and call her.

Day Two of the Oak Fire: I received a call from the niece of friends living in Brooktrails. I explained they had no doubt been evacuated to the high school already. Later the niece called again to say she hadn't been able to find them and, because of their health issues, wanted to get them into a motel but had been unsuccessful at finding any vacancies. I called Delores explaining the niece's dilemma. She said, "Give me a few minutes and I'll call you right back."

Five minutes later it was Delores, "Call the niece and give her this number. A room is being cleaned right now and will be available in two hours."

Some people, without any hesitation, instinctively know what to do when confronted with a desperate situation. That's Delores Pedersen.

Gail Richards, Willits

School board endorsement

To the Editor:

To the stakeholders of Willits Unified School District: I would like to start off by thanking you for allowing me to serve as a trustee on the school board for the past four years. Although I am not running for re-election, I would like to recommend that you re-elect current residing president of the board, Alex Bowlds, and Bryan Mann for the second open seat.

Alex has always put the success of students at the forefront of his decision-making; he also understands the district, its complex budget and climate. As a former graduate of Willits High School, Alex's loyalty stands strong, he gives endless hours supporting programs in athletics, FFA, musical productions, school award ceremonies, and the list goes on. Alex continues steadfast in making tough decisions for the future of WUSD, I encourage you to vote for him.

Bryan is a big fan of the children in this community, volunteering as a coach and at his church, he always encourages them to be their absolute best. With several years' experience working with students, teachers, and administration, Bryan has become familiar with district policies. Mr. Mann raised his own children here in Willits, and they graduated from WHS, now his grandchildren attend those same schools. Bryan has the energy and is willing to be a committed board member.

In closing, I want to again thank you for trusting me as your board member for Willits Unified School District.

Bob Colvig, WUSD board trustee, Willits

No on Measure I

To the Editor:

What, yet another school bond? In Willits Weekly over the last two years I have read about Superintendent Westerburg's continued desire to add another bond tax on us for the Willits Unified School District. No was the answer given, but he does not want to listen to us. His reasoning is similar to that used by his predecessor (superintendent) in talking the voters into paying for that debacle.

First, to be clear, we in this district have already passed a school bond measure. We have been paying every year on it, and it increases every year, seemingly exponentially. That bond passed over a decade ago and was to address the same issues he continues reciting again and again. As he pointed out, other school districts have had bond measures past. And we have past school bond measures to support the district as well. We do not appreciate trying to be shamed into passing another bond.

I agree, Brookside School is a deferred, poorly maintained, old, hazardous materials facility. You can not tax us citizens enough to fix an old run-down school – a "money pit." In the Willits News, there used to be a column "There's a better way. Find it!" written by Mr. Ed Burton. Why not look at a different scenario? Close down Brookside School, sell this more valuable location property to a developer for residential housing in an already residential area; combine the elementary school grades (as is the norm) at Blosser Elementary; take the money combined with state and federal grants (such as other school district have done) and put in updated modern modular infrastructure at the 8.5 acres at the Blosser location. Especially now that the city rezoned it, it should be less cumbersome. It would be perfect for a combined elementary campus. I can enumerate the benefits to students, parents, classified, certificated and administration staff in reduced overhead, cost for redundancy, centralization.

Mr. Westerburg, Mr. Bruce Burton is knowledgeable about zoning law and property development. And your dismissive attitude regarding his recommendation regarding not building residential housing adjacent to industrial area is astonishing.

As a final note, we currently, per our Mendocino County tax statement, pay on a yearly basis for:

- Little Lake Fire Measure J bond for the new firehouse
- Little Lake Fire
- Willits Unified School District bond
- Mendocino College bond
- Willits Sewer

• And maybe an increase in sales tax to pull the City of Willits out of bankruptcy

We live on a fixed income; therefore, it isn't increasing. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing financial hardship for many of us. Live within your means, and as Ed would write "There's a better way. Find it!"

Scott Koller, Willits

Yes on Measure I

To the Editor:

It is important to respond and clarify some of the arguments raised by some who ask you to vote No on Measure I.

1. Some think that Willits Unified schools (WUSD) can be repaired by existing staff. Staff are already overwhelmed with the maintenance obligations of maintaining older buildings. They are equipped to do minor repairs but not the extensive work that needs to be done. For repairing a large roof you need a roofing contractor and crew with the expertise to do the job right. Licensed electricians are needed for doing electrical work, the same for plumbing, etc.

2. WUSD should pay for repairs out of reserves. The state of California sets a minimum reserve but no school district wants to operate with just a minimum. If there is an emergency situation, (think of COVID-19), reserves are needed to pay for extra equipment or extra staffing.

But there is a larger problem now. The Constitution of the State of California requires that the state balance its budget each year. In order to maintain funding for schools during a time of declining revenue the state is going back to doing "deferrals." This is the second time in 10 years that schools in the state will have to go through this.

This means that after January 2021 WUSD and school districts throughout the state will have the funding that they would receive each month "deferred" until the next school year. That means that the bulk of their money they would receive from February through June will be received in monthly payments beginning in July 2021. This is the time that adequate reserves are critical to surviving during this tough time.

3. Proposition 15 is on the ballot in November. Can it replace Measure I? School funding is expected to be cut substantially in the next school year as well as subsequent years as the state deals with declining revenues from the pandemic. If Prop. 15 passes it will be used for backfilling the cutbacks that everyone in education knows are coming. Prop. 15 funds would not be used for construction and repairs, but Measure I funds would.

Here are some things to think about in support of Measure I

1. Did you know that California was ranked 25th in spending for education in 2016? It was ranked 32nd in 2017. California is one of the most expensive states to live in and yet is in the bottom half for school funding. It is no wonder that schools throughout the state struggle to maintain their facilities. Schools have to fundraise just to have enough funds to run educational programs, let alone fix aging facilities.

2. School districts all over California have gone to voters to pass bond measures to maintain schools. In Mendocino County: Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Mendocino Unified have all sponsored bond measures. Anderson Valley will also have a bond measure on the November Ballot.

3. Healthy communities have healthy schools. This community needs young families who want to live here because the schools are good. It is one of the first criteria people look at when choosing where to live.

4. Students have been out of school since March of 2020. We owe it to them to come back to school campuses that are being improved. We are asking them to go above and beyond; we need to go above and beyond as well.

5. Measure I is a \$17 million bond issue to fix our aging schools and facilities. It will benefit public schools in the Willits area, both traditional and charter schools.

In 2018 this bond measure missed passing by eight votes. The children of this community need your support. Please vote yes on Measure I.

Eric Glassey, board president, Charter School Association of Willits

Savings Bank's 'Stronger Together' campaign provides community support

Submitted by the Savings Bank of Mendocino County

As the local community bank, Savings Bank of Mendocino County understands that our local businesses, non-profit organizations, individuals and families throughout Lake County and Mendocino County are experiencing unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is why Savings Bank developed the Stronger Together Small Business Sweepstakes as well as the Stronger Together Face Mask Fundraiser.

The Sweepstakes provides community members an opportunity to nominate, on Facebook and Instagram, their favorite small businesses in Lake County and Mendocino County, giving those businesses a chance to win \$1,000.

To nominate a business, go to the Savings Bank Facebook page or Instagram page, find the Sweepstakes post, and tag a business in a comment that expresses appreciation for all that the business is doing to show commitment to their customers and community during the pandemic.

Every Tuesday through October 27, 2020 one lucky business will be randomly selected from the nominations to win \$1,000. Sweepstakes rules are available at www.savingsbank.com

Since the Sweepstakes began in July, Savings Bank has presented 11 local small businesses with \$1,000 each: The Book Juggler in Willits, Gualala Supermarket, Imaginations Printing and Gifts in Fort Bragg, Forks Ranch Market in Ukiah, Antojitos Mary in Ukiah, Rollin Dough Baking Company in Willits, Combs Consulting Group in Lakeport, BONA Marketplace in Ukiah, GoodLife Café and Bakery in Mendocino, Red's at the Skyroom in Lakeport, and Hedgehog Books in Boonville.

"The social media Sweepstakes is providing a platform to increase awareness of local small businesses in the two counties and for customers to express their appreciation for all that their favorite businesses are doing to provide products and services during these challenging times," said Katie Knight, director of Marketing and Community Outreach for the Savings Bank.

"Small businesses need the support from the community now more than ever as they reopen and adjust to the new requirements."

Savings Bank established the Face Mask Fundraiser in response to several customers expressing interest in the Stronger Together logo face masks that Savings Bank employees are wearing and to provide additional support to the Community Foundation of Mendocino County's COVID-19 Relief Program.

Donations provide a safety net to our most vulnerable individuals and families, non-profit organizations, and small businesses throughout Mendocino County. Suggested donations of \$5 per face mask can be made at any Savings Bank Banking Center or mailed to Savings Bank of Mendocino County Attn: Marketing Department, PO Box 3600 Ukiah, CA 95482. If mailing a donation, include a note with the address that the face mask should be sent to.

Together we can help our communities survive the uncertainty of the pandemic today, and in the future.

Do you want to submit a letter to the editor?
It's easy.
We print letters from residents of the 3rd District, just email us yours:
willitsweekly@gmail.com



Happy Camper

Make a bid on the Humane Society's 41-foot luxury trailer auction, and home could be where you park it

It may be a good time to get away, escaping the fires and the air so thick you can cut it with a chainsaw. If so, the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino has a solution. Until September 30, 2020, they are offering a chance to purchase a 2018 Jayco Eagle Series M-333 BHOK 41-foot luxury trailer on a sealed-auction basis.

With a starting bid of \$45,000 on a trailer independently appraised at \$59,000, this can be a deal for anyone in the market for a home on wheels. The bids will be opened on October 1, 2020 and the trailer will go to the highest bidder.

The Eagle was home to a family that lost their house in the 2018 fires and was immaculately cared for. Although they wish to remain anonymous, the family generously donated the trailer in honor of Spencer Kitty and all rescue animals.

This fundraiser, which will help support the fine work of the Humane Society, will defray some of the \$600,000 in annual operating costs. The trailer is fully equipped with such appointments as an outdoor gas-grill kitchen, a stand-alone ice maker, four-door refrigerator, 50-inch flat screen TV with HD and surround sound, CD and DVD players, satellite dish, hydraulic leveling jacks, scissor stabilizer jacks, ceiling fan, gas fireplace, outside shower, power double-bunk system, power roof vent with rain sensor, glass shower enclosure, skylight, remote spotlight, cabinetry upgrade, power slide-outs to increase room sizes, and more.

Those interested can view the trailer – by appointment – at the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino, 9700 Uva Drive, Redwood Valley. The facility is open Wednesday to Friday, 1 to 5 pm, or Saturday and Sunday 11 am to 3 pm. Call 707-485-0123 to make an appointment.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino has been rescuing animals for the last 30 years, 20 years in their current location. They are entirely funded through donations, grants and fundraisers. In addition, they do dog kennel and kitten condo sponsorships, wherein a donor can pay \$250 to sponsor a kennel or \$100 for a cat condo annually. They get a plaque with their name written on it to be placed at one of the kennels or condos.

The Humane Society just finished raffling off a 1999 Harley-Davidson Fat Boy, generously donated by Judy Valadao, and are currently holding a raffle for a custom-made cornhole board set. Tickets are \$10 each or \$50 for six. "Cornhole for a Cause" raffle tickets are available at Rainbow Ag in downtown Ukiah.

There are currently very few dogs available at the shelter due to the amazing fostering support from the community. "Our fostering program is going great," explains Kether Sprague, president of the board of directors. "We have a lot of wonderfully active fosters that are housing our available animals at home.

"Fosters are needed now," Sprague added, "to make sure the dogs and cats are off-site and in a home. They can learn more about the animals that way. The animals are exposed to children, other animals, regular household behaviors. Our fosters can also give us notes on the animals that we wouldn't otherwise have if they were just in a kennel on site with us. We provide fosters and adopters with as much of a history of the animal as we can find out."

Due to the recent and current fires, the shelter has taken in several animals that were evacuees or strays. "We have taken on evacuees from the fires," Sprague continued. "We have several dogs that were brought to us that needed to be here because of being evacuated from the local fires.

Read the rest of Trailer Over on Page 12

707.459.5193

JOHN FORD RANCH

RANCH RAISED NATURAL BEEF

No Hormones, Pastured in Willits, California

BUD GARMAN

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC.

707-459-5859

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

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

Do it Best WILLITS

POWER & HARDWARE

HONDA • HUSQVARNA • STIHL • MQ • CARIHART

Lawn & Garden Equipment • Generators
Sales, Parts & Service • Pick-up & Delivery

1600 S. Main St. Sales/Parts: 707 459-6420
Willits, CA 95490 Service: 707 459-0596
willitspower@gmail.com Fax: 707 459-6369

TO-GO ORDERS CALL 459-5702

DINE IN ON LOOSE CABOOSE PATIO FROM 5 - 8:30 PM

MAHI MAHI TACOS

WITH RICE & BEANS - \$12.95

166 SOUTH MAIN ST

Restaurant El Mexicano

10AM - 8:30PM
MON - SAT



At left: The spacious interior of the Jayco Eagle luxury trailer can comfortably house a family of four. Above: A cornhole set was specially created for a raffle to help raise funds for the Humane Society. Below: Lyra Bishop, Rosa Martinez, Sarah Clayton, Becca Edwards, Heather Baarsch and Kether Sprague show off the Jayco Eagle that will be auctioned to raise money for the Humane Society. At bottom, left: Kether Sprague, president of the Inland Mendocino Humane Society, shows the outdoor grill kitchen. At bottom, right: The Jayco Eagle is available for auction until September 30.

Photos by Mathew Caine



Above: Above: Bunny and Rabbit are at the Humane Society looking for a caring human to take them home; call 707-485-0123. At right: The bathroom is attached to the master bedroom with its king-size bed.

Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

	8	6					4
				8	2		
		3				9	
		7	5		1	8	3
		1					
4				3		7	
			4	1			6
	5				6		
	6	9		2			

ISLAND VACATION WORD SEARCH

R	M	T	C	U	L	T	U	N	E	H	S	I	P	F	C	D	O	E	P	W
X	H	O	B	C	N	O	R	A	K	E	L	O	K	P	H	O	I	S	P	S
K	G	L	I	A	N	S	K	A	O	P	T	H	O	I	S	H	B	I	P	S
V	C	E	A	C	S	B	M	N	I	G	L	M	S	T	L	N	E	W	I	G
C	N	O	R	N	I	D	V	E	H	L	L	B	N	R	W	O	M	K	L	V
H	O	M	O	R	D	R	E	W	L	E	B	N	R	I	V	E	B	A	U	G
U	L	V	C	R	I	D	A	I	S	O	P	O	E	G	H	S	L	E	U	P
M	P	C	H	R	L	A	P	B	U	C	H	N	E	L	Y	F	I	T	E	R
I	X	M	T	G	A	R	H	U	S	O	P	O	E	G	H	S	L	E	U	P
I	S	W	N	O	R	R	S	L	A	T	B	E	A	A	E	C	P	N	V	L
T	A	D	O	O	L	M	U	R	L	S	V	E	G	E	D	I	T	U	V	G
Y	P	U	L	C	R	A	K	L	S	V	E	G	E	D	I	T	U	V	G	O
W	E	P	K	E	A	L	M	S	V	E	G	E	D	I	T	U	V	G	O	A
M	L	A	P	E	W	T	D	E	S	C	A	U	C	S	X	A	S	B	S	S
M	C	S	M	K	I	D	E	S	T	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	D	O	S	S

BEACH	CULTURE	ISLAND	SHORELINE
BIRDS	DESTINATION	LUSH	SNORKEL
BLUE	DOCK	OCEAN	SUNSHINE
BOARDWALK	DUNE	PALM	SWIMSUIT
BOATING	EXPLORE	PEBBLES	TIDE
CONCH	FISH	PENINSULA	TROPICS
CORAL	FOLIAGE	SAND	VACATION
COVE	GULL	SCUBA	WARMTH
CRUISE	HUMIDITY	SEASHELLS	WAVES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20				21	22			23				
			24		25			26				
27	28	29	30				31		32	33	34	
35		36				37			38			
39				40				41				
42				43				44				
45			46				47				48	
			49			50			51			
52	53	54			55			56		57	58	59
60				61			62		63			
64				65					66			
67				68					69			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Aurochs
5. Central Dravidian language
10. Split pulses in Indian cooking
14. Tropical starchy tuberous root
15. Well known constellation
16. About aviation
17. Bowfin genus
18. Proper
19. Expression of annoyance
20. Cabbies
22. Bro or sis
23. Spiritual leader
24. Where football coaches work
27. Old TV part
30. A way to color
31. Touch lightly
32. Surround
35. Breached
37. Aristocratic young woman
38. Dry ravine
39. Hebrew measurement units
40. Supporter
41. Type of sword
42. Influential Irish playwright
43. Witch
44. Flower cluster
45. Mark Wahlberg's animal friend
46. Psychedelic amphetamine
47. Actors' group
48. Cool!

49. Salts
52. Group of SE China
55. Illuminated
56. Semitic Sun god
60. Water (Spanish)
61. Employed
63. Japanese ankle sock
64. Fishing fly
65. Some pheasants are this
66. Literary name for Ireland
67. Must have
68. A way to write
69. One point east of southeast

CLUES DOWN

1. American state
2. Hindu model of ideal man
3. Type of acid
4. Drenches
5. 'The Raven' writer
6. Emerged
7. Alpha Centauri: ___ Kentauros
8. Democratic Presidential candidate
9. Hostelry
10. Fathers
11. Any plant with leaves used for flavoring
12. Member of a Semitic people
13. Lesotho monetary unit
21. Lots
23. Jewish address corresponding to 'Sir'

HOW TO
SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

August 31 to September 6

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 165 incidents in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

September 7

9:25 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1600 block of Elm Lane.

12:35 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 100 block of North Main Street.

11:47 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity near the intersection of Mill Creek Drive and Northbrook Way.

September 8

6:17 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1500 block of South Main Street.

10:34 am: Officers initiated a hit-and-run vehicle collision investigation in the 300 block of Highway 20.

6:59 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1400 block of Baechtel Road and issued a warning.

8:19 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 200 block of Margie Drive.

September 9

5:13 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1200 block of Locust Street.

8:09 pm: Officers responded to a report of an assault in the 1200 block of Locust Street.

September 10

9:13 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

2:45 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 800 block of South Main Street.

7:57 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in the 100 block of South Main Street.

More of Conference | From Page 1

and leading to the evacuation of all of the Brooktrails township and much of the surrounding area.

Noyer said that the Oak Fire event was unprecedented in Brooktrails, and that the ability of their department and others to respond appropriately was the result of years of planning and training for it.

"In the almost two decades that I've been here, we have trained for this over and over," he said "And it's just been an ongoing dry run of trying to come up with things that we could anticipate would happen or not happen or lessons learned. And I feel that having now done this we can walk away from it with confidence knowing that our plan that we had in place did work. But there's always room for improvement, and I believe that the other agencies involved also realize that. And I think that it'll make for better planning from this point forward."

Noyer and others who spoke felt that the coordination between the various "mutual aids" during the emergency was outstanding.

"All agencies involved kind of knew what their responsibility in all this was going to be ahead of time," said Noyer. "And so when it came time to implementing the plan, I think it went a lot easier, a lot smoother, and we eliminated a lot of the guesswork."

Garrabrant-Sierra started off by thanking all who helped in the fire effort, including the local fire departments, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, the Willits Police Department, city staff, and CalFire. She also noted that Ukiah and Fort Bragg both sent police officers to help with the evacuation efforts.

"I can't really talk enough about how proud I am of the relationship we have with Brooktrails, with our neighboring agencies," she said. "We work so well together cooperatively and it showed. And I have such tremendous respect for those partners who came forward, and Lake County too. People just called me out of the blue and said, 'Can I help?' And it was an amazing effort."

Garrabrant-Sierra and Wilkes also spoke at the September 9 city council meeting just a couple days into the Oak Fire, and Wilkes talked then about how impressed he was with the immediate response he saw.

"We've had to implement some of the things that were all just goals and dreams

and things that we have talked about and tried to implement, and now we got to put them in place," he said. "The cooperative effort between all agencies ... all seemed to work super well -- I can't believe how well. It seemed that everybody was on the same page, and things go pretty smooth when that's the case."

"Obviously evacuations have been the big talk for the last few years," he continued, "especially since the Redwood Complex [Fire]. And we evacuated Brooktrails, and I think it went fairly smooth. It took a lot of work and a lot of planning but that cooperative effort worked well. And will we make some adjustments to our plan? I'm sure that we will, just to tidy it up. But we certainly have a good concrete foundation of where to be and how to move forward and make it even better than it was before."

Garrabrant-Sierra noted that the experiences the city had in previous events, such as with PG&E's public safety power shutoffs, helped them to be more prepared for this one.

"[Willits Unified School District Superintendent] Mark Westerberg and I had extensive conversations about where evacuation centers would best be held, and he chimed in and said absolutely, 'Use our schools,' so he was ready to go," she said. "We had opened [our Emergency Operation Center] for COVID, so we were somewhat prepared there.... Every time an incident happens we are more prepared, and I think that it showed."

At the council meeting Garrabrant-Sierra said the work that city staff had put in since the start of the Oak Fire had been exemplary.

"It was just extraordinary work from everybody, everybody had a role in making this effort go forward," she said. "And keep in mind that most of the people that work for the city of Willits live in Brooktrails. So we're talking about people who are sleeping on the floor, dressing out of bags on the ground, and coming to work every day and getting the job done. And I cannot thank this staff and people cooperating enough because they're exhausted. You've got police officers who've evacuated ... pretty much everybody had to evacuate."

Read the rest of
Conference |

Over on Page 11

Willits Meet the Merchants
Part 3 of our mini edition sets for 2020



Willits Furniture Center
PRICE | QUALITY | SERVICE
775 Central Ave., Willits, CA 95490 | 707 459-4224
Open Monday to Friday 10 am to 6 pm, Saturday 11 am to 5 p.m.
Sunday by appointment only
www.willitsfurniture.com | willitsfurniture@willitsonline.com



Little Lake Heath Center
MEDICAL | DENTAL | BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
CARE FOR HER
45 Hazel Street in Willits, CA 95490 | 707-456-9600
Monday, Thursday, and Friday: 8 am - 5 pm |
Tuesday and Wednesday: 8 am - 7 pm and Saturday Urgent Care: 9 am - 3 pm



Member FDIC
Savings Bank of Mendocino County
YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY BANK
145 S. Main St., Willits | 707-459-5533 | www.savingsbank.com
Stronger Together Since 1903 -- We're Here For You!



Mariposa Market
SPECIALTY GROCERY | ORGANIC PRODUCE
DELI TO-GO
500 S Main St., Willits, CA 95490 | 707.459.9630
OPEN EVERYDAY: Monday to Friday: 9 am to 6 pm
Saturday and Sunday: 9 am to 5 pm
Curbside pick up and more at www.mariposamarket.com



Willits Mini Storage, LLC
SELF STORAGE | NEW WEBSITE | PAY ONLINE
261 Franklin Ave., Willits, CA 95490 | 707-459-2529
(Covid-19 hours) Monday - Saturday: 9 am to 3 pm
Curbside or phone assistance only | www.willitsministorage.com



Sherwood Valley Casino
SLOTS | PLAYER'S CLUB | BLACKJACK
100 Kawi Pl., Willits, CA 95490 | 707-459-7330
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
www.svrcasino.com | info@svrcasino.com





At top: Tricia Austin confers with a CalFire associate to find areas of the fire impact. Above: People were not the only ones affected by the Oak Fire, although the story of this skull is unknown. Above, right: The view of the fire area from Fire Flower Farm, showing the reddish pink where fire retardant was dropped.

Below, top to bottom: This satellite view shows the confluence of Third Gate, Skyview, and Big John roads (center, towards the top) above where the fire began. Both sides of Big John Road, near the epicenter of the fire, are blackened. An area near the confluence of Third Gate, Big John, and Skyview roads shows signs of fire. Retardant has turned the landscape red.

Photos by Mathew Caine



The rest of Aftermath

From Page 1

Zone 1, Tricia Austin, accompanied by Willits Weekly, spent several hours surveying a good portion of the fire area. She traversed First, Second, and Third Gate roads as well as various arteries that brought her in contact with the heart of the inferno. She then went across the valley to view some of the preventative measures that were practiced by CalFire and the residents.

The cause of the fire is still under official investigation. According to Austin, state investigators have an extensive checklist which they have to run through in their probe in order to explore all the possibilities.

Whatever the final cause, the Oak Fire touched the lives of all of the residents of the Willits and Brooktrails area. Evacuations were mandatory for all of Brooktrails and many surrounding areas, within hours of the initial incident.

The fire, driven by 100-degree temperatures and wind, quickly grew (final count: 1,100 acres), causing some to flee from their homes, taking only the possessions they could throw together quickly and fit in their vehicles. Although some, heeding the advice of CalFire, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, and the local Sherwood Firewise Communities group had their "go bags" packed and ready, as they knew that fire in Brooktrails was a matter of "when" not "if." The inevitability was always in the back of the residents' minds.

For those who evacuated to Willits, the air quality that Tuesday was some of the worst in the world, due to an inversion layer that made the smoke from the August Complex fires cling closely to the earth, but also created cooler temperatures which aided firefighters in their task of containing the blaze.

Austin's tour of the area began off Highway 101, at Ryan Creek Road. However, it was not passable, so after conferring with colleagues, she decided to go up through Brooktrails and try Third Gate Road, nearly 9 miles up Sherwood Road from Main Street. The dry and extremely dusty route led up various winding roads to the confluence of Third Gate, Big John, and Skyview roads, above the original ignition point of the blaze.

Several CalFire trucks were in a clearing waiting for assignments and engaged in observation and mopping up, as well as feeding a stray dog that wandered in and out of their position.

The view, across the valley to First Gate Road, was a stark dichotomy in differing vistas and effects. Looking west down the slope, burned-out trees, scorched earth, and dark red retardant spoke of the fierce conflagration and valiant battle, while across the valley, a serene green could be perceived through the thick smoky air.

In order to get a view of the totality of the fire area, Austin drove back down to Sherwood Road and up First Gate Road, just north of



the new bridge over Rows Creek.

At the top of First Gate Road, where it turns into Willowbrook Road, she encountered a displaced resident with binoculars, who was not currently being allowed back to his burned-out home next to the property where the fire started. He had lost everything and was searching in vain for the cat he had left behind, hoping that someone would be able to take him up to the property. Austin offered to call her superiors and see if there was something she could arrange, but they were not able to grant his wish. The next day, the area was opened up and he found the feline alive. "The cat survived," he wrote, with "CalFire leaving out food."

Farther on, Austin met a couple who had a 20-acre farm, directly across from the main brunt of the fire in the Pinecrest area, near where Rows Creek meets Sherwood Creek.

Avery Edmunds and Hildi Gerhart of the appropriately named Fire Flower Farm had remained as long as they were able during the evacuation to secure their property and crop, with bulldozed fire breaks to mitigate the combustible grasses, thus creating a barrier to hinder any advancing flames.

During this process, CalFire had joined them, greatly increasing the effectiveness and width of the breaks, and extended the breaks down to Sherwood Creek. Luckily for Fire Flower Farm, the wind and fire travelled away from their hillside, and they were spared.

As time goes on, there will be many stories that will emerge from the event, but for now, those who escaped the flames will count their blessings and realize how fortunate they are. But this is just the beginning of the fire season. The August Complex, the largest wildfire in the history of California, still burns out of control to the east of Little Lake Valley, threatening Emandal Farm, Hearst-Willits Road, and points east of the valley as well as, further north, Covelo and Dos Rios.

This was an event that could have been a lot worse. Thankfully it wasn't, due to the efforts of local groups to prepare residents for the emergency, the first responders who made a herculean effort to keep the fire from breaching the bulk of the residential areas, and the various law enforcement agencies who handled the logistics of getting people out and getting responders into the fire area.

"I think this whole fire was an incredible example of a large-scale cooperative effort from all agencies," said Little Lake Fire District Chief Chris Wilkes.

The beauty in which the residents of inland Mendocino County live comes with a price. It is only through diligent efforts of forest management, human preparation, valiant firefighters, first responders, and a myriad of other concerned entities that it is possible for people to live fairly safely in a beautiful but dangerous land. Nature is constantly attempting to reclaim its property.



At left: Tricia Austin, public information officer for CalFire's Mendocino Unit, on a tour through the Oak Fire aftermath with Willits Weekly reporter Mathew Caine. Above: CalFire's Tricia Austin checks her fire map.

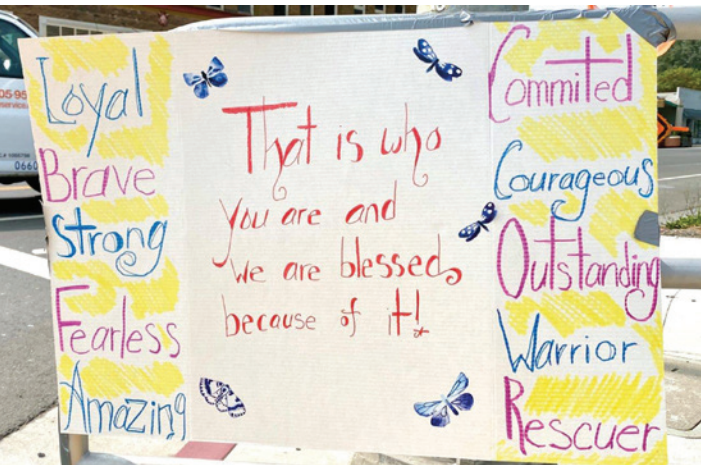
Below, left: The bulldozed open fire break helps stop the fire if it gets close. Below, right: The Fire Flower Farm dog surveys the fire break on his farm.

At bottom: The view from across the valley of an area near where the fire began.



Above: Scorched earth is visible, looking west from Skyview Road. At far left: The fire reached its fingers into the foliage. At left: Hildi Gerhart and Avery Edmunds of Fire Flower Farm live near the fire off First Gate Road.

Photos by Mathew Caine



At right: Someone feeling relieved, thanks to the firefighters' presence, added this sign to the Third Gate pole.

Clockwise from above: Expressing the qualities of what makes a firefighter is this sign maker's focus for their gratitude. This poster, put up recently on a utility pole that Caltrans sprayed with fire retardant, is found heading west on Sherwood Road before Second and Third Gates. This colorful sign is found on a utility pole at the spotlight for Sherwood Road and Main Street. Mariposa Market offers free coffee drinks to firefighters from their deli. An eye-catching and simple sign says it all. Painted on wood, this sign is just before the Sherwood Market as you head west.

Photos by Ree Slocum



Signs of the Times

Mendocino County Sheriff Matt Kendall, in collaboration with Brooktrails Fire Chief Jon Noyer, made the call on Monday to begin evacuations for the Oak Fire in the area beyond Brooktrails, at Second and Third Gates. Evacuations continued, and soon included Brooktrails, the northwest quadrant of Willits proper, and beyond.

The quick response by Sheriff Kendall, CalFire, and volunteer firefighters from Brooktrails Fire and Little Lake Fire and more, was noted by grateful residents along Sherwood Road. Heartfelt posters and signs cropped up along Main Street in Willits and Sherwood Road during the week and weekend since the Labor Day fire outbreak.

"Even though we know that the firefighters are just doing their jobs, we feel deeply grateful for them for putting their lives on the line to help save our homes and lives," said one tearful resident who'd made a sign.

— Ree Slocum



LEGAL NOTICES

WW286
Fictitious Business Name Statement
2020-F0430
The following company is doing business as Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty Referrals, 1460 South Main Street, Willits CA 95490 / mailing address: P.O. Box 188, Willits CA 95490.
Registered owner: LiveInMendo, Inc. 1460 South Main Street, Willits CA 95490
This business is conducted by a corporation.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.
FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on August 31, 2020
/s/ Tara M. Moratti, President, LiveInMendo, Inc.
Publication dates: 09/10, 09/17, 09/24, 10/01/2020

Willits Weekly
can run your legal notices including
fictitious business name statements, foreclosure notices, storage unit auctions and much more.
Contact us for more information at willitsweekly@gmail.com

WW287
NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: GRACE GERALDINE WESTON aka GERALDINE WESTON CASE NO. SCUW CVPB 20-27416
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate or both of: GRACE GERALDINE WESTON aka GERALDINE WESTON
A Petition for Probate has been filed by RANDY WESTON in the Superior Court of California, County of Mendocino. The Petition for Probate requests that RANDY WESTON be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent. The petition requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.
The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows:
Date: October 9, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Dept. 1 of the Mendocino County Superior Court, located at 100 N. State Street, Ukiah, California 95482.
If you object to granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 56(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code.
Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code Section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.
Attorney for Petitioner: ALEXANDER C. RICH, ESQ., CARTER RICH PC, 716 S. Main St., Willits, CA 95490. Telephone: 707-456-9210
Publication Dates: September 17, 24 and October 1, 2020

Willits Weekly

Tom Wake Plumbing

Serving in Mendocino and Lake Counties
Full Service Residential, Commercial
•Faucets & Tubs •Garbage Disposals •25 YEARS
•Toilets •Pipe Repairs **EXPERIENCE**
•Gas Lines •Fixture Replacement
For Fast Service Call 707-391-4343 Lic: #884811

Christina McCluskey's Paralegal Service

Paralegal and Legal Document Assistant
Small Claims • Divorces • Child Custody • Criminal History Record Expungements • Certificate of Rehabilitation/Governor's Pardon • Restraining Orders • Evictions • Civil Complaints • Wills & Trusts • and much more
(707) 467-7642
104 W. Mendocino Ave., Willits, CA
Email: cmccluskey.paralegal@gmail.com
I am not an attorney. I cannot give you legal advice or represent you in court.
Mendocino County Registration No. LDA-14, Expires 10/01/2021

Mendocino County Library wins women's suffrage book sets

Submitted by the Mendocino County Library

This summer, the American Library Association partnered with the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission to distribute 6,000 book sets about women's suffrage to public and school libraries across the United States in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment.

The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, created by Congress to mark the centennial of women's suffrage, selected the books and provided funding for the project. Each set consists of three books aimed at different reading levels for youth.

Titles include Mara Rockcliff's "Around America to Win the Vote" for elementary readers, "The Woman's Hour: Our Fight for the Right to Vote" by Elaine Weiss for middle school readers, and the "National Park Service Women's Suffrage Reader," an anthology of essays for high school readers.

Mendocino County Library applied and won several of the book sets allowing each library branch, the bookmobile, and the outreach van to have their own copy of each title, which will be available for curbside checkout. For more information, please contact the Mendocino County Cultural Services Agency at 707-234-2873.

1920 WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

commemorating 100 years of women's right to vote

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. Can you volunteer as a Meals on Wheels driver? Call Deb at 459-6826.

Thursday, September 17: Cobb Salad

Friday, September 18: Fish Sandwich

Monday, September 21 – Crispy Chicken Sandwich

Tuesday, September 22 – Spaghetti with Meat Sauce

Wednesday, September 23 – Shredded Chicken Burrito with Green Sauce

Thursday, September 24 – Spinach Lasagna

Friday, September 25 – Turkey Dinner

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

Current Job Openings:

Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II
Legal Secretary I/II
For a complete list of current job openings and to apply:
www.mendocinocounty.org/government/human-resources
EOE

7	8	6	9	5	3	2	4	1
9	4	5	1	8	2	6	7	3
2	1	3	7	6	4	9	5	8
6	9	7	5	4	1	8	3	2
5	3	1	2	7	8	4	6	9
4	2	8	6	3	9	7	1	5
8	7	2	4	1	5	3	9	6
3	5	4	8	9	6	1	2	7
1	6	9	3	2	7	5	8	4

CLASSIFIEDS

Computer Help

Need help with your computer? PC, Macintosh, Android and IOS devices. Repairs, configuration and tutoring: \$50/hr. Call Liam 459-2470 or email uicearbhail@gmail.com

RV/Trailer Space for Rent

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

Cottage for Sale

In town, a 2-bedroom cottage for sale. \$178,000. Call 707-459-9228.

Stay Safe

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

Farmers Market Help Wanted

The Mendocino County Farmers Market Association is looking to hire a Market Manager for the Willits Market. This is an independent contractor position with pay based off of Market earnings. If interested, please email Julie@gmmtfarm.com.

Truck Driver Wanted

Bothiller's Construction is looking for an experienced Class A truck driver. To include: End-dump, transfer, water truck, dump truck, etc. Start date: ASAP. Call Jamie: 707-459-4041 or 707-272-2772

Freezer Empty? We can help!

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

Virtual Spiritual Exploration

To learn more about classes and topics that may interest you visit: <https://www.meetup.com/Lake-Mendocino-Counties-Spiritual-Explorers/> Join us on Zoom or via telephone Wednesday evenings, 7 to 8 pm, September 2 through October 28, 2020. Questions? Call (952) 999-2288.

Wanted: Meals on Wheels Volunteer Drivers

As demand for home-delivered meals has increased due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, the Willits Senior Center is looking for a few more Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers: the job takes about 3.5 hours to complete. If you're interested in joining the team, call Deb Holcomb at 459-6826.

Keith's Structural Repair

Rural bridge repair and restoration. Structural retrofitting for buildings. On site welding. Retaining walls. Keith Rosen: 707-354-8992

Lost Dog

Black McNab female cow dog lost in Willits out in the valley. Comes to Kate. Very timid and shy. Call Walt @ 707-362-1383

Mendocino Counts!

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

Office for Rent

Office space, 140 sq ft, with waiting room. A/C, off street parking. Utilities included. \$240/mo. Call: 707-354-2473.

Willits Food Bank Open

Willits Community Services & Food Bank continues to distribute food, following COVID-19 safety provisions, to hungry families and individuals in the Willits area, with an increase in numbers served. The front office at 229 E San Francisco Ave is closed to the public, but the back door area is open for food distribution on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4:30 pm. Homegrown produce donations to share with the food bank are welcome. Info: 459-3333; financial donations to WCS can be mailed to 229 E. San Francisco, Willits CA 95490.

Marc Komer

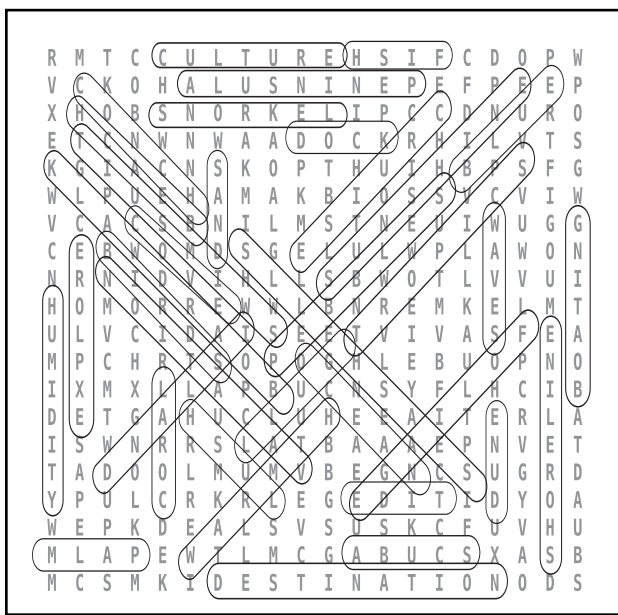
Legal Document Assistant
An Affordable Non-Attorney Service
Divorce, Living Trusts, Evictions, Probate, Incorporation, Name Change, etc.
www.mendolegaldocs.com
459-2775
104 W. Mendocino, Willits
I am not an attorney, and can only provide self-help services at your specific direction.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO MAKE MENDOCINO COUNT!

Complete the Census
Call 1-844-330-2020
Responde al Censu
Llame 1-844-468-2020
MY2020CENSUS.GOV

B.A.S. ROOFING, Inc

Roofing applications available to fit any roofing need
W.C. & G.L. Insured Ca. Lic # 927007
Office: (707) 462-4514
Mobile: (707) 367-3786
Residential & Commercial
Serving areas of Mendocino, Lake and Sonoma Counties
Online: www.basroofing.com Email: basroofing@live.com



state agencies to get the applicants to the stage of having an annual state permit. Just hypothetically, let's say that those applicants take 14 hours each. You're talking 3,208 hours....

"And then you have 882 that are not yet at the county license stage. Some of these applicants have not heard back from the county in three years. So, what is the current state? Well, we don't know. It may be that the county asked for additional paperwork. It may be that the applicant emailed that to an ag employee directly, who is no longer with us.

"It could be that Information Services could pull that email out of an email box, but trying to match up email addresses with pending applicants? It's a mess. It's foreseen that it may take five hours per file just to make sense of the current state. ... So, let's put in five hours each. Just putting in a little "back of the napkin" math here. Then those 882 will also require the same 14 hours, so now we're up to 20,566 hours. And if we figure 40 hours a

week, and let's say staff is 75 percent efficient, because of staff meetings, trainings and contact switching, you're talking about 685 human weeks.

"That's a problem. We only have until January 1, 2022 to get all the applicants to a state annual license, or their legal cultivation will end.

"I think what's in jeopardy here is an industry that's worth more than \$500 million per year, and about \$5 million of revenue to the county. ... Based on the numbers I've seen, the projections, if we wanted to process all of the current files within six months, I could see needing 16 additional planners.... And if we don't think that's possible, we need to put an RFP [request for proposals] together and out-source this work," Williams said.

Third District Supervisor John Haschak, who sits on the cannabis ad hoc committee along with Williams, agreed with the Fifth District supervisor. Haschak said that providing adequate staffing of the cannabis unit was part of the county's responsibility to the cannabis industry.

"We're creating the pathway right now," Haschak said. "I feel that we created a pathway with the CDDA [the California Department of Food and Agriculture, which administers the cannabis program for the state], and we also have created a pathway with CDFW [the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, a state resource agency that must approve certain permits that are part of the

county's cannabis cultivation permit] with the pilot program that just got approved.

"So these are looking like we have a way of getting people to their annual license, if they qualify," Haschak continued. "We just need to do our part, with the CEQA checklist and the sign-off."

"So the ad hoc will be bringing back some recommendations [to the full board]," Williams said. "I think we wanted to share, at the earliest possible time, we have a serious problem with staffing. If we find that we want to continue with the current ordinance, we don't have a planning staff that can support the needs. We may have to out-source it," Williams said.

According to the cannabis unit's Program Manager Megan Dukett, the cannabis unit now consists of eight employees, including four full-time planners and a program administrator, a position for which the county's Human Resources division is now actively searching. Dukett will work with these five administrators to process permit applications.

Willits Community Theatre expands its online streaming catalog with new hit monologue show

By Steve Hellman, for WCT

In its ongoing effort to expand locally based community entertainment, Willits Community Theatre has launched its latest offering in streaming video. "Speakeasy VII," a newly produced installment of the popular annual hit monologue show, is now available through the new WCT website. The production showcases original stories from many of the show's long-time veterans, along with unique pieces from some very talented newcomers.

WCT Production Manager Mike A'Dair says of the show, "We think it's wonderful that our local story-telling and the monologue format have continued with this latest mix." He is particularly impressed that some of the performances include timely takes on life and conditions during the ongoing pandemic.

Access to "Speakeasy VII" and WCT's complete video library is available through its new website: www.wctperformingartscenter.org. For "Speakeasy VII" an optional donation is being requested to help support WCT in its move to expand viewing content for home audiences.

Produced by Emmy Good and edited by Keena Good, the "Speakeasy VII" video includes presentations ranging from current heart-warming accounts, to thoughtful and very funny remembrances. Good says it was a new and complicated process producing the show for online distribution.

"At first there were so many challenges, we weren't sure we could do it," she says. "But then people realized it would be therapeutic, so we ended up with a real learning experience, and something for everyone."

The lineup for "Speakeasy VII" includes: Emmy Good opening the show with her life-long love affair for driving, including some wild mis-adventures; Bill Herr's humorous and friendly take on a one-night stand; and Gloria Grieco's personal account of her appearance on the 1960s American Bandstand show with host Dick Clark.

Other monologues include: A journey through an outlandish artist co-op in San Francisco begins a long, strange trip recounted by Bill Barksdale; life in an old log cabin with visits from a very wild bear from Jane Camp; a touching eulogy to a beloved pet dog by Nancy Wilson; and Linda Posner and her daughter, Pearl Marill, performing in a duet mime dance with an accompanying voice-over elegy to yummy food, amazing animal toys, and family ties.

Also appearing are: Peter Winslow describing with childhood glee the magic of a butterfly escaping from its cocoon; Freddie Long recounting her childhood with a monkey-strapped mother and their caring for each other; Earlene Gleisner traces events with a fully packed car following a loved one's passing; and Kelli Weaver offers the gripping experience of being very sick and getting well again.

There is also a most compelling account from Ellen Weed in which a 14-year-old girl strives for her very survival; Melinda Clarke offers snapshots for the present transformational time; Barbara O'Reardon sings amazingly of the power of family and survival; and for comic effect at the show's conclusion, four dogs appear on screen with human voice-overs, offering some pieces of advice for how everyone can just get along.

The Oak Fire, which occurred northeast of the Brooktrails Township, started on September 7, and was 100 percent contained by Monday, September 14 according to the CalFire website. Evacuation of areas in and around Brooktrails began September 7 and weren't completely lifted until Sunday, September 13.

CalFire's final report on the Oak Fire, released the afternoon of September 14, identified a total of 56 structures as "destroyed" without separating out the "minor structures destroyed," number. CalFire's morning report on the Oak Fire on September 14 reported at least 25 structures were destroyed and 20 damaged in the fire. A CalFire representative's initial estimate of the damage from the Oak Fire was \$20 million.

Noyer said that CalFire will do a further damage assessment once the area cools off, and then at some point give a more detailed account of the number and types of structures that were destroyed or damaged. He also said that no official cause for the fire had yet been declared.

"Due to the fact that this is a CalFire incident, and there is significant damage and loss, CalFire will not release a cause until they are absolutely 100 percent sure," said Noyer. "I know there are rumors going around out there but they're strictly that. There has not been an official cause, and I would venture to say that it would be some time before that's released."

Noyer said that based on his findings there's never been a fire of this size in the Brooktrails area.

"For Brooktrails, since its development in the '60's, this is the largest [nearby] fire," he said. "However, I want to be clear this did not happen in the Brooktrails township. This actually occurred in a rural area outside of our township that is protected by CalFire. We provide them with auto aid because we are the closest resource."

"With that being said," he continued, "we did some checking, and we cannot find any documented fire history in that area other than maybe an acre or two in the last century. So what that means is that a large-scale fire has not been through there in over a century, and the fuels that were there at the time were prime to burn."

Little Lake Fire Chief Chris Wilkes praised Noyer's actions in his initial response to the fire.

"The initial attack phase of a fire like that is how you get things started and get things implemented," said Wilkes. "Chief Noyer was the first fire officer on scene, and he started the evacuation process early knowing that this fire could get ugly in a hurry. And that process is important because it takes time – plus it's the first time that we've had to implement any kind of operation like that here locally, even though we've planned for it."

While it is law enforcement – and in this case the sheriff's office – that ends up making the final call on evacuation orders, Noyer said he approved of the staggered approach that was used to evacuate Brooktrails during the Oak Fire.

"So when we evacuate, the idea is to evacuate those that are threatened immediately and work outward," he said. "Imagine trying to evacuate the entire township in one shot with one notification versus a tiered evacuation, where you bring the people out closest to the fire, some time passes to let them through, and then evacuate further down the line. It's a much more organized approach, I feel, and I stand 110 percent behind the way it was handled in this situation."

Wilkes said that it was challenging for the LFFD to handle all the other local emergency calls while also contributing resources to fighting the Oak Fire.

"The day-to-day business doesn't stop because of a big incident," he said. "So for us [the question] was how to manage and help Brooktrails and ourselves with the day-to-day emergencies, while we know that each of our agencies have fire apparatus and personnel out on the incident itself. And I'll say that I thought it worked out very well."

Garrabrant-Sierra talked about how the Willits Emergency Operations Center acted as a local communications hub, and how Mayor Gonzalez and Willits Community Development Specialist Jim Robbins played crucial roles there.

"It is not typical for a mayor to sit in an EOC center," she said, "but our particular mayor has a lot of experience as he was the chief of police. So he sat with our staff shoulder-to-shoulder and manned the EOC until late at night, and I am very grateful that he was there since he gave great guidance and leadership."

Wilkes said that having Robbins working steadily in the EOC greatly improved their communications ability, compared to when the last major fire occurred in the area – the Redwood Complex Fire of 2017.

"Having Jim down there was fantastic because he did a very good job of keeping a steady flow of information back into us," said Wilkes. "I thought that was again a lesson learned from before that we put into use, and it worked."

A large portion of Willits north of Highway 20 West was on evacuation warning for a few days during the Oak Fire, and Garrabrant-Sierra said that Community Development Director Dusty Duley, Mayor Gonzalez and others put together a detailed evacuation map "really looking critically at how to get in and out of the city."

"So if we were to need to evacuate the city, we were prepared to do that," she said.

Gonzalez said he had gotten into contact with some of the "vulnerable communities" in the city who were "activating their initial plans in getting ready" preparing for a possible evacuation.

When asked about the specifics of an evacuation plan, Garrabrant-Sierra and others said that the plan for a city really can't be a one-size fits all approach,

since the location and size of a fire will dictate which routes are available.

"I asked the sheriff where we go if there's an evacuation," she said, "and the answer is you go where the sheriff tells you to go. Because you don't know what direction that fire is going, it all depends."

"What we do is so dynamic, you cannot put a black-and-white playbook together that's going to address every scenario, situation, dynamic that we're faced with," added Noyer. "So what I tell people is go the opposite direction of the smoke and listen to law enforcement."

He also pointed out that the fire departments are not in charge of evacuation decisions.

"Law enforcement is in charge and responsible for evacuation," he said. "We can suggest it as the fire department, as the fire professionals, but they are the ones to order it and organize it, and we assist however we can."

Gonzalez noted that signing up for Nixle alerts is an effective way to receive information about local emergencies such as fires and evacuation orders from law enforcement (www.nixle.com).

Looking to the future, Garrabrant-Sierra said they are compiling "a list of skilled volunteers that could jump in to help with an evacuation effort" for the city, and putting together a "playbook" looking at what worked well this time around.

Gonzalez said he would like to get the local Community Emergency Response Team more involved in future emergencies, and pursue more training for staff and volunteers in helping with evacuations and other efforts.

The two fire chiefs urged all in the community to continue to be active in their fire preparedness since we have a long way to go before we are out of fire season this year. They suggested using resources like www.readyforwildfire.org to learn about what supplies to have on hand in case evacuation is necessary and other useful information.

At the council meeting, Wilkes also asked for those in the community to be more cautious, noting that there had been three non-permitted fires in Willits city limits in just the two days prior to the meeting.

"What we really need is cooperation from the public to not end up with another incident," he said. "When resources are stretched thin, we can't have accidental fires happening due to literally negligence and just not paying attention. So I plead with the public to think twice about what you're doing with fire and make sure that it couldn't be a problem, and make sure that it's within guidelines. We shouldn't have any kind of outdoor burning right now."

Chief Noyer closed the press conference by thanking the community for their "cooperation and outpouring of support" during the Oak Fire.

"I couldn't ask for much more," he said. "I kind of suspected that on Monday I'd be hearing people complain about being evacuated and the inconvenience and all the things that go along with it. But I haven't, and I've heard nothing but good things from the community. And so thank you to the city of Willits for taking our evacuees and making room for everybody that stayed there. And thank you to the community for cooperating and doing what they were asked to do."

August Complex West

Regarding the August Complex West, the section of the August Complex Fire that is closest to Willits, Wilkes said that Little Lake had two fire engines and a water tender helping CalFire's efforts nearby, and that they were in regular radio contact with them.

He said that since the fire has now seeped out of federal national forest land and into a CalFire's state responsibility area, CalFire will likely be taking an aggressive approach in battling it.

"I can tell you that on the radio just a couple hours ago they were talking about using VLATs [very large air tankers] to move into that area and put retardant down in between the dozer line that they've created and the contingency line that they've created with dozers," he said. "You can rest assured that when the fire gets into SRA, CalFire is very much into putting fire out. That's their goal – they don't play around with it, and so they take a very aggressive attack towards making stops."

"So knowing it's in SRA, knowing we have CalFire dealing with that and on it – that's a big help to us," he continued. "We do have some favorable weather that's coming our way. So knowing that, I think that we have a good chance of seeing some really good progress on that fire, at least in the areas that could affect Willits."

"They have a plan in place," added Noyer. "They've initiated that plan based on information they've received from the [U.S. Forest Service], and they've had this in the works.... I feel confident that they're going to handle business."

At nearly 800,000 acres, the August Complex Fire is the largest in California history. Although the complex was considered 30 percent contained as of Wednesday morning according to CalFire, the "West" section of the fire is still considered to be at 0 percent containment, though CalFire hopes to announce some containment soon.

Areas to the north and east of the Eel River around the Hearst community have been evacuated in recent days due to the August fire.

Editor's Note: During the Wednesday, September 16 August Complex West fire updates on KYBU Radio out of Round Valley, representatives from the Sheriff's Office and CalFire reported 1,400 personnel are now working on the "West" portion of the fire; that aircraft were utilized most of the day Wednesday; that favorable weather is continuing; and that there wasn't a lot of fire growth on the August Complex West fire on Wednesday, "no significant runs." Firefighting crews from Montana, Utah, Texas and New Jersey are among the resources currently assigned to the August Complex West fire

"They get blankets and food and shower in the facility," he said. "We're running breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

The district is also running distance learning, with high marks thus far from both Westerburg and trustee Robert Chavez.

"Hats off to all those people out there making distance learning work," said Chavez, who described "a chance to eavesdrop" during a car ride with his daughters "while they had their meeting with their teacher."

"To listen to the teacher have to deal with the difficulties of technology and speak to her whole class at the same time, and the way she worked it, and the way she accomplished the lesson," he said. "It was magical."

"I think the staff has done a great job of getting ready for it and putting it out there," said Westerburg. "I know at Sherwood and other schools, there are very few connectivity issues from what I'm seeing."

For those that do have connectivity issues, "especially 9 through 12, [they] have already worked through the high school and are on an alternative packet program."

Also, a "higher ... number than there's ever been, especially K-8, are on independent study," Westerburg said.

He added that it was "concerning because that number's probably going to grow if we go to some sort of on-site learning ... [and] how we are going to staff independent study without knowing what the real number is ... [it's] one of those wild cards that we've had through this whole pandemic."

"Most parents who I talk to [about independent study] say, 'Well, it depends on what it looks like,' he said.

"Well, I can't give them what the county rules are going to be like when that happens."

"I do tell them [to] be prepared to be 6 feet away; be prepared to have a mask on; be prepared that we're not going to be doing normal

interaction between students," he said. "And most of them kind of shrug their shoulders like 'that's not really what school should be.'"

"And I tell them ... well, that's what it's going to be like in 2020. I don't see any magic panacea coming that's going to change that anytime soon."

There is, however, something like a magic funding panacea that might come the district's way if the voters approve Measure I, the school bond measure on this November's ballot.

An almost identical measure on last March's ballot (the only difference being Willits' charter schools will share in funding under the current measure) failed to get the 55 percent approval needed by eight votes.

Trustee Paula Nunez was concerned that "people seem[ed] to be mixing up what is the measure for the city [measure K] and the measure for the school [Measure I]."

"Unfortunately, the city is going for an increase in taxes [3/4 cent sales tax for 10 years] at the same time," said Westerburg.

"I sure don't want to be having to take \$500,000 plus out of our general fund to fix roofs on Blosser," he said. "It's really important ... this is a long-term strategy for the district to have funds for 10-plus years to be able to fix and repair the facilities."

The district's website explains that "in California, public schools receive state funding for operational costs like supporting strong instructional programs and paying teachers, but not enough to pay for capital improvements like fixing deteriorating roofs or updating classrooms, science labs, and instructional technology. All our school facilities were built with bonds, and they need to be updated through this process as well."

All the district's school facilities were also built a long time ago. Willits High School will be 100 in 2029. Baechtel Grove Middle School was built in 1952, Brookside Elementary in 1953, and Blosser Lane in 1989.

from September 7 to September 14, for an average increase of just over four per day. That is, very close to the upper limit of Zone Two, the so-called "orange" or moderate zone. Mendocino County remains in Tier 1, the Purple zone, in which the spread of the disease is described as "widespread."

When asked to comment on the apparently dropping numbers, Mendocino County Public Information Officer Sarah Dukett said: "What this is, is, we're seeing some positive trends. Typically, we look for a bump four or five days after a big holiday. That was what we saw after Memorial Day and again after the Fourth of July. So we are waiting to see what happens [after Labor Day]. I think the big question is, if this substantial drop in daily cases is real, can we sustain it?"

There was no supervisors meeting this week, and so the most current COVID-19 discussion took place last Friday, when the county hosted its weekly press conference. At that conference, newly installed Public Health Officer Andy Coren gave a COVID-19 status report and answered a few questions from the press and the public.

He noted that gatherings remained one of the largest driving forces of the disease in this county. "Gatherings are still a big issue," he said. "Unauthorized parties are the most out of control. Over Labor Day, there were some large parties on the coast. It is hard to avoid being invited to a party when you've been apart for so long, but remember that you are protecting your friends, your family, people in your household and people that you love, and that these people are depending on you staying away from those parties."

Coren said that one of those parties – held on the coast – had at least 1,000 people attending.

"This is a war. This is a war against the virus," Coren commented further. "And our weapons at this point are 6 feet of distance, soap and masks. We're all suffering to protect each other. So masking,

hygiene, and social distancing is patriotic," he said.

When asked whether he thought the pandemic would be over by the new year, Coren was dismissive. "To have a vaccine ready before January 2021, let alone before the election, is very unlikely," he said.

"It would be a huge jump to think we could distribute hundreds of millions of vaccines quickly. So, for now, our best line of defense is the mask, the social distancing, and carefully cleaning ourselves and our environment," Coren said.

COVID-19 current numbers

As of Tuesday evening, since the first case that was confirmed in the county on March 19, the county has confirmed a total of 808 cases of the disease. Of that number, 727 have been released from isolation, and 18 have died.

The county has 63 confirmed active cases of COVID-19 in the county. Of that number, 57 are being kept in isolation; three are in local hospitals and three are in an intensive care unit.

From September 2 to 8 – which was just one week before the daily case count started to drop off – the Department of Public Health has confirmed an average daily new case rate of 8.29 cases per day. The testing positivity rate for the same period is 3.27 percent. Therefore, the county remains in the purple tier, in which the prevalence of COVID-19 is called widespread.

Looking at the disease as broken up into age cohorts: 20 cases have been among people between the ages of 0 and 5; 38 cases between ages of 6 and 12; 69 people between the ages of 13 and 18; 283 people between the ages of 19 and 34; 203 people between the ages of 35 and 49; 122 people between the ages of 50 and 64 and 73 cases are among people who are 65 or older.

A total of 24,573 tests have been done in this county. As of Tuesday evening, the results of 1,230 tests were pending.



Black Cujo

Meet Cujo. Cujo is a 5-year-old black male cat who was dumped in the woods near the home of a kind lady who fostered for us. She was able to trap him after several attempts. He was rough and ragged after living on his own. Because he was injured, we did blood work, and he is all clear for FIV/FELV!

Cujo is looking for a home where he can be a working barn cat. He lives happily with 15 kitties in our open Cattery. Cujo is neutered, microchipped, and current on vaccines. You may apply to love Cujo at www.mendohumanesociety.com.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, by appointment only, for intakes, adoptions and fostering: Call 707-485-0123 for information or any questions. Visit "Humane Society for Mendocino County" page on Facebook to see available dogs and cats, and visit www.mendohumanesociety.com to learn more.



Viking Tig

Meet our handsome buddy Tig, aka Ragner. You may remember him as one of mama Monkey Sue's puppies known as the Viking litter. Tig is now around 8 months old and back to look for another shot at love. Unfortunately things didn't work out in his previous home. That's OK; we are here to help him find the perfect love match.

Tig is dog-social, lived with kids, and is just overall one handsome guy! Tig is a mixed-breed pup who weighs about 80 pounds. He is up to date on vaccines, microchipped, and neutered. Which means he is ready to go home with you today! You may apply to love Tig at mendohumanesociety.com.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, by appointment only, for intakes, adoptions and fostering: Call 707-485-0123 for information or any questions. Visit "Humane Society for Mendocino County" page on Facebook to see available dogs and cats, and visit www.mendohumanesociety.com to learn more.



Blue-Eyed Wiley

Wiley, a 4-year-old husky who weights 45 pounds, is the perfect medium-sized dog, and quite the trooper. When he arrived at the shelter, he had a skin issue, and was in need of a medicated bath, which he got. We're pretty sure this was Wiley's first bath! Though we can say Wiley is not a fan of bath time, he was a very good boy and allowed us to lather him up and do what needed to be done!

As we spent time with Wiley during his evaluation, we observed an independent dog who really just wanted to find a way out of the room. Perhaps he is more comfortable being outside. Secure fencing will be important in his new home. Wiley was a little unsure of Bella, a fellow shelter guest, when he met her, and we therefore want him to meet any potential canine housemates. Questions? Email the shelter's adoption coordinator at campbella@co.mendocino.ca.us

To see our canine and feline guests, and for information about our services, programs, events, and updates about COVID-19 and the shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, visit: www.mendoanimalshelter.com, For information about adoptions please call 707-467-6453.



"I'll be joining you on video to announce the winners!"

Come Meet Barry...Virtually!



WIN BARRY'S RIDE
2020 CHEVY BLAZER

SAT. SEPTEMBER 26
Car, Cash & Free Play Giveaway
Earn Entries Sept 14 – 26

Winner is responsible for any taxes, fees and licensing. Non-transferable. See Player's Club Booth for complete details.

START EARNING ENTRIES
SEPTEMBER 14TH

FREE PLAY DRAWINGS
Thurs, Fri & Sat • Sept 24, 25 & 26
5PM – 10PM

2 names drawn each hour to win \$100 Free Play and a ticket into the Grand Prize drawing.

EARN ENTRY TICKETS DAILY
SEPT 14–26 — 8AM – 10PM
100 points = 1 entry ticket

GRAND PRIZE DRAWING
4 BIG WINNERS!

Saturday September 26 After 10PM

1 ST PLACE	2020 CHEVY BLAZER
2 ND Place	\$5,000 CASH
3 RD Place	\$1,000 Free Play
4 TH Place	\$500 Free Play



SHERWOOD VALLEY CASINO

100 Kawi Place • Willits, CA 95490 Tel: 707-459-7978

Non-transferable. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Player's Club Members are required to present their postcard with valid I.D. and Player's Club Card. Management reserves the right to cancel or modify any promotion at any time without notice. For complete rules and details please visit the Player's Club. Gambling a problem? Call 1-800-GAMBLER.

Congrats
John Mitchell & Ingrid Kerr

John "Jai" Mitchell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Mitchell, California, and Ingrid Sibylle Kerr, daughter of Ms. Birgit Murphy, Louisiana, and Mr. Louis Kerr, California, were married on August 8, 2020.

The ceremony was held in a redwood grove in Willits, with Druid Scott Ferleman officiating at the ceremony.

The bride attends Santa Rosa Junior College pursuing an Associate Degree in Humanities. She is an American Sign Language interpreter.

Mr. Mitchell has a Bachelor's Degree in Nuclear Engineering from UC Berkeley in California and is self-employed, providing consulting services to public and private organizations for the research, development and evaluation of large-scale resource conservation, alternative transportation and electricity generation and resource-related social policy projects.

After a honeymoon in Germany, the couple will reside in Willits.



This 41-foot 2018 Jayco Eagle will be auctioned to raise funds for the Humane Society.

Photo by Mathew Caine

The rest of
Trailer

From Page 3

"We have also been helping the Milo Foundation Sanctuary. Many of their transporters have transported animals to a different facility. Some of their feral cats come here to us in transition. We had 10 arrive the other day. We had another batch of 13 arrive yesterday.

"We have lots of cats available for adoption," Sprague said. "We are in the full swing of kitten season. We have lots of available kittens. Our public finds either pregnant mother cats or newly delivered litters. Once they are old enough to get spayed and neutered, we take care of that here, and then they are available for adoption through this facility."

Many of the foster families find they wish to adopt the animals after living with them for a time. "We charge differing fees for the adoptions," continued Sprague. "Puppies, under 6 months old, are \$225. Adult dogs are \$195. Cats are \$95. We have barn cats available at varying fees. They are generally very good at their jobs. They're hunters." The fees include spaying, neutering, and all the care up to the adoption.

For more information or to make a donation, sponsor a kennel or cat condo, make a bid on the trailer, arrange for adoption or fostering: contact 707-485-0123 or hsimc@pacific.net. To view available animals: www.mendohumanesociety.com.



FARMERS
CANTUA INSURANCE AGENCY

16 W. Valley Street • Willits, CA 95490
Bus: (707) 459-3276 • Fax: (707) 459-3298
www.NorCalQuote.com • rcantua@farmersagent.com

Auto • Home • Life • Health • Business

COBURN'S CONSTRUCTION & CABINETRY INC.
CA LIC #392108

Preview your completed project with our 3-D Computer Image

Randy J. Coburn
General Contractor
P.O. Box 616
Willits, CA 95490
707-459-9719/FAX 707-459-4984
coburn_randy@yahoo.com/
coburnsconst@gmail.com

- Custom Homes
- New Construction
- ICF Structures
- Remodeling
- Cabinetry
- Kitchens and Baths
- Blueprints
- Plan Drawing
- Design

C BROWNS CORNER

Groceries
Beer & Wine
Gas & Diesel
Pay at the Pump

7am - 10pm
459-4854
1799 So. Main St.
P.O. Box 428

"Family owned since 1983"