

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

What good theater should be

To the Editor: I saw the Pulitzer Prize nominated play, "Keely & Du," at our own Willits Community Theatre last Saturday. I admit that I was somewhat reluctant to go, but am so glad that I did! I was rewarded by an excellent production as current as today's news.

I was totally engrossed and involved every minute. It was what good theater should be – beautifully acted, good direction, compelling – and it made me think about one of the most important issues of our times. It tore me away from my TV and gave me real live theater. Wow! We're so fortunate to have a real treasure like WCT in our richly diverse community.

I left "Keely & Du" grateful for every person who brought this play to our town, to take that chance to shine light on something important and real – and to do it so well. Thank you, WCT.

Bill Barksdale, Willits

Senior Photos a great opportunity

To the Editor: To those considering doing Maureen Jennison's Senior Photos event at the Senior Center on Saturday, November 12:

Sometimes I hear friends joke about reading the obit section of the paper to make sure they are not in it. I have done that as well, and sometimes I see familiar names, but their photo included in the paper may be 25, 40, even 50 years old, and I'm not entirely sure who it is.

My husband, Roger, and I discussed that a few years ago and decided we would have more current pictures of us taken so the family could use them in the paper when the time comes. We contacted Maureen Jennison and set up a photo session for this purpose, but I have also taken advantage of having the photo by using it when I require a professional picture since that time.

Roger and I also were able to give our children copies for Christmas gifts the year we had them taken. And it is good for the grandchildren to see photos of what we look like now and for them to remember us when our time comes.

This photo session is a great opportunity for you and your family to have a professional photo to enjoy. These will make excellent Christmas gifts your family will cherish.

Vicki Ham, Willits

Children are our future

To the Editor: It has been my honor to serve on the Willits Unified School District Board of Trustees for the past four years. My reason for running at that time was that I care deeply about children. That remains true now; I want what is most helpful for children. Children are only one-third of our population but they are 100% of our future. We need to do our best.

I have been an engaged, informed and effective member of the school board. To this end I have taken multiple courses with the California School Board Association.

I am an independent thinker who gathers information from many different sources when considering my vote on any issue that comes before the school board. As a community member, a parent, a grandparent, a retired teacher, I can see through multiple lenses. I have worked diligently to support staff and parents during the past four years.

I have skin in the game. I have two grandchildren attending school in Willits Unified. Service on the board has been a

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family affair over the decades with my husband serving on the board for six years in the 1990s, and my son was the student rep to the school board in his senior year at Willits High School.

I want the children who attend WUSD to receive a stellar education that will prepare them to be successful in life and to be fully engaged citizens.

I hope I have your vote.

Jeanne King, Willits

City council endorses library

measure

To the Editor: The Willits City Council met Wednesday, October 12, in person for the first time since the pandemic, and unanimously voted to endorse the Citizens Initiative for the Library 2022, or Measure O.

Measure O is a citizens initiative, which required and collected more than enough signatures to qualify to be placed on this ballot for November. It will replace Measure A, which passed by 78% of the voters 11 years ago, and has served us well.

Measure A allowed for an expansion of programs, and created a huge increase in library patronage throughout the county. It is sunseting out soon, so Measure O has come to the rescue. It will NOT increase our sales tax, but will simply continue with a 1/4 cent of sales tax. It will be permanent. And it is earmarked for library use only.

The money engendered will be split between salaries, books, programs, and other materials (60%), and for capital improvements (40%) which will allow our Willits Library a much-needed new roof, as well as other structural needs around the county. You may go to the Measure O website for further details: yesonlibraries.org.

Libraries are one of the pillars of democracy. They are places of safety, of curiosity, of inspiration. Please remember to vote in the November 8 election, and tell your friends. And come visit any of our many Mendocino County libraries, open and welcoming now more than ever.

Thank you for our overwhelming support from area citizens.

Melinda Clarke, president, Friends of the Willits Library, and Willits area representative for Citizens for the Library Initiative

Election and tax proposals

To the Editor:

We are getting ready for another November election cycle. With it comes usually different tax proposals, and this election cycle is no different. We live in a state with some of the highest/ if not THE highest taxes of any state, i.e., gas, income, property, sales, business, to name a few examples.

We have two ballot measures proposing additional sales tax increases this November.

Measure P. This is a quarter percent (.25%) hike in sales tax for county fire departments. If you read the ordinance it states "Nothing in the ordinance shall prohibit the county from entering in agreements with the Cities of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits and Point Arena to share a percentage of the increase of the voter approved tax proceeds". Furthermore: "The funds from the tax are not legally restricted and may be used for any valid county purpose." Basically these funds will just provide additional monies for the county to spend as they see fit at our expense.

Measure O. This is a quarter percent (.25%) hike in sales tax for the county libraries. The libraries current tax of (.125%) percent is set to expire in 2027. However they wish to revoke the sunset clause with the passage of this measure, and make it a permanent tax along with (.125%) increase.

Most people today have cell phones /computers so libraries aren't as vital as they probably once were. Why doesn't the library system establish user fees for the different services they provide? That way those who use the library would pay directly for the different services they are requesting.

Public transportation, some bridges, and museums charge a fee (to name a few) for use – shouldn't libraries do the same? This shouldn't be a taxpayer handout. Libraries provide a service to some and should charge those that they are providing the service to.

Read the rest of Letters Over on page 6

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WILLITS, BROOKTRAILS FIRE CHIEFS ENDORSE MEASURE P To the Editor: We are writing in strong support of Mendocino County Measure P, which will appear on the November 8 ballot. Our volunteer fire departments urgently and desperately need additional funding. Costs continue to rise for vital equipment, training and firefighter protection. Replacement of a single engine can cost \$400,000 or more. Fire seasons have gotten more intense and will continue to worsen. Our firefighters and fire prevention crews, many of whom are volunteers, are on the front line for all of us. They need our support now more than ever. Measure P WILL NOT increase taxes. It will dedicate a portion of the sales tax already collected to the county's 20 fire departments and the non-profit Mendocino Fire Safe Council, which helps local communities with their critical fire prevention projects. Many of our small departments have struggled to raise money for budgets with BBOs and other fundraisers for years. This measure will give them reliable funding for the next 10 years. Measure P has the support of all 20 fire chiefs, Cal Fire Local 2881, and Mendocino County sheriffs past and present. Every resident of Mendocino will benefit from this funding to strengthen our fire protection and prevention. We urge a YES vote on Measure P. Jon Noyer, chief, Brooktrails Fire Department William Carter, chief, Little Lake Fire Protection District

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT October 2022 update By Supervisor John Haschak Senator Mike McGuire and I conducted a Town Hall meeting in Willits on October 9. It was great to be back to in-person mode, as the bay in the new Fire Station was packed. We talked and answered questions for over two hours. Issues of concern were PG&E's Vegetation Management program, economic development and broadband, homelessness and Care Court proposals, Jackson State Demonstration Forest management, education (especially Career and Technical Education), cannabis, and the Great Redwood Trail. I appreciate the many people who showed up and Senator McGuire for his accessibility and openness. Senator McGuire is the California Senate Majority Leader, so we are fortunate to have him as our representative. He certainly gets things done on behalf of Mendocino County. The Mendocino County Museum opened its exhibit "Exploramos Juntos: Nuestra Alianza" on October 9. The exhibit is beautifully done, educational as well as emotionally appealing, and highlights the contributions of the Hispanic community. Of course the opening had fabulous food, dancing, and smiles. As I work with the Museum in developing a Strategic Plan, one of the goals is to reach out to all of Mendocino County. This exhibit does just that in an inclusive way. It is open until February 5, 2023, so check it out. We just had another Tree Mortality Task Force meeting. We can all see the number of dead trees in the hillsides due to drought, climate change, and bark beetles which are all interconnected. We had a productive conversation. CalFire, Caltrans, Office of Emergency Services, UC Cooperative Extension scientists, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, and others shared their perspectives. Moving forward, we will propose a Declaration of Emergency and Resolution of the Board of Supervisors. This will be in alignment with Lake, Napa, and Sonoma counties, which will help us solicit state and federal dollars and resources for a regional approach to this problem. According to projections, tree mortality will get worse. Time to be thinking rain, rain, rain. Please reach out to me at haschakj@mendocinocounty.org or 707-972-4214.



Above: The Willits Charter Middle School volleyball team poses for a photo: back row, coaches Jade Clark-Wilson and Amanda Pierson; middle row, Sofia, Maggie, Micaela, Abigail, Izzy, Allie, Amelia, Bayleigh and Zoey; front row (on floor), K'Allana and Chloe.

Charter School Athletics WCS sports and theater building completed just in time for a year of new programs

The Willits Charter School for the Arts and Sciences now has an athletics program, or at least, the beginnings of a program, which at this time, concentrates on their middle school students.

After many years of not having facilities in which to hold sporting events, the school has finally completed its building that will double as an assembly hall, capable of seating approximately 600 people, and a theater with an ample stage for most student productions. The floor of the facility is large enough to host volleyball, basketball, wrestling, and a myriad of other activities.

The first-ever league competition for Willits Charter School, a set of two volleyball matches, was played October 9, against Eagle Peak Middle School of Redwood Valley. Due to the smaller number of students at WCS, the girls volleyball team only had a single "A" team to play in both matches against the "A" and "B" teams of Eagle Peak.

They did well against the B team of their adversary, after a rough start. They did not win, but showed promise. However, in the second match against the A team, their enthusiastic efforts were not rewarded with a plethora of points. Even so, after each play, the team energetically cheered each other on, with chants of "side out" and "dominate." All in all, they obviously enjoyed the competition, as did all

Above, right, from top: The post-game routine always includes this show of sportsmanship. WCS Athletic Director Anthony Sylstra addresses the crowd before the inaugural volleyball game in the new gym. This scoreboard-timer was generously donated by METALx. Below, from left: WCS coaches Amanda Pierson and Jade Clark-Wilson watch their team's progress. Allie returns the ball over the net with a high-flying jump shot. Amelia hits the ball over the net to gain a point.



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System Flushing Plan" from Public Works Director Scott Herman. The plan documents the city's routine water main cleaning activities, done to reduce occurrences of "brown water" experienced by the city's water customers.

"In recent years," the agenda staff report said, "the community has experienced frequent brown water events. Water customers experience brown water when there is a sudden change in velocity in the water system pipes that stirs up any accumulated sediment. Annual flushing of the city's water distribution system reduces these occurrences.

"These maintenance activities are conducted during periods of low water demand," the report continued, "typically between December and April, with possible modified flushing during drought years. With the recent addition of groundwater as an approved source to offset the use of surface water, Public Works can schedule annual flushings on a regular basis."

City Manager Bob Bender mentioned the just-finished City of Willits project replacing 60 feet of corroded 4-inch steel pipe on South Magnolia Street with new 4-inch C-900 plastic pipe. Check the City of Willits Facebook page for an eye-opening photo of the corrosion in the old pipe. The city's ultimate goal is to replace all the old steel pipe in the system over time.

The October 12 Willits City Council meeting was recorded, and is available to watch at https://youtu.be/ZM_JMRj9R18

WCC resolution to endorse Measure P

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLITS PROCLAIMING ITS SUPPORT FOR MENDOCINO COUNTY MEASURE P, A PROPOSED SALES TAX TO FUND FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Willits at its September 28th meeting received a briefing on the proposed Mendocino County Measure P from the Fire Safe Council of Mendocino County and the Little Lake Fire District; and

WHEREAS, Measure P is not a new tax but a reallocation of the existing 5/8 of one-cent sales tax to fund fire protection and prevention throughout Mendocino County; and WHEREAS, Measure P is a Ballot Measure set for the November 8th General Election; and

WHEREAS, ninety-percent of the revenue collected from Measure P is earmarked for local Fire Districts and the remaining ten-percent for fire-prevention programs; and WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Willits agreed it is in the best interest of the public safety for Willits' citizens to have the Little Lake Fire District receive additional funding to strengthen the fire and emergency services in the City of Willits; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Willits City Council by adopting this Resolution proclaims its support for Mendocino County Measure P to provide additional funding for fire protection and prevention efforts.

WCC resolution to endorse Measure O

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLITS PROCLAIMING ITS SUPPORT FOR MENDOCINO COUNTY MEASURE O, A PROPOSED SALES TAX TO SUPPORT THE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Willits has an interest to ensure the Mendocino County Library System has sufficient funding thereby enabling the System to provide the most complete range of services for the benefit of County residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Willits hosts one of the six Library Branches; and

WHEREAS, Measure O is a Ballot Measure set for the November 8th General Election; and

WHEREAS, Measure O is not a new tax but a reallocation of the existing 5/8 of one-cent sales tax to annually collect an estimated \$4.2 million of which 40-percent is earmarked for capital repairs and improvements for the Library System; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Willits agreed it is in the best interest of the community to advocate for additional funding for the Mendocino County Library System especially as citizens of the Willits benefit by having a local Library Branch; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Willits City Council by adopting this Resolution proclaims its support for Mendocino County Measure O to provide additional funding for the County Library System.

school district during a time when teachers are in short supply across the country.

"I think one of the main things that Willits can do," said incumbent Jeanne King, "and I've seen it be very successful here, is to 'grow our own,'" to attract young people who grew up in Willits back to be teachers in the district. "I think compensation is really really important," King said. "Willits Unified compensates not only with monies, but it has an excellent benefits package, much better than other districts."

King also said the district's reserve was 17%, a "prudent reserve" that "allows the school district to pay expenses for two months in case there's a catastrophe with the state budget – it's a way to keep things going so it doesn't stop abruptly."

"I strongly believe our district has enough money to increase salaries by a great deal," said incumbent Paula Nunez. "According to our unaudited actuals, which are monies that must be reported exactly as spent to the state, there is an over 25% reserve, even though our district has decided that 17% is the max we should go to."

Nunez also mentioned lack of housing, suggesting large property owners in Willits might consider donating or selling their property inexpensively to the district "so we can set up some appropriate teacher housing."

"The strategic reserve for Willits is far higher than any other district in the area," said candidate David Liker. "It's more than twice as much," maybe more, than neighboring districts. "It's clear we do have the funding" to raise teachers' salaries.

The problem of attracting employees is "not just teachers," Liker said, citing issues with recruiting and retaining administrative and classified positions. "Our health care is good, but frankly it's not quite as good as it used to be relative to our competitors. I would say salaries is an important reason why we can't retain teachers."

"If we have reserves that we're not spending on the teachers," said candidate Colby Friend, "we should be ashamed of our ourselves, we should be spending it on the teachers. Let's make their salary competitive with the school districts around us. I don't understand how we could think we're going to keep good teachers if they're paying more 20 minutes down the road."

"I think we should incentivize longevity," Friend added. "If you've been here longer, you get paid more. And not just teachers but classified personnel – the bus drivers, janitors, cafeteria workers, and all the other personnel that help make the school run efficiently."

"The first thing for me is salaries," said candidate Jennifer Sookne. "I don't know how people survive" on teachers' salaries. "I've spoken to some teachers at the high school," she said, "and we were talking about salaries and we were talking about their concerns.... There were questions as to whether the district was using all of the money that was being given for salaries, for those salaries, or was it being put aside for other purposes."

Sookne cited her experience working with the county as a social worker and a member of Service Employees International Union when "there were a lot of questions about where the money geared specifically toward salaries was going. So that would be one thing to look at," she said, as far as finding funds to raise compensation for teachers.

Incumbent Robert Chavez talked about "the magic" that happens between students and teachers. "We have to support [our teachers]," he said. "If it was up to me we'd start our teachers out at about \$200,000, and we'd go up from there," he said. "However, I'd love to say give teachers all our money, and personally I'd give them everything we can, but I also want to be fiscally responsible. In a couple, three years, we're looking at a recession and a cliff on budget, and we do have to keep our district running – so give them as much as we can and still remain fiscally responsible."

Chavez also commented that keeping a larger reserve than some other small districts had given WUSD, during the last big round of education cuts, "the little edge to keep programs like band and athletics going."

Write-in candidate April Lamprich said she agreed with Chavez that "I would love to give our teachers as much as I possibly can, but I mean if we don't have the money, it's kind of hard." Lamprich also said that if rewarded with increased "longevity" pay, teachers would stay longer. "The reserve may need to be reevaluated," she said, "to make sure teachers stay."

She also mentioned it's not just teachers: "We don't have registered nurses at any of our schools, they're just certified. I think it's super-important for teachers to be CPR-certified. The hospital offers those classes for free, I would love to put an incentive program in to make sure our teachers are being paid for the time they were there. As a parent, I would feel better if teachers were CPR-certified."

would include walking and biking areas as well as enhanced traffic conditions. Whatever participating individuals want to place in this map will be welcome."

O'Shea further added, "This is a potentially great study that will help provide solutions for transportation needs in our area." Director Tony Orth added that the study is also accessible on Facebook.

Orth also reported that "the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts Steering Committee is now meeting on a monthly basis."

General Manager Tamara Alaniz shared: "Brooktrails water supply is good, and the water quality is good. We've experienced additional water treatment costs recently, and we will be talking about that later in the meeting."

Joe Haggard, active Brooktrails Golf Course volunteer who heads up the Basket Beaters Disc Golf Club, went to the podium and wanted to let the board know of some points that needed to be clarified in the previous September 13 meeting staff report regarding the Brooktrails Golf Course. (Joe Haggard's name was misreported in a previous edition and we are glad to make the correction now.)

Haggard provided receipts totaling \$11,000 for items that his group had purchased to expedite repairs and updates on the Brooktrails Golf Course. He said he wanted to make sure that the significant contributions that volunteers (himself, River Haggard, Tom Allen, and Mark McKee) had made, including over 200 volunteer hours expended by the group, to improve the golf course and to prepare Ohl Grove for disc golf tournament play were recognized and noted.

In addition, he and several volunteers put in many hours following the January 2021 winter snowstorm to clean up – clearing multiple branches and burning brush – to make the golf course playable not just for disc golf but also for the ball golf course again. "We are extremely grateful for Brooktrails Township allowing us to create this disc golf space," Haggard said, "and we just want to make sure that our volunteer efforts and contributions are recognized."

Director Ed Horrick pointed out that Haggard and his group should be recognized for the \$5,000 contribution that they gave to the Brooktrails Fire Department last month, as well.

Responding Haggard's comments, General Manager Alaniz thanked him for sharing his information and said that corrections to the previous staff report would be made.

Two interesting notes were additionally made by Director Orth and Director Horrick. Orth said: "Historically, the golfers were the initial firefighting volunteers for Brooktrails. The golf club was the first group to man the fire engines originally." Horrick added: "Significantly, the Brooktrails Disc Golf Course is rated #3 in California."

Board President Williams said to Haggard: "Please assure your members that the board is firmly convinced that without the disc golf activity at the course, it's very possible that the golf course would not have survived as an ongoing entity. You guys came around at the perfect time. You've done a tremendous amount of work. You've attracted a lot of people. You've really made a huge difference in terms of the golf course, which is simply one of the most beautiful places in Brooktrails and in the Willits area."

The board then voted unanimous approval of the Consent Calendar Accounts Payable in the amount of \$105,705.75.

Next up was Consent Calendar item "Consideration of Findings Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 to Hold In-Person and Remote (Hybrid) Publicly Accessible Board Meetings." With

With all the different taxes we are currently paying do you think it is a good idea to just continue to raise your families' cost to live in this state? How do other states get by with fewer/lower taxes? The argument is it is not an increase because a tax expires. If a tax expires and reduces our taxes and another tax comes and takes its place then that is an INCREASE in my book.

With the way our cost for everyday living is skyrocketing do you really want to pay additional taxes on the current 9+-% sales tax you currently pay on purchases? [Editor's Note: if both Measure O and Measure P passed, the sales tax rates residents currently pay, depending on whether they live inside a city or in the county, would not go up – the current sales tax rate would continue.)

Sales tax is close to \$10 for every \$100 dollars you spend now. When will this insanity end?

Dale Briggs, Willits



Above, from left: Jennifer Lutge and Vanessa Jimenez of CalFresh offer healthy and refreshing drinks. Nick Buettner, who created the concept, along with his brother Dan, of the Blue Zones Project, speaks on the benefits of healthy lifestyles. A couple attendees pose against the green screen in the instant photo booth. At right: Allegra Foley and Viridiana Rodriguez help people enroll in the CalFresh program and answer questions. Below: Michelle Duarte of Blue Zones watches as Diana Howe pedals the smoothie-maker bicycle.



At far left: Tina Tyler, of the Blue Zones Project, thanks Adventist Health for their sponsorship of the program. At left: Shawna Javavons signs people up for her yoga and Pilates classes.

Healthy Lifestyles

Blue Zones Project of Mendocino County hosts kickoff event to inspire people to live and eat well

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
mathew@willitsweekly.com

On a beautiful Sunday in Recreation Grove Park, the Blue Zones Project and several like-minded health-oriented entities and services, set up booths in order to educate and inform the people of Willits about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, as well as provide an entertaining couple of hours for the families.

"The event went really well," said Michelle Duarte, senior events and office specialist for the Blue Zones Project in Mendocino County. "We had a lot of families that attended, learning about the Blue Zones Project, and a great turnout of about 150 people."

Several speakers, including the staff of the Blue Zones Project and such local luminaries as author Jed Diamond, Willits Mayor Saprina Rodriguez, and Third District Supervisor John Haschak spoke about the efforts of the organization and other supporting entities to make the citizens aware of the possibilities inherent in living according to the Blue Zones philosophy.

The tenets of the philosophy are to live life well, eat properly, and exercise regularly. The idea was developed a few years ago by Dan and Nick Buettner as they set out to discover what made some areas of the world healthier and have a longer life expectancy than others. They developed a Nine-Point Plan, which will create a healthier life for those who follow it. Nick Buettner was the key speaker of the afternoon.

The park was inhabited by several booths, a few of which were by the Blue Zones Project, offering insulated tote bags, tchotchkes, and a passport card to be stamped at each station. Other booths included North Coast

Read the rest of
Zones
Over on page 13

THIS WEEKEND!

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Above, left: CalFire Battalion Chief Ray Taglio shows the Mendocino map of air bases. Above, right: Robert Richardson, air tanker base manager, and his trainee-replacement, Sophie Bell, work from inside the Ukiah Air Attack Base. Below: An air tanker drops retardant over the Ridgewood Fire.



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No Hormones, Pastured in Willits, California

Above, from left: Air Attack 110 flies ahead of the tankers and communicates with the ground and tankers to coordinate the attack. Ray Taglio, battalion chief with CalFire, directs the fire attack from Air Attack 110. Battalion Chief Ray Taglio shows the indicators used in filling the tanks. At left: CalFire Air Tanker 90 awaits any fire incident for which it is needed. Below: A sign marks the entrance to the Ukiah Air Attack Base at the Ukiah Airport.



Photos by Mathew Caine

Higher Vantage Point

A CalFire battalion chief explains the important role of air tankers in preventing the spread of forest fires

"We don't put the fire out," said Ray Taglio, CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit battalion chief at Howard Forest Station and the Ukiah Airport. "That's not the goal for us. That's one of the misconceptions out there. We don't actually put the fire out. We slow it up enough for the guys on the ground to really get in there and put it out and do the mop-up stages."

Taglio explained the responsibilities of the air tanker unit: "The air tankers drop retardant and the helicopters drop water. The air tankers can carry water but we use fire retardant as an agent to slow down the progression of the fire. That's the goal of the aircraft."

"We drop the retardant in front of the fire or parallel," he said. "If you figure, the fire has these parts: the heel, the head, and two flanks. We use fire retardant very similar to fire engines using a fire hose or dozers putting in a dozer line. We'll try and make our way around the head and come back down the other flank."

The fire retardant is a mixture of detergent chemicals made from a combination of wetting agents and foaming chemicals, fertilizers (ammonium and diammonium sulfate and ammonium phosphate) mixed with thickeners (guar gum) and corrosion inhibitors (for aircraft safety). The retardant has a red color for visibility.

The Ukiah unit has two tankers, S-2T double-engine aircraft with the designations 90 and 91. Acquired from the US Navy, where they were formerly utilized from 1958 to 1975 as anti-submarine craft, in 1996 by CalFire, they were refitted with powerful turboprop engines and fitted

with tanks capable of carrying 1,200 gallons of retardant. The two tankers work in close communication with the OV-10 Air Tactical Aircraft, in which Taglio and others of his rank ride in order to coordinate the overall attack on the fire incident.

"We're not a spotter plane as the general public would believe," explained Taglio. "We really don't go up looking for fires. We only go flying once we're dispatched to an incident and our job is aircraft safety coordination between the ground and the incident commander and to give periodic updates as the fire is progressing."

"From our vantage point," he said, "we can see the overall picture where the guys and gals on the ground can only, unfortunately, see what's in front of them. We're constantly giving updates on the fire, where the fire's headed, what it's doing, is it slowing down or stopping, is it outrunning them, do we need to get way out in front to take care of it?"

There are occasions where the OV-10 will send out a puff of smoke to designate the desired retardant drop area.

"The goal for CalFire is to have aircraft at an incident within 20 minutes. There are bases placed periodically all over the state, helicopter and fixed-wing, so, strategically, we can be over an incident within 20 minutes," said Taglio, showing the various regions on a wall map in the headquarters.

Depending on the terrain and the materials burning,

Read the rest of Tankers Over on page 15

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Assessor-Clerk Recorder Technician I
Auditor/Appraiser
Building Maintenance Mechanic I/II/III
Corrections Deputy
Department Application Specialist
Deputy District Attorney I/II/III
Deputy Probation Officer I/II
Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II
Environmental Health Specialist I/II
Juvenile Corrections Officer
Juvenile Corrections Officer - Extra-Help
Planning Technician I/II
Public Health Nurse
Public Safety Dispatcher
Registered Nurse
Senior Auditor/Appraiser
Senior Program Manager-Family & Children's Services
Senior Public Health Nurse
Social Worker Assistant I/II
Social Worker I/II/III/IV A-D
Social Worker Supervisor I/II A-C
Vocational Assistant
For a complete list of current job openings and to apply:
www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mendocinoca
EOE

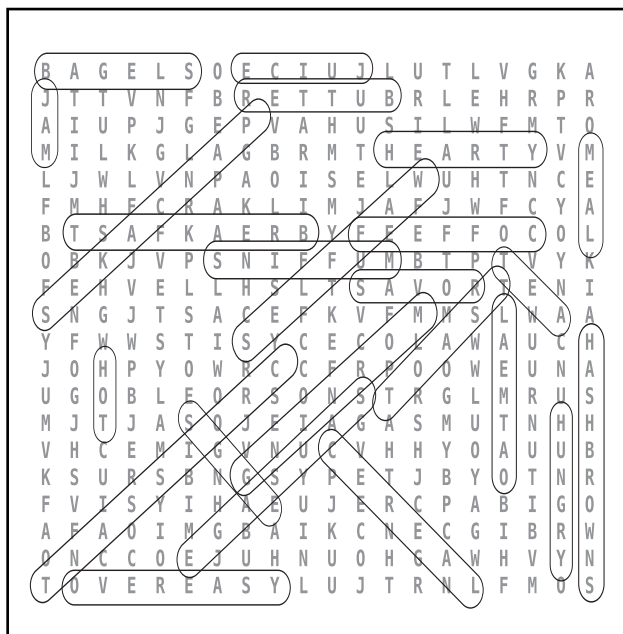
The rest of Charter From page 3

"I teach volleyball for the Friday Academy class," explained Coach Jade Clark-Wilson. "The girls in the class wanted to have an actual after-school team. This has been their first real experience with having volleyball as a sport. Most schools have been able to have their kids watch the programs from the sixth grade on, but these kids have had to start fresh."

"They've learned a lot," said Clark-Wilson, "not just in volleyball, but in how to be a good teammate and what it means to be a dedicated player on a team. Sports was the one thing that was lacking here [at WCS] and now it's coming together. Right now, we're just starting at middle school level sports and hopefully, eventually, it will also move up to the high school level."

The Willits Charter School now has an athletic director named Anthony Sylstra to oversee the new programs. "Last year, our official [California Interscholastic Federation] sports were soccer, basketball, wrestling," explained Sylstra. "The City of Willits allowed us to use the city soccer field. We got track and field added last year, and badminton. Baseball has been approved for us for the girls. I have to coordinate with Saprina [Rodriguez] about using their fields."

"Volleyball is going right now," continued Sylstra. "They haven't gotten an official win yet but they're having fun."



LEGAL NOTICES
WW401
BROOKTRAILS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of Brooktrails Township Community Services District will conduct Public Hearings on revisions to the water base rate, volumetric/water usage rate, and sewer base rate, as well as golf rates/green fees, effective January 1, 2023.
The public hearing will be held in person and remotely (hybrid meeting) at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 13, 2022. Information on remote access to the meeting will be provided on the meeting agenda at its publishing. At or prior to this time, any interested person, including all people owning property in Brooktrails Township Community Services District, may appear personally or submit a written presentation on any matter relating to the proposed revisions.
The General Manager will submit a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 based on increased utility base rates and volumetric/water usage rate. The monthly water base rate would increase by 2.47% to \$61.50; the volumetric/water usage rate would increase by 8.71% to \$0.03718 per cubic foot; and, the monthly sewer base rate would increase by 2.23% to \$76.67. The proposed increases are necessary based on the increased cost to provide water and wastewater services. Golf rates will be increased for the first time since 2018 and are related to significant cost increases over the last five years.
A copy of the proposed rates is available for review during normal business hours at the Township Office, 24860 Birch Street, Willits, California or by request from btcsd@btcsd.org. Dated: October 12, 2022
Signed by: Tamara Alaniz, General Manager/Secretary to the Board of Directors
Publication Date: October 20, 2022
WW400
BROOKTRAILS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of Brooktrails Township Community Services District will conduct Public Hearings on revisions to the rates for Solid Wastes of Willits garbage collection and curbside recycling in Brooktrails effective January 1, 2023.
The public hearing will be held in person and remotely (hybrid meeting) at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 13, 2022. Information on remote access to the meeting will be provided on the meeting agenda at its publishing. At or prior to this time, any interested person, including all people owning property in Brooktrails Township Community Services District, may appear personally or submit a written presentation on any matter relating to the proposed revisions.
The proposed increase is necessary based on the increased cost to provide services, especially fuel costs. Further justification for the rates and franchise fee will be provided at the Public Hearing and in the agenda packet.
A copy of the proposed rates will be available for review during normal business hours at the Township Office, 24860 Birch Street, Willits, California or by request from btcsd@btcsd.org. Dated: October 12, 2022
Signed by: Tamara Alaniz, Secretary to the Board of Directors
Publication Date: October 20, 2022

"I was coaching basketball last year. They started out 0 and 5. Guy Vaccaro came in and said 'let me show you some things.' The girls won four in a row."

"It's not just about winning," he added. "There's sportsmanship, leadership, integrity. You got to show up ready to play that sport, but you also have to [keep up with] your schooling, and how you treat other students comes into effect."

Currently, the athletic program is aimed at middle school, with soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, wrestling, and cross-country. "I would love to have boxing here. Swimming would be good if we can get pool time," said Sylstra.

Sylstra explained the value of having a sports program: "The main goal I get out of sports, whether teaching or learning it, is leadership. I've taken what I've learned doing sports and used it in my life, getting a job. I teach the kids sports but also leadership and sportsmanship. I believe that sports are what keep schools and America together."

The Willits Charter School is located at 1431 South Main Street. Call 459-5506 or visit www.willitscharter.org for more information.

CLASSIFIEDS
Attention
Anyone with generator, small engine or misc. equipment located at 'Alternative Power Solutions' in the care of Derek Stamps - please contact Tanya at 707-272-8668 to claim your property. Proof of ownership required. All remaining items will be disposed of by October 22, 2022.
Business for Sale
Kenny's Barber Shop, turn key business. Month to month rent at 1569 South Main Street. 3 chairs and 3 sinks. TV, Fridge, 6 waiting room chairs. \$10,000 all included. Call Don Keith - 949 677 5334
The Chamber needs YOU!
Willits Chamber of Commerce is looking for volunteers to help answer phones, meet and greet the public, help with fundraising and mixers and much more! Interested in getting involved? We need enthusiastic, energetic and excited people to help with all the Chamber needs. Paid, part-time position also available for the right fit. For info: please email 8atscoops@gmail.com (preferred) or call 707-272-2396.
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 uicearhail@gmail.com
Firewood for Sale
1 true cord of 16 inch firewood, fir starting at \$250, and up. Plus delivery. Call Dave at 707-459-2868.
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Willits Weekly runs our classified ads for just \$10 for 30 words for two weeks - in print and online, too! Add yours by emailing willitsweekly@gmail.com
For Rent
2 Bdrm. 1 Bath Apt., in a quiet complex, close to shopping, newly redecorated. Washer & Dryer on site. \$1,100 per month & security deposit. Armco 707-459-9601.
John Ford Ranch Beef
John Ford Ranch still has the 50 lb. Rancher's Choice Box for \$325.00 and the 25 lb. Hamburger Box for \$150.00. Please contact Debbie Arkelian @ 459-5049.
Moving Sale
9 am to 3 pm. Oct 21-23. Golden Rule Mobile Village, Sp 63. 6 miles south of Willits Furniture. Kitchen items, books, tools, antiques, and lots of miscellaneous items.
Moving Sale
Everything must go. 1701 Perch Road, Willits. Land Line (707) 459-5464. 2 Saturdays and Sundays, (10/15 & 10/16) and (10/22 & 10/23) 10 am to 6 pm.
Room for Rent
Master bedroom and bath, private entrance, no shared spaces, refrigerator, no range; includes utilities. You need to have a job. 1 person only. In town. \$700. 805-259-9155
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) 972-4696. See at <http://www.oakvine.net/p>
Wanted
Propane stove with oven pilot light (not electric ignition). Call or text Kip @ 707-459-6098.
Yard Sale
Saturday 10/29/22 and Sunday 10/30/22 at 555 Mill Street in Willits, from 9 am to 2 pm. Items include new and used men's and women's clothes and accessories, sports and household items, some furniture.
You Noticed
That's the great thing about classifieds: People look through them just to look through them and it makes it a perfect place to place an ad! Extra bonus - they're super cheap! \$10 for 30 words for two weeks!

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



Slinky Tiki

Tiki, like her brother and sister, is quite shy and reserved. Tiki would likely do best in a home with no young children, as she can be a bit nervous and hissy at first. She gets along

well with other cats and plays with toys once she is comfortable.

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, requires a reservation to view adoptable animals. Call 707-467-6453 to make an appointment to meet Tiki or our other canine and feline guests. Make sure to pre-fill out the adoption application available at www.mendocinoshelter.com.



Golden Mac

Mac is our Mexican-born sweetheart! He's house-trained and crate-trained and is dog-friendly to boot! He does need a bit of training since he's only 1 ½ years old and he can be mouthy, so we recommend an adult home with no children.

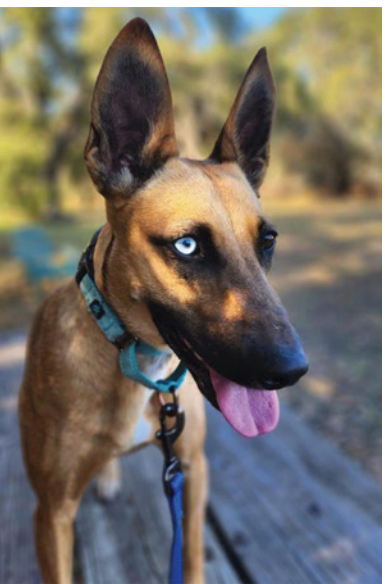
To learn more about Mac or view other adoptable animals, visit www.milofoundation.org or the Milo Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only due to COVID-19. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment. You can reach the Milo Foundation at 510-900-2275.

Clever Layla

This beauty with two colored eyes is Layla. She was previously adopted but unfortunately it wasn't the right match and was a sad decision for everyone. Layla is a nice medium size and is extra smart. She would love an active home where she

can thrive! Layla is under the age of 2 and looking for the perfect place in this world for her young, eager self. Could that be with you?

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 and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. You may also look at our available dogs and cats on our website: www.mendocinohumane.org, our Facebook page, and on www.petfinder.com.



OBITUARY |

Pom Cartwright

Pomella Joyce (Brewer) Cartwright passed away at home on September 30, 2022. She was born Sept. 6, 1939 to Albert and Pat Brewer in Eureka. She moved with her mother to Richmond and eventually back to Willits.

Pom was the majorette in the Willits High School marching band and graduated in 1957. After school she attended business school in Berkeley then moved back to Willits.

Pom married Percy Cartwright in November, 1959. They were married 63 years.

Pom was well known in Willits for her work at Bank of America, and at Hot Rocks and Harrah Industries. She served as a Bluebird/Campfire Girl Leader, was active in her local sorority and RV club, and always made time to help family and friends.

She is survived by her husband, Percy; daughter Rhonda Cartwright-Ladendorf and husband, Barry, of San Diego; son Bruce Cartwright of Willits; brother Carl Simonson and wife, Katie, of Santa Rosa; brother Bob Simonson and wife, Kathy, and nephew Matt Simonson of St. Louis; sister Lucy Simonson of Ukiah; and brother Jeff

Brewer and wife, Gail, nephew Marc, and niece Jessica of Oregon.

She is also survived by granddaughter Jenifer Evans and husband, Jeff, and their daughters, Scarlett, Autumn and Harlow; grandson Bruce Evan Cartwright of Ukiah; her beloved aunt Vivian Hazelswerdt of Willits; numerous cousins; and many close friends.




She is predeceased by her mother Pat Simonson and stepfather Bob Simonson; father Albert Brewer and step-mother Mildred Brewer; and mother and father-in-law Carrie and Ben Cartwright, and sister-in-law Gale.

Pom is remembered fondly for her sweetness and generosity and will be deeply missed.

Her memorial service will be held on November 1 at 10:30 a.m. at the Willits Methodist Church.

Donations in memory of Pom can be made to the Diabetes Research Institute at <https://support.diabetesresearch.org>

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



Please join us in celebrating
the life and memory of

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Auditions for ‘One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest’

Auditions for the classic play “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” will be held at 7 pm on Monday, October 24 and 7 pm Wednesday, October 26 at the new gymnasium at the Willits Charter School at 1431 South Main Street in Willits.

The play, presented by Willits Community Theatre, will be directed by Billy Hetherington. It was written by Dale Wasserman and is based on the 1962 novel by the same name by Ken Kesey. Set in a mental hospital, it tells the story of how institutional power and the need to control people and make them conform can crush the human spirit.

The director is seeking four women and 13 men, ages 16 to 70. You can find an online version of the script at www.lths.net/cms/lib/L01904810/Centricity/domain/767/visual%20word/acting%20chpt%207/One%20Flew%20complete%20play.pdf

To find the Willits Charter School gymnasium, go through the gate at the east end of the parking lot, and head east. The gymnasium is the large building behind the main building of the school.

“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” will rehearse in December and January and will open on February 10, 2023. It will play for nine shows and will close on February 26.

For more information about the play or about auditions, call the director at (707) 367-5724.

Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, and continues to serve drive-through and walk-up lunches, too. Lunch is available Monday through Friday, from 12 to 12:45 pm, inside and outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Price is \$7.

Thursday, October 20: Spaghetti w/meat sauce, Garlic Bread, Green Salad

Friday, October 21: BBQ Chicken, Beans, Veggie, Corn Bread

Monday, October 24: Fish Tacos, Rice & Beans

Tuesday, October 25: Chicken Florentine Pesto Pasta, Garlic Bread, Green Salad

Wednesday, October 26: Ground Sirloin, Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy, Veggie, Roll

Thursday, October 27: Chili Mac, Corn Bread, Green Salad

Friday, October 28: Turkey Dinner, Veggie, Roll, Cranberry

Meals on Wheels: The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday. To sign up call Deb at 459-6826, who can help fill out the application form. Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery. Delivered throughout Willits.

Transportation for seniors: Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors’ appointments. Senior Center Thrift Shop: 459-2176

The Senior Center is in need of volunteers to help with the many activities here at the center, including volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers. “Volunteers are one-third of our workforce, which allows us to offer many services to our members and community.” To learn more about volunteering: 459-6826

School bus lights flash to save children's lives

Submitted by CHP, Sacramento

School bus safety is a two-way street – a responsibility shared by professional school bus drivers and every motorist on California’s roadways. The California Highway Patrol is bringing awareness to the role we all play in ensuring students throughout the state travel safely to and from school as part of National School Bus Safety Week, October 17-21.

“School bus safety is part of the CHP’s mission, and we take our mission very seriously,” CHP Commissioner Amanda Ray said. “This week is a reminder that everyone should do their part each day to remain alert behind the wheel, particularly when you see a school bus or children at bus stops.”

With few exceptions, California law requires drivers to stop in both directions when a school bus has flashing red lights on. Drivers must stop until the red lights are off, and school bus drivers are trained to only turn their flashing red lights off when they are certain the children are safely out of the road and seated on the bus.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, riding a school bus is the safest way for students to get to school – 70 times safer compared to other modes of transportation. School buses are one of the most regulated vehicles on the road.

On average, more than 50,000 certified school bus drivers transport more than 1 million students each year in California, traveling approximately 243.5 million miles.

To help ensure the safety of students, the CHP inspects more than 20,000 school buses annually and launched the Vehicles Illegally Passing a School Bus enforcement project in 2017. During these VIPS enforcement operations, CHP officers ride on school buses and patrol bus routes, watching for vehicles that do not stop for flashing red school bus lights.

The VIPS enforcement project also encourages people to report drivers who illegally pass a school bus – a violation that last year resulted in citations to 218 motorists. For non-emergency complaints, you can contact your local CHP area office at <https://www.chp.ca.gov/find-an-office> or call 1-800-TELL-CHP.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of “Safety, Service, and Security.”

Funding available for ‘Earthquake Brace + Bolt’ Program

Submitted by Mendocino County Executive Office

Mendocino County’s Prevention, Recovery, Resiliency, and Mitigation Division encourages homeowners in Willits, Redwood Valley, Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Mendocino to take advantage of grant funding to offset the cost of seismic retrofitting of their primary residences.

The Earthquake Brace + Bolt Program, jointly administered by the California Earthquake Authority and the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, offers eligible homeowners grants for up to \$3,000. The grants help offset the cost of seismic retrofits that brace the cripple walls of older homes, when present, and bolt houses to their foundations, making them less vulnerable to earthquake damage.

Eligible homeowners can apply online for grants during the registration period, October 18 through November 29, 2022. Thanks to additional FEMA funding that is administered by Cal OES, EBB grants will be available to homeowners in 521 zip codes in more than 270 cities and communities. In Mendocino County, zip codes eligible for EBB grants are 95437 (Fort Bragg), 95460 (Mendocino), 95470 (Redwood Valley), 95482 (Ukiah), and 95490 (Willits).

Income-eligible homeowners may also qualify for available supplemental grants. The amounts vary depending on the region and type of retrofit completed. These supplemental grants, which are available for households with an income at or below \$72,080, may be able to provide up to 100% of the funds needed to cover a seismic retrofit. Grants are contingent upon meeting eligibility requirements and available funds.

For more information on the EBB grant program please visit: <https://www.earthquakebracebolt.com/How-Our-Program-Works/See-If-You-Qualify>

Fire training towers purchased with PG&E funds

By Darcie Antle, CEO, Mendocino County

September 2022 – Settlement funds received from PG&E are being put to good use in Mendocino County. Money provided to local fire agencies by the County of Mendocino has been used to purchase and install training towers in Hopland, Manchester and Laytonville.

The towers, built and installed by Affordable Drill Towers out of Austin, Texas, are 13 feet by 18 feet, and five stories high, with a top floor at 32 feet. These towers provide several anchor points to allow firefighters to practice high angle rescue.

Additionally, the towers can be used to conduct ladder drills, practice fire hose usage through a 2.5 inch standpipe that provides water to three levels of the structure, and to train with fire suppression systems like fire sprinkler heads. Training with fire sprinkler heads and high angle rescue are particularly valuable, as there are limited opportunities to train without access to these types of specialty towers.

These facilities will be available regionally for various fire agencies throughout the county. Two additional large towers, also partially funded by the County of Mendocino’s PG&E fund allocation, should be installed within the next eight to nine months. The County Training Officers Association is developing best practices for use of the towers to ensure participants’ safety and maximize training opportunities.

When asked about the towers, Greg Smith, assistant fire chief, wanted to give special thanks to the team at Affordable Drill Towers and the County of Mendocino. He further stressed how important these towers will be for future training of local fire agencies during this period of high wildfire danger.

For further information, please contact the Executive Office at 707-463-4441 or ceo@mendocinocounty.org.

MTA to offer free bus rides in November

Mendocino Transit Authority is offering “No Fare November” - free bus rides from November 1 to 30 on all fixed-route buses.

Mendocino County residents are encouraged to give MTA a try for free.

All public transit buses in the county are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

For more information on MTA and its services, visit www.mendocinotransit.org or call (800) 696-4MTA.

NO FARE NOVEMBER 1ST - 30TH ALL FIXED ROUTE BUS RIDES ARE FREE

Planifique un viaje en la MTA

Mendocino Transit Authority ofrece viajes gratuitos del 1 al 30 de noviembre en todos los autobuses de ruta fija.

Se alienta a los residentes del condado de Mendocino a probar MTA de forma gratuita.

Todos los autobuses de transporte público en el condado son accesables para personas con discapacidades.

Para obtener más información sobre MTA y sus servicios visite www.mendocinotransit.org; (800) 696-4MTA.

‘Graveyard Bash’ at the Willits Library, October 29.

The Willits Branch Library will host their annual Halloween Party for kids and families on Saturday, October 29th from 2:30 to 4 pm. The theme this year is “the Graveyard Bash,” and it will be both safe and spooky.

Weather permitting, the event will be hosted in the parking lot next to the building. The area will be blocked to ensure safety from vehicles. Parking will be available in front of and behind the library.

There will be games, activities, a book patch, photo opportunities, prizes, candy, and special prizes for kids who come in costume.

This event is open to all ages, but is best suited for families with children. The staff will be dressed in their spookiest attire. Please bring your friends and family down to the Willits Branch Library Halloween Graveyard Bash.

For more information, please visit www.mendolibrary.org or contact the Willits Library at 707-459-5908.



Above: Dahvi Hooper of Dahvi’s Kitchen passes out free samples; Tom Mann and an employee of Brickhouse Coffee prepare samples in the background. At right: Cici Winiger prepares the wheel so that participants can win healthy prizes. Photos by Mathew Caine

The rest of
Zones | From page 7

Opportunities, Redwood Coast Regional Center, Adventist Health, Thrive Yoga, Women Infants and Children, and one of the most popular, the smoothie bike on which people pedaled to make a blender whip up delicious smoothies. Dahvi’s Kitchen, Brickhouse Coffee, and Thanksgiving Coffee provided welcome free samples of their products.

As a special treat, several young dancers from the Nuestra Alianza exhibit, across the street at the Mendocino County Museum, entertained the crowd with their colorful demonstration of Latino culture.

Duarte wished to thank her volunteers: Stepheni and Jim Lotten, Carlos Duarte, Joan Hamilton, and Itzel Chavez, without whom the event would have been much more difficult to produce.

“We came to the conclusion that everyone cares about their community, the food policies, the tobacco policies, and the people,” said Duarte. “We’re very stoked that we live in a community where people care about people and want to make the community healthier.”

Below, from left: Calendula like to sprout in cooler weather and bloom much of the year. This is a great time to plant them for winter and spring bloom. “Sunshine Flashback” is an original variety from farmer Frank Morton. Winter squash that are fully ripe, picked before frost, properly cured, and kept in a dry, frost-free place should provide many meals all winter. Love-in-a-Mist is best sown now, and makes a perfect companion for poppies in spring. Poppies come in many styles, and every color but blue. These Shirley poppies bloom over a very long period. Sow them now for spring bloom.



At left: This is the time to revel in the fragrance and flavors of your garden produce. These zinnias, cucumbers, crookneck squash, and basil will soon succumb to frost. Below, left: Delicata squash is a sweet treat for fall and winter. They don't keep as long as other winter squash, and should be used by Christmas. Below, right: Cold weather develops brighter colors in hardy vegetables like this chard.



Above, from left: Growing your own garlic is easy and gives you lots of choices for the flavors and types you want. Now is the best time to plant. Turnips are dependable winter crops that come in a variety of colors. Tomatoes will ripen indoors if they are full-sized and pale green. Those that are undersized and dark green should be cut off now and composted. Winter Density is a classic lettuce that you can plant now for harvest through most of the winter.

Below, from left: Criolla Sella is a pepper from the Andes that overwinters well indoors or in a greenhouse. Picking the whole outer leaves from the base of your lettuce increases the yield and gives a very good quality leaf that keeps well. For best flavor, harvest tomatoes on a sunny afternoon. Be sure to pick any that are close to ripe if either rain or frost threatens. Fava beans (and bell beans which are small favas) are winter cover crops that are also food crops. Now is the best time to plant.



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COLUMN | Garden Tip of the Month

October: More and better harvests

These sunny days of October are great for planting garlic, sowing cover crops, and transplanting out the hardy vegetables that will feed you all winter. It’s also harvest time.

With summer crops, the goal of harvesting is to save everything usable, before the damp and cold ruin them. With greens and winter vegetables, the goal is to keep the plants healthy and productive over the winter. Success with both depends on how and when you harvest.

Tomatoes are many folks’ first concern. Prevent mold and rot by removing dead leaves and keeping plants off the ground. Ripen fruit faster by topping the plants, so they put all their energy into ripening the fruit that has a real chance of being usable. Small, dark green tomatoes will not ripen, either indoors or on the plant. They can be used for pickles or chutney, composted, or fed to animals.

When frost or heavy rain threatens, pick all red or pale green fruit, and set them upside-down in a single layer in a frost-free, dry place to ripen. Other options are to make a big batch of sauce, salsa, or chutney with them all, regardless of color. Or, do as the Italians do and use green tomatoes in salad.

Peppers are another crop that can’t stand frost. All peppers are susceptible to mold, but keep an especially close eye on sweet peppers. Your best bet is to pick them now, cook them (try oven-roasting with a light coating of oil) and freeze.

Any pepper, hot or sweet, can be dried in a dehydrator, but the air is too wet in Willits to dry peppers in strings (ristras) this time of year. The less-fleshy hot peppers will usually dry if you clip off the green cap and spread them in an airy place.

Small pepper plants do surprisingly well as houseplants, if you have the room and ambition for pots indoors. If you have many green, unripe peppers, you can just cut off whole branches and hang them in a frost-free place for indoor ripening. They ripen far better on the branch.

Squash, both summer and winter types, must all be picked by frost. Most people don’t know that zucchini keeps in a dry, airy place (or even the kitchen counter) better than in the fridge, where they quickly mold. Use the smallest first; larger zucchini will keep up to a month.

Read the rest of Garden | Over on page 15

The rest of Tankers | From page 10

Taglio must decide what retardant coverage is needed.

“We have different coverage levels,” said Taglio. “We have coverage one through eight. If I call for ‘coverage four’ on a fire, that’s going to give you four gallons of retardant in a 100-square-foot area, a 10-by-10-foot spot. So if we do a level one, that’s going to give us a long drop but not with a lot of retardant in the areas versus a ‘coverage level eight,’ a max coverage which will be a short area but with a thick coating of retardant.

“It depends on the vegetation, what coverage level I’m looking for. As an example, for a grass fire with oak woodland, I usually call for a coverage level four. But if I’m dealing with brush and timber, I usually call for a level six or a max coverage level.”

As huge as the air tankers seem on the outside, with a wingspan of 73 feet, they seem rather cramped inside, most of the interior is taken up by the tanks. A single pilot, unless with a trainee, operates the aircraft, and their experience serves to allow them to target the correct areas with precision.

Taglio, having been on the job since 2009 and

whose goal is to retire at the end of the next fire season, gives a positive spin on the current season: “In the 10 years or more I’ve been doing this, this, by far, is my slowest fire season ever. I think the reason for the slow season may be several factors. Over the last five to eight years, the general public has seen several huge fires, so they are being more cautious and we haven’t had a serious lightning bust in a long time. They’re actually thinking about what they’re doing. There are not a lot of accidental fires.

“Our prevention bureaus up and down the state,” he continued, “have been really good about catching arsonists. The drought plays a huge part in it once the fire gets started. If you don’t have starts, you don’t have big fires.

“Our goal is to keep all fires to 10 acres or less,” said Taglio. “We’re pretty good at it. You never hear about the one-or-two-acre fire that we got retardant around. The guys on the ground just smashed it. You hear about the big fires. We’re very close to those [10 acres or less] numbers if you look at the one-or-two-year range.”



Above: This view of the cockpit in one of the air tankers shows how little room there is inside; usually they are staffed with only one pilot.

At far left: The air tanker crews take a few moments of rest after lunch.

Photos by Mathew Caine

At left: From below, an air tanker is seen dropping retardant over the Ridgewood Fire.

Photo by CalFire

The rest of Garden | From page 14

Winter squash should be wiped if muddy but not washed, then put in a warm dry spot to develop full sweetness. After a couple of weeks indoors, they’re ready to eat. Delicata and acorn types are good until Christmas, while maxima and butternut keep all winter.

All squash can be cooked any way you like it and then frozen. It will have no loss in quality when thawed. Don’t forget that squash blossoms, immature squash, and even the tips of the vines are edible and delicious in stir-fry or in soups like minestrone.

The way you manage and harvest salad greens can make the difference between a slug-ridden, unpalatable crop and one you can use and enjoy all winter. This is especially true of lettuce.

Rather than harvesting whole heads, harvest the outermost leaves weekly. This prolongs the life of the plant in several ways. Not only does it leave the plant alive and growing, but it actually changes the life cycle of the plant to keep it in more vigorous growth. The plant responds to this “renewal pruning” by growing faster, and staying longer in its vegetative, or “teenage” stage, when the leaves are juicier and sweeter.

Commercial salad growers clip the plants with a sort of mower. But you will get better quality and many more harvests per plant if you pick leaves by hand instead of cutting: Grasp the leaf you want to harvest at the very base, pinch, and twist. The leaves will be bigger and stay fresh longer, while the plant will grow better without cut surfaces that host rot.

Fastest regrowth occurs when you leave six to eight leaves in the center of the plant. This leaves enough leaf surface for the photosynthesis that fuels growth. Commercial operations that cut a bed of greens straight across often get only one to three cuttings, while hand harvesting outer leaves can give you 12 to 15 harvests per plant.

Make sure to remove and compost any yellow or pest-eaten outer leaves. Slugs primarily target old moribund leaves, so keeping plants tidy will prolong their life and vigor. This is true of every plant you grow. Whether it’s lettuce, rhubarb, tomatoes or peonies, removing yellowed leaves or those that are down in the mud will reduce pest populations and keep your plants healthier.



The rest of Nuestra | From page 5

Botello Gaona shared that it was an honor for her to participate in the museum project. “What made the biggest impact on me was seeing the happy faces of people of all ages as they explored the exhibition, and found something of themselves there,” she smiled. “Thank you to the Mendocino County Museum!”

Traditional costumes including skirts and dresses of satin, ruffles and ribbons, crafts, including a seed and bean “mural,” weavings, papier-mâché guitars, large crepe-paper flowers, and ceramic pieces contributed to the other-world feeling of the exhibit. A life-sized “La Catrina” mannequin, part of Mexico’s Dia de los Muertos celebration, and an elaborate altar created as an homage to artist Frida Kahlo, added to the glitter and glow that illuminated the exhibit.

Of course no Latin American celebration would be complete without a lovingly prepared and delicious lunch, which included traditional red and green pozole with all the fixings.

Another striking part of the exhibit was dedicated to the transformational life cycle of the monarch butterfly. There are two butterfly sanctuaries in the state of Michoacán, Mexico, called El Rosario and Sierra Chincua, where many of the founders of Nuestra Alianza were born.

Dina Hutton, currently board president of Nuestra Alianza, believes that the butterfly has a spiritual meaning for many, mirroring the journey of young immigrants who are themselves undergoing a profound transformation, having left their beloved native countries to embrace a

new life in the United States.

Hutton believes that the secret to Nuestra Alianza’s long success is its stability and grassroots connections. “We are of the community and for the community,” she said, explaining that most of the staff and board are first-generation immigrants. “We’ve all learned a lot over the years and we’re still learning,” she added.

Nuestra Alianza began as a conversation that took place in Hutton’s English as a Second Language class at Mendocino College in the year 2000. Students shared their vision of a place where the variety of services, programs and activities could be accessed by immigrant families, and a place that could act as a cultural hub for that community. That small group decided then and there that they would do what they could to make their vision a reality for their friends and neighbors.

Twenty-two years later, Nuestra Alianza’s varied services include the popular Plan Vacacional, a summer program taught in Spanish and open to all children ages 6 to 12, centered on the history, art, culture and sports of Mexico. The organization also offers tutoring in Spanish and English to high school students, along with the use of computer and copy machines to their clients.

Immigration assistance and referrals are offered to individuals who need assistance with naturalization, as well as ESL classes. Parenting classes are offered in both English and Spanish, and child supervision is available for many of the organization’s events and classes. Nuestra

Alianza also assists families and individuals with tax preparation, and offers activities, presentations and guidance about drug and alcohol use and gang activities.

Third District Supervisor John Haschak was also at the exhibit’s opening, and expressed his delight in the colorful exhibits and the shared personal stories on display. “Nuestra Alianza’s contributions to and enrichment of the community encourage greater participation in the broader community. As an organic, grassroots organization, they have accomplished much,” he noted, adding, “I’m proud that the county museum and Nuestra Alianza collaborated on this fabulous exhibit.”

As visitors left the exhibit, they were invited to take handmade gifts, or regalitos, as a symbol of friendship, a meaningful gesture which added to the spirit of camaraderie that created this cross-cultural artistic exchange, “Exploramos Juntos: Nuestra Alianza” will be on display at the Mendocino County Museum through February 5, 2023.

The Mendocino County Museum, located at 400 East Commercial Street, is open Wednesday through Friday from 10 am to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 pm. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$2 for children ages 6 to 17; children under 5 are free. Admission is free on the first Saturday of every month, and is free every Wednesday for Mendocino County library card holders. For more information, visit www.mendocinocounty.org/government/cultural-services-agency/museum or call 459-2736.

Photos by Margi Gomez Guhde



Skeletons for St. Jude

Spooktacular house on the corner of East Valley and Penn streets provides plenty of scares while raising money for pediatric diseases

Creepy crawlies, goblins, ghosts, things that go bump in the night, and Lil 206 are the things of childhood thrills. Lil 206 is a 12-foot skeleton looming menacingly over the graveyards and ghoulish specters at East Valley and Penn streets. Named for the number of bones in the human body, she beckons passersby to enter this creepy world of eerily lighted creatures.

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
mathew@willitsweekly.com

The giant skeleton also brings awareness to the plight of many children who, due to cancer, are not getting the chance to join their friends, dressing up as their favorite movie and TV characters, collecting bags full of precious sweets, and enjoying Halloween night with their friends.

For the last two years, Krystle Coffman and her husband have created a stunning display of frightening creatures that entice the populace to come closer and explore the scary but benign pastiche of horror icons. The purpose of which is to get the people to donate to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

The St. Jude mission is "to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Consistent with the vision of our founder Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay."

It effectively, according to its website, has increased the "overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20 percent to more than 80 percent since it opened more than 50 years ago." No child or family pays a penny for this treatment.

"The display is to help raise money for Skeletons for St. Jude," explained Coffman. "It's a nationwide fundraiser. We have over 400 houses participating this year. This is our second year of participation. We just found out today that we've broken \$75,000 that we've collectively raised. Our goal is \$100,000 and we're still 17 days away from Halloween. I think we're going to make it."

Signs with a QR code that take you to the fundraiser page are hanging in Coffman's yard. The donations are tax deductible and all the money goes to St. Jude.

"We'll have some live performances and some music on Halloween night. I've made close to 200 treat bags to hand out. All the treat bags will have the card with the QR code so their parents can choose to donate. They can even choose to become part of the Skeletons for St. Jude Facebook page. Anyone can join. All you have to do is print out a sign, decorate, take a photograph of the sign in front of your decoration, and they'll put you on what they call, 'the map,'" said Coffman.

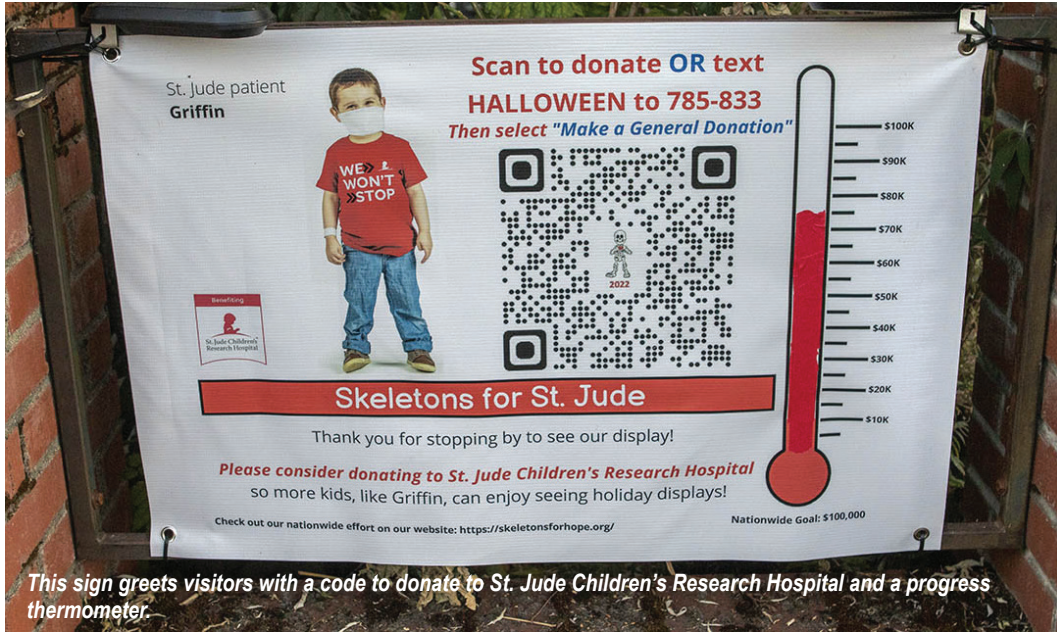
Stop by on Halloween. Lil 206 would like to see all the children.

For more information on St. Jude or the Skeletons for St. Jude, visit www.skeletonsforstjude.org, www.stjude.org, or the Facebook page "Skeletons for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital."



At top, left: Krystle Coffman sports her Skeletons for St. Jude sweatshirt as a friend looks on. At top, right: You never know what is going to rise from the grave on Halloween. Above, left: A watchman seems to say, "Don't axe me any questions, and get off my lawn." Above, right: Lil 206 looms over the display with glowing evil eyes. At left: This witch floats menacingly above the displays. At right: Krystle Coffman is dwarfed by the huge skeleton, Lil 206.

Photos by Mathew Caine



This sign greets visitors with a code to donate to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and a progress thermometer.



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