

Rent stabilization needed at Wagon Wheel

To the Editor:

To the Willits City Council: My name is Cheryl Abney and I have enjoyed living in Wagon Wheel Mobile Home park for 10 years until May 2017 when BoaVida Communities purchased Wagon Wheel, along with Valley Oaks and EZ Living [in the unincorporated county area outside Willits].

Drita Bromkey and Abe Arrigotti were hired to oversee their parks. These two were formerly employed by Sierra Corp and Kort & Scott Financial group; while they were at Sierra Corp, 714 persons in Reseda, California, including seniors and disabled persons, lost their homes because of huge rent increases that they could not afford; rent stabilization would have prevented this!

The first thing Bromkey did was fire the on-site manager at Wagon Wheel which they did not replace, a violation of California state law, #18603; as parks with 50 or more units are required to have an on-site manager. After our manager was fired, Bromkey's intimidation tactics began, which included posting threatening letters on people's doors, threatening to "take legal action" against them for various reasons such as "overgrown landscaping," children's toys in the yard, empty flower pots ... ridiculous, and even threatening to evict Mexican people who disagreed with her; another violation of California state law (AB291, the Immigration Protection Act passed October 2017 and also a \$2,000 fine).

On November 1, we received a \$110 a month rent increase, which Arrigotti advised would happen every November 1. Merry Christmas! I did surveys this summer, which revealed that 68 percent of residents in Wagon Wheel (and Valley Oaks) earn \$25,000 a year or less and can't afford a \$110 a month rent increase and without rent stabilization will lose their homes!

Mobile home park owners have special "prey" – it's not like the supply and demand of apartments, where if the rent goes up you just move down the street. It's a monopoly! Mobile home owners can't afford \$8,000 to \$10,000 to move – by the way these are only their homes. And even if they could, where are they gonna move them to? By the way Wagon Wheel only has nine that can be moved. Most parks don't accept old mobiles. So sell?? But when the rent is outrageous, it decreases the value of your home, so you can't sell and can't move and end up losing your home, and big city investors re-sell it or re-rent it, making a fat profit off of poor people. It may be legal, but this is a moral crime!

Federal law mandates that all cities in the U.S. provide affordable housing for their community; Wagon Wheel is the only affordable housing in Willits! I've stepped up to help my friends and neighbors in this community of Wagon Wheel, spent hours of time doing research, talking to other advocates who educated me – not to mention the money spent on copies – going door to door to talk to people and hand out meeting notices, and now I am asking you to step up and help us keep our homes by passing rent stabilization because, if you don't help us keep our homes, we will be living in your streets.

I'm not asking for rent stabilization for the whole city, just my park. Thank you for your time.

Cheryl Abney, Willits

Why farmers need direct sales

To the Editor:

As a vegetable farmer, the scale at which I produce is not large enough to enable me to survive in the wholesale marketplace. The same is true for my cannabis crop. Given the extensive and costly regulatory requirements, along with the falling wholesale price, it is of utmost importance

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that small cannabis farmers be able to access a direct-sales market option.

It's the 80-20 principle – so long as my farm is able to engage in direct market participation with consumers for 20 percent of our product, we will then have workable margins to move the other 80 percent in a wholesale marketplace. If I tried to compete with Safeway, I'd go out of business; being able to access direct market channels as a market-gardener is crucial to my business strategy.

In a world dominated by large brands with extensive advertising budgets, it is necessary for small farms to be able to interact directly with their consumers to build brand awareness. Creating an understanding in the marketplace for what makes small farms different and worth supporting in the minds of consumers is paramount to our survival.

Without the opportunity to interact directly with consumers, small farms are at the mercy of larger downstream industry players, who are able to control consumer perception in ways that often do not include the realities of small farms.

Given the requirements for testing and quality assurance, along with the implementation of a track and trace system that will log transactions of product, it would be sensible to allow farmers to retrieve product from distribution hubs after testing and taxation have occurred. Farms should be allowed to have on-farm sales (when approved by local jurisdictions), and vending at events must be an option.

To disallow farms from participating in customer interactions is to remove one of the mainstays that have made us viable and competitive in the current marketplace. We are at a tremendous disadvantage to larger operations, but we are unique and important participants in our local economies. Changing the policy in regards to sales by small farms (so long as track and trace and distributor testing/taxation still occurs) is a logical and sensible policy.

Casey O'Neill, vice-chair of development for California Growers Association, HappyDay Farms, Laytonville

Thank you

To the Editor:

We would like to thank our patients for their ongoing support, prayers and generosity due to the loss of our home in the Santa Rosa fire. We are grateful to have all of you as our patients and friends.

Happy Holidays ... Wonderful New Year's!!! Love,

Dr. Walter S. D'Costa, D.P.M., and family

Thank you!

To the Editor:

The Willits Center for the Arts would like to thank everyone who supported, organized and participated in this year's 31st Annual Holiday Craft Fair. The fair is one of the major fundraising events for the WCA.

The Willits Center for the Arts would like to acknowledge and thank Lynne Whiting Robertson and all the volunteers for organizing the prize drawing table, Jon Maglante for designing the poster, Creek Norris for the sound system, the Kid's Craft Room organizer Elizabeth Blecha and volunteers, and Sparetime Supply for providing the Christmas tree for this year's successful Holiday Craft Fair.

A special thanks goes out to Hal Wagenet for the electricity and jumping in to secure a generator from Willits Power to keep the lights on after an electrical malfunction. Also other members of the WCA board: Ursula Parth and June Ruckman for keeping things running smoothly, Ann Maglante for organizing and scheduling the entertainment, and Carole Alshire for keeping track of the finances.

A huge thank you must be extended to all the artists, without whom the fair would not exist. Each artist donated a piece to the prize drawing, volunteered their time to distribute posters, decorated the Community Center and cleaned up Sunday after a long day in the booth. A big thank you also goes to the Willits Charter School whose "Chef Charlie" and students provided the delicious new gourmet food menu and wonderful goodies throughout the event.

The WCA also thanks the schools and organizations who participated in the Kid's Craft Fair held on Saturday. There was entertainment at both the Community Center and the Upstairs Gallery at the Art Center featuring our own very talented local musicians: Dorian & Dorothea May, "Twining Time" with John & Anita, Ron O'Brien, David Parth, Nancy New & the Just for Fun choir, and Emandal Chorale, which we thank for giving their time and talents for the fair.

The artists also want to thank the citizens of Willits and

the surrounding areas for coming out to support and help sustain our artists and economy. All of the artists were grateful for the appreciation and kind words from everyone who attended

this year's fair and the community's commitment to our home-grown talent.

We also want to thank Willits Weekly's Jennifer Poole, Jenny Senter and Mathew Caine, and the staff of the Willits News for fair publicity.

Every year it takes a special group of dedicated people to provide our community with a high-quality, festive, fun and profitable Holiday Fair. With the support and participation of everyone, we look forward to the Annual Holiday Craft Fair in December 2018.

Bonnie Belt and Ann Maglante, Holiday Craft Fair coordinators, and the Willits Center for the Arts

NCO sends checks to 688 fire survivors

The 2017 wildfire season continues to rage in California, with the southern part of the state currently experiencing massive devastation. Those impacted by the October fires in North Coast counties understand what their fellow Californians are going through, and also understand what the days, weeks and months ahead will look like now that there has been some time to process what happened and think about the next steps to move forward. It's a long, painful process, and one of the few silver linings is that it has brought the community together in a remarkable way.

North Coast Opportunities, Inc. has been a collaborative partner in that process, working with county offices, area organizations, and fire survivors to help with immediate and intermediate needs. NCO partnered with Redwood Credit Union Community Foundation to raise and distribute funds directly to those impacted by the fires in Lake and Mendocino Counties. In Mendocino County, NCO also partnered with the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, Savings Bank of Mendocino County, and Community First Credit Union.

Anyone impacted by the fire – including those who experienced full loss, partial loss, lost wages, and / or evacuation costs – was eligible to apply to the Wildfire Relief Fund, which closed on November 30. As of Friday, December 8, \$783,738 had been disbursed to 688 fire survivors across both counties. NCO received 729 applications to the Fire Relief Fund, and the remaining 38 that have not been funded require additional information to be verified.

Fire survivors with full loss were sent \$2,000, and other applicants received lesser amounts based on their circumstances. "It's worth noting that money received from a non-profit organization to help with an emergency is not taxable income," explains NCO Executive Director Patty Bruder. "This money is intended to help people get back on their feet, and will not negatively impact them when it's time to do taxes."

Additionally, \$40,000 in gift cards was distributed at shelters, resource centers, and NCO offices. These were given out regardless of other financial aid a person might have received. "We knew from previous fires how valuable gift cards to gas stations and grocery stores are, so we prioritized getting those out to people as quickly as possible," says Bruder. "That gave people a little boost while we worked on processing applications."

To date, approximately \$1.1 million has been raised. Any money not distributed for immediate needs will be earmarked for intermediate and long-term needs. NCO is already working with other agencies and organizations to determine what the needs are, and the collaborative approach will help avoid redundant efforts.

One such collaboration between NCO, the Health and Human Services Agency of Mendocino County, and the Ukiah Valley Conference Center is the Redwood Fire Survivor Resource Room, providing free resources and support to anyone impacted by the fires. People can drop in Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm, or call 707-621-8817 to make an appointment. People can also call that number to sign up for the free Redwood Fire Survivor Support Group, which will meet for six weeks in January and February in Ukiah.

"Unfortunately, the work is only just beginning," says Bruder. "It will take years to rebuild, and we hope to support our community throughout that process."

– Submitted by North Coast Opportunities



Photos by Mathew Caine



At left: Taylor, Jack, Tanner and Bill Drew present a wreath to William Drew, a World War II veteran, and the boys' great grandfather. On a cold morning at the Willits Cemetery, veterans of all wars and services, along with members of the 4-H and the Future Farmers of America, honor soldiers who have fallen in conflicts.

Wreaths Across America

Local fallen soldiers honored with wreaths and ceremony

They say a soldier dies twice. Once, when they take their final breath, and later, the last time their name is spoken. Wreaths Across America was created to help remember all the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for this nation. On a blistery cold morning at the Willits Cemetery, veterans of all wars and services, along with members of the 4-H and the Future Farmers of America, honored the soldiers who had fallen in conflicts with a simple wreath for each and their names quietly spoken.

"We are not here to decorate graves. We are here to remember not their deaths, but to remember their lives," said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America.

Wreaths Across America had its beginnings in a young boy's visit to the Arlington National Cemetery. That experience so impressed the youth that decades later, in 1992, Merrill Worcester who owned Worcester Wreath Company, founded the event with the mission to "remember, honor and teach." Merrill found his company had a surplus of about 5,000 wreaths. He realized that a good part of the success he enjoyed was due to the sacrifice of veterans, and he wanted to honor them and inspire others to honor them as well. A local trucking company volunteered its resources to distribute the wreaths throughout the area.

Other volunteers from the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars helped to decorate the wreaths, and others helped to distribute and lay the wreaths on the soldiers' graves as far away as Virginia. The event remained in the northeast until

2005 when some photos of the graves at Arlington, covered in snow and adorned with the wreaths, began to circulate, receiving national attention. Thanks to the generosity of several companies and volunteers, by 2014 Wreaths Across America had grown to place 700,000 wreaths in over 1,100 locations, including Valley Forge, Pearl Harbor, the 9-11 site and others.

The proceedings at the Willits Cemetery on Saturday, December 16 began with the national anthem, followed by the invocation by Reverend Mike Smith, chaplain of American Legion Post 174. He thanked the Lord "for the freedom and opportunity to assemble together on this sacred ground and in the dedicated place to ask you to help us accomplish three things in this hour and all throughout the year as defined by Wreaths Across America.

"First, we want to remember the fallen. Second, we want to honor those who serve on active duty as well as their families. And finally, by our example today and every day, to teach our young as well as our communities, the value of peace and freedom while we also bear in mind and in heart our unique history."

Next, three young members of the local FFA spoke to those present about their vision of what this event meant to them: "We are all proud to be Americans and live in a free society that is made up of many people from all walks of life. The freedoms we have come to enjoy today have not come without a price. Lying here before us and in cemeteries across the nation are men and women who gave their lives so we can live in freedom without fear.

"This nation has always been the first to stand up for freedom around the world.

Read the rest of Wreaths | Over on Page 11



At top: The members of 4-H and FFA pose for a group photo at the Wreaths Across America ceremony. Above, left: 4-H member Stephany Brundage and U.S. Army veteran Dole Berry present the first wreath. Above, right: Roger Ham, commander of American Legion Post 174, talks about respect for veterans. At right: Natalie Spackman, organizer of the local Wreaths Across America, holds one of the wreaths to be presented to a fallen soldier. Below, left: Taps is played by Zack Ireland, of Sons of the American Legion. Below, right: Mendocino County Supervisor Georgeanne Croskey, a U.S. Air Force veteran, presents a county proclamation.



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Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Letters focusing on Willits and 3rd District issues, activities, events and people have priority. Willits Weekly prints letters from residents of Willits and the 3rd District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once a month.

Typed letters can be sent to Willits Weekly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490, but email is preferred. Letters and commentaries must be submitted with a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

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Yolo, Lake and Nevada counties.

Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde – who found no support from his colleagues for suggesting board members take a much smaller raise – cast the lone dissenting vote.

Monday's action was the first salary increase the board had given itself since July 2007, when supervisors bumped members' salaries to \$68,000. The collapse of the nation's financial markets in 2008 caused supervisors Carre Brown and John McCowen, as well as former Third District Supervisor John Pinches, to voluntarily offer to take a 10 percent pay cut in July 2009. Fifth District Supervisor Dan Hamburg (elected to office in November 2010) voluntarily offered to take a 10 percent cut in January 2011. The board voted to make the 10 percent cut ongoing in 2013.

While discussing the raise, supervisors acknowledged they were aware that, generally, it looks suspicious and corrupt for public officials to vote on their own raises. Board Chair McCowen noted that at \$61,200, supervisors' salaries were about equal to that of a middle manager in the county's current salary structure.

"I think there are several hundred county employees who are paid more than we are," McCowen said. "I think we are paid at about the level of middle managers."

Supes OK raises for five elected offices

In addition, the board approved significant pay hikes for the county auditor, assessor-clerk-recorder, treasurer-tax collector, district attorney and sheriff.

Pay for the county auditor, currently \$120,048, will increase to \$138,055. The assessor-clerk-recorder salary, currently \$108,888, was raised to \$127,171. The treasurer-tax collector went from \$103,692 to \$127,171. The district attorney went from \$146,251 to \$153,569, and the sheriff went from \$132,384 to \$153,569.

Supervisors also approved linking the pay of the five elected officials with those of county department heads. Henceforth, so long as department heads and elected officials' salaries remains linked, whenever department heads get a raise, elected officials will receive the same raise, figured as a percentage of their current salary.

These raises were approved on a 4-1 vote, with McCowen voting no. Although the treasurer-tax collector received a raise of \$23,479, and the assessor-clerk recorder got a \$18,283 raise, McCowen said he could not support giving the county auditor such a big raise. The office of the auditor-controller received a raise of \$18,007.

During discussion on the raise for elected officials, Gjerde noted the salary increase would leave these officials between 13.7 percent and 18 percent "out of market," with pay packages still lower than the average salaries of the same offices in Sonoma, Napa, Humboldt, Yolo, Lake and Nevada counties.

In discussing the board's own raises, Gjerde said the hike to \$85,550 seemed excessive to him, and suggested pegging supervisors' pay increase to the same degree of being "out of market" as those of other elected officials.

If the average salary for a supervisor for the six comparable counties was \$85,503, Gjerde argued, a fair salary adjustment would be to leave board members' salaries 13.7 to 18 percent below the average salary of \$85,553.

Gjerde calculated a supervisor's salary that was 13.7 percent out of market would total \$73,960; at 18 percent out of market, it would be around \$70,000.

Gjerde also suggested that supervisors' salaries in future be pegged to the salaries of Mendocino County Superior Court judges, so when the judges received raises of a certain percentage, supervisors would automatically get the same raise. That way, he said, the politically embarrassing task of the supervisors voting to give themselves a raise would no longer have to come back to the board.

However, Gjerde's colleagues supported neither of his recommendations, instead approving the "market" salary of \$85,550, and pegging future salary increases to increases given county department heads.

The salary increase for the department heads will become effective on December 31, 2017; the salary increase for the board of supervisors will become effective 30 days after the second reading of the ordinance is approved by the board, or around mid-February.

mayor," said Strong. "And I will do my best to do a good job, and look forward to hearing any feedback you might have and suggestions for improving."

"I want to congratulate Madge and Saprina on the ascension to your new posts," said Gonzalez. "I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve as mayor this last year. It was a learning experience."

Vacant building ordinance to be revised

The council discussed at length a draft ordinance for regulating vacant commercial buildings in the city, but held off on a vote, instead giving City Planner Dusty Duley several suggestions for revising the measure.

The ordinance particularly targets buildings that have been vacant for an extended period of time and are blighted to the point where they are a detriment to nearby businesses and the community in general.

However, there was some disagreement between councilmembers on the way the measure should be enforced.

Duley said the plan was to have a small annual fee for registration and initial inspection – somewhere in the \$50 to \$100 range – for all vacant commercial buildings, and then add fees and penalties for any violations.

One section of the draft read: "Property shall be maintained free of weeds, dry brush, dead vegetation, trash, junk, debris and excessive foliage growth that diminishes the value of surrounding properties and/or causes a blight."

Owners would have 90 days from when their properties went vacant to register with the city before facing penalties.

Orenstein worried the ordinance was too "scattershot" in its approach, and thought having an annual fee for all vacant commercial properties would unfairly charge property owners who were doing their part to maintain, sell or rent their buildings.

Rodriguez and Strong disagreed, saying a small registration fee for all vacant commercial properties was reasonable, given that it would be difficult to pick out problematic properties without some sort of inspection.

Orenstein felt the ordinance should have even stricter rules for long-vacant buildings in obvious disrepair.

"That kind of building is an insult to this town," he said, "and that's what we have to target and that's what we have to focus on."

Stranske agreed action was needed to encourage the clean-up and use of empty buildings, adding he's not sure he would choose to move here if he was visiting and looking at some of the buildings in town.

"As a community, if we want to invite people in to spend their money here and stay here, you've got to do something about these buildings," he said. "And as a council we're on the threshold of doing that, and we need to do it."

Cannabis applications

Duley reported city staff has now received three official applications for cannabis businesses under the new ordinance, which have brought in around

\$40,000 for the city in fee money.

He said he expects several more applications by the end of the year, and many more in January. Overall, Duley said he's been very impressed by the professionalism of the applicants.

"I can say they're the most sophisticated applications that I've seen in my year and a half by far for this city, so that's a good sign," he said. "We're certainly looking for those that have the desire and capacity to do it right. We look forward to working with them in the process and making sure that their business is consistent with our ordinance."

He noted none of the applications had been approved yet and are at various stages in the permit process, with some needing to make building alterations at their location.

Moore says goodbye

Former City Manager Adrienne Moore gave a farewell speech at the start of the meeting, praising council members along with city staff for the work they did together during her tenure.

"It is bittersweet to say goodbye," she said. "It's just been my really profound privilege to serve the city and the community, and work with such a fine group of professionals. I'm so proud of the team the city has, and I want to see nothing but good things in the future."

Moore was given a plaque in appreciation of her service to the city, which began in 2009 when she became city clerk. She had been city manager since 2012, and is retiring after her final days of work (to be completed this month). Moore will be moving out of the area to be with family.

Several on the council had kind words for Moore, including Strong.

"She's been just a joy to work with," said Strong. "She's very unflappable and very honest and very competent.... I just have the utmost confidence and admiration for what you've done for the city, and I hope we can carry on and fill those shoes the best we can."

Willits contract extended

The council extended the contract of interim Police Chief Stephen Willis to June 30, 2018, since Chief Scott Warnock needs to extend his medical leave and will remain inactive. Warnock has been on leave since June of this year.

The council and staff agreed they would revisit the subject in March after a qualified medical opinion evaluation of Warnock scheduled for February 1 is assessed.

Brooktrails second access

The council approved sending an official letter, crafted by interim City Manager Bob Perrault, urging the county board of supervisors to pursue adding a secondary access road into Brooktrails for safety and traffic reasons.

According to Perrault, supervisors have set up a subcommittee to explore the idea, and he had asked in the letter that the City of Willits be a part of future discussions regarding the project since it is an adjacent community impacted by Brooktrails.

New fire funding formula

The board approved a new funds-distribution formula written by the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts. The new formula is much like the old formula, and proposes a 2 percent allocation, to be distributed among 20 of the 22 local entities that fight fire and save lives in Mendocino County. The other component of the total allocation is based on the population served by each entity.

The most important change to the funding formula is that the 2 percent allotments for the City of Fort Bragg Fire Department and the City of Ukiah Fire Department have been eliminated. That resulted in an increase in the allotments for the other 20 fire districts, from \$7,960 to \$10,000.

At the same time, the population component for those two entities was increased, and the population components for the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District and the Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District were decreased.

Supervisors took \$87,186 from the county's Contingency Fund and added it to the \$398,001 of Prop. 172 funds going to the county's 22 fire departments. The total amount to be disbursed is \$485,187.

Under the new funding formula, 20 fire districts, fire companies and community service districts that administer a fire department, will receive \$10,000, creating a subtotal of \$200,000. Beyond that, the county will distribute \$285,187 to 22 fire districts, including the fire departments for the cities of Ukiah and Fort Bragg.

One result of all these changes is that the Little Lake Fire Protection District will receive \$15,544 more than it did last year. In 2016, the LLLFPD received \$22,815; this year it will receive \$38,359. That's because the population of the City of Willits (4,827), plus the part of the unincorporated (non-City of Willits) portion of the population served by the Little Lake Fire Protection District (3,980), have been lumped together in one population base of 8,807. The LLLFPD gets \$28,359 as a result of the population it serves, plus the \$10,000 that is coming to it by virtue of the 2 percent contribution, for a total of \$38,359.

Board Chairman John McCowen said he thought the unanimous approval of the new funding formula – plus the fact supervisors voted unanimously to take money from the county's contingency fund to pad out the amount going to the fire districts – meant the policy decision to help the fire districts is permanent.

"I would anticipate that, barring economic collapse, we are making a commitment to fund the fire districts at this level of funding into the future," McCowen said. No other supervisor contradicted his remarks.

Jail architects hired

Supervisors unanimously approved expending \$60,000 in county funds to hire the company of Nacht and Lewis to design a new

and recycling costs, among other factors.

The fee to pick up a 20-gallon roadside cart once a week will rise from \$25.13 per month to \$26.21; driveway cart pickup will increase from \$32.69 to \$34.09.

Roadside pickup for a 35-gallon cart will increase from \$23.23 to \$24.22; a driveway pickup will go up from \$39.53 to \$41.22.

Commercial garbage service also faces increases. Pickup of a 35-gallon cart will rise to \$41.22 per week, \$59.77 twice a week, \$26.12 every other week, and \$22.95 for once-a-month service. A 65-gallon cart will increase to \$56.56 per week, \$108.05 for twice-a-week service, \$45.28 for every-other-week service, and \$30.56 for once-a-month pickup. The cost for a 95-gallon commercial cart pickup will rise to \$71.76 for once-a-week service, \$137.07 for twice-a-week pickup, \$57.42 for every-other-week service, and \$38.23 for once-a-month pickup.

For the average household, the increase will amount to about \$16.08 each year to pick up a 35-gallon can.

\$25 million building that will become part of the county jail complex.

The building, which is scheduled to open in 2022, will house both violent criminals sent to the county jail from the overcrowded state prison system through Prop. 109, and jail inmates who are judged to be suffering from a mental illness.

Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman said he was pleased the county team who helped select the architects for the new building had selected Nacht and Lewis. "They have built hundreds of state buildings," Allman said. "They are well-known for having no cost overruns. We are going to get what we want, with no surprises at the end."

The total amount going to Nacht and Lewis is \$2.9 million. The term of the contract is until June 30, 2021. Allman said nearly all of the money going to that firm will come from the \$25 million grant the county received earlier this year to construct the new jail building. Only a small portion, some \$60,000, will come from the county's general fund, he said.

Fire recovery efforts slowed by contract snafu

According to Mendocino County Fire Recovery Director Tammy Moss Chandler, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has switched subcontractors on the debris removal phase of the fire recovery effort, moving from EEC to AshBritt Environmental, a "national turkey rapid-response disaster recovery and special environmental services contractor." Since its inception in 1992, AshBritt has "managed and executed more than 230 disaster recovery missions and numerous special environmental projects; successfully serving clients all over the country," according to the company's website.

However, as a result of the change in recovery service providers, nearly a week of potential worktime has been lost. "There was a slow-down," Chandler said.

"We had a period of several days to a week where we did not have a full team on the ground, or where we had only a partial team," said McCowen. "This is on the Army Corps, who were unable to anticipate their extant contracts would not be enough to cover the work that needed to be done."

In other aspects, county personnel appeared pleased at the progress of the recovery. Chandler said the Local Assistance Center, located in Ukiah next to Raley's Supermarket, closed on December 11. She added that community partners are making a lot of tickets for entertainment and events in the Ukiah area available to fire victims over the holidays. Chandler said the county has created a web page that contains the latest in fire recovery information: www.mendocinocounty.org/community/fire-recovery

Mendocino County Planning and Building Services Interim Director Nash Gonzalez told supervisors his department is beginning to receive applications to build houses on properties impacted by the fire.

The new rates take effect January 1.

In other Brooktrails news, current board President Rick Williams was elected to a new term of office, as was Vice President Tim Ramming.

And Brooktrails Fire Chief Daryl Schoepner announced the department's "top 10" responders for 2017. They are, in order: Engineer Damian Angell, Fire Capt. Tyler Porritt, Engineer Albert Hinkle, Fire Capt. Jim Kessler, Firefighter David Wells, Firefighter Brittany Kessler, Battalion Chief Robert Nowlin, Engineer John Turner, Firefighter Scott Bowman, and Firefighter James Wells.

Chief Schoepner also recognized the following BFD volunteers for their service in 2017: Engineer David Edgar, Engineer Martin Duran, Engineer Tim Goss, Firefighter Niko Steffen, Firefighter Jon Arrington, Firefighter Andy Wagoner, Firefighter Emily Smith, and Firefighter Guy Walter.

"These men and women have devoted a huge amount of time and effort to protecting our community," Schoepner said.



Ready to Wrap?

Presents, paper, tape and labels await helpful hands to complete gift-giving project in time for Christmas Eve

Already done with your own wrapping? Can't get enough of folding corners and tearing tape? Well, your skills are needed and requested to complete the Willits Kids Christmas Program project currently underway this holiday season.

Anyone is welcome to stop by the old Rexall building on the corner of West Mendocino Avenue and Main Street and lend a wrapping hand, now through the weekend to get the hundreds of gifts wrapped and ready for Christmas Eve distribution to those

in need in our community. Event organizers the Willits Wild Bunch are also asking that anyone who selected a gift tag from one of the trees around town please bring back the items with the tag, or just the tag, if filling the requests is no longer possible, or if the shopper changed their mind. It's just fine to give back the tag.

However, if shoppers do select a tag, organizers stressed the importance of filling the clothing items listed on the tags.

"We are so short on clothing, jackets and shoes this year," said Willits Wild Bunch member "Pickles."

"We have toys covered, but if anyone wants to still donate items in bulk, clothing and shoes, especially young, age-appropriate items, and boy items, would be really appreciated."

Check for the "Open" sign on the building, and pop in if you see it to learn more about the program, or lend a helping hand, grab some wrapping paper, and get to work!

– Maureen Moore

Below: Willits High School FFA members wrap gifts at the old Rexall building, including, from left: Claire Case Brackett, James Brown, Callie Brown and Samantha Arms.



Photos by Maureen Moore

<p>12 Days of Christmas Sales</p> <p>Best Quality Prices</p> <p>WILLITS POWER & HARDWARE</p> <p>Quality Service & Sales Since 1999</p> <p>1600 South Main Street Willits, CA 95490 Phone: (707) 459-6420 • Fax: 459-6369 Store Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 am-6pm Sat. 8 am-5pm • Sun 10 am-4pm</p>	<p>December 21</p> <p>25% OFF</p> <p>Everything you can stuff in our stocking!</p>	<p>December 22</p> <p>25% OFF</p> <p>Yeti Rambler Bottles and other store Yeti specials</p>	<p>December 23</p> <p>30% OFF</p> <p>All Footwear</p> <p>KEEN, Danner, BOGS, carhartt</p>	<p>December 24</p> <p>30% OFF</p> <p>All Clothing and Accessories</p> <p>Columbia Sportswear Company</p>
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Redwood Meadows is an active independent senior community featuring 101 apartment homes, primarily a mix of one and two bedroom apartments which are single story 4-plex cottage-type set amongst seven acres of park like landscaping.

We are a smoke-free and pet friendly community. We boast a community center where activities are held like card games, Bingo, birthdays and socials. We also have a barbecue area for residents to get together for social functions.

Redwood Meadows is conveniently located adjacent to the William F. Harrah Senior Center with a thrift store, cafeteria and taxi service, and Howard Memorial Hospital is just blocks away.

1475 BAECHEL ROAD
WILLITS, CA 95490
707-459-1616
MON-FRI 10:00-4:00

REDWOOD MEADOWS
Senior Apartment Community

FOOD. FUEL. FUN.

CRUISIN' INTO 2018

WIN A 2018 TOYOTA CAMRY!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

12PM – 8PM Play with your card for your chance to win *100 Free Play every hour.

8PM – 1AM Play with your card for your chance to win *150 Free Play every hour. Plus, each hour we'll draw one winner to select an envelope and win big.

START EARNING ENTRIES TODAY!

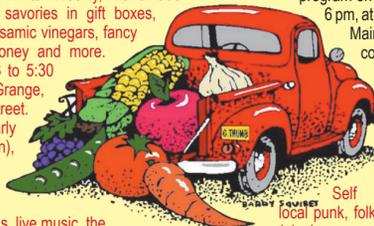
*No printed entry drawings 11pm – 12am. Two winners will be selected in the final hour. Vehicle provided by Thurston Auto Plaza.

COYOTE VALLEY CASINO

Thursday, December 21

Discovery Day at the Library: "Get crafty and create your very own ornament." Thursday, December 21. 1 to 2:30 pm. Willits Public Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-5908.

Willits Farmers Market: Check out the market for locally produced last-minute Christmas gifts, including artisan chocolates in gift boxes, gift subscriptions to Willits Weekly, handmade jams, jellies and savories in gift boxes, crafts, jewelry, balsamic vinegars, fancy teas and local honey and more. Thursdays from 3 to 5:30 pm at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Veggie (come early for best selection), local meats and local grains, savory and sweet baked goods, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more.



Bridge Club: All levels welcome. Thursday, December 21. 4:30 to 7:30 pm. Willits Public Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-5908.

Shanachie Pub: Singer-songwriter Dennis Chrip is featured on solo guitar, but some talented local musicians may well drop by to play. Thursday, December 21. 8 pm. No cover. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

Friday, December 22

Holiday Bake Sale: Willits Senior Center sells homemade baked goodies starting at 8 am. Get there early for the best selection. Friday, December 22. 8 am until sold out. Willits Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Info: 459-6826.



WHS Girls Basketball Bake Sale: The Willits High School girls basketball team holds a bake sale fundraiser on Friday, December 22, starting at 10 am in front of ER Energy, 821 South Main Street (next to Safeway).

Discovery Day at the Library: Librarian Benjamin McBean will host "Stockings and Stories." Friday, December 22. 1 to 2:30 pm. Willits Public Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-5908.

What's Happening Around Town

WHS Varsity Girls vs. Alumni Basketball Fundraiser: The Willits High School varsity girls basketball team plays against a WHS alumni girls team as a fundraiser for the girls basketball program on Friday, December 22, at 6 pm, at the WHS gym, 299 North Main Street. The public is cordially invited: Admission is by donation, and there will be T-shirts and baked goodies for sale, too, as well as a 50/50 raffle.

Shanachie Pub: Self Fulfilling Prophecies, local punk, folk, and rock band with all original compositions. Visit: myspace.com/selffulfillingprophecies. Friday, December 22. 9 pm. No cover. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

Saturday, December 23

Holiday Open House at KLLG: The public is invited to a Holiday Open House at KLLG 97.9 FM, "Willits Hometown Radio," on Saturday, December 23, from 12 noon to 4 pm – Santa from 1 to 3 pm. Plus "oodles of kid prizes!" Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street.

Shanachie Pub: Pre-Christmas Dance Party and good cheer with DJ Joey D spinning popular dance hits for the dancing massive. Saturday, December 23. 9 pm. No cover. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service: Everyone is invited to a Christmas Even Family Service at St. Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, at the corner of Commercial and Main streets. Doors open at 4:30 pm for informal carol singing in the church; services begins at 5 pm and ends around 6:15. Included will be a pageant performed by all the

children present who wish to take part. There are no spoken lines to remember. Children who would like to take part in the pageant should come between 4:30 and 5 to get instructions. The church is completely wheelchair accessible. All are welcome!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: St. John Lutheran Church invites the community to celebrate the "Reason for the Season." The service will feature local musicians. Sunday, December 24, 7 pm. St. John Lutheran Church, 26 Mill Creek Drive. Info: 459-2988.

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas! 12th Annual Community Crossroads Christmas Meal: On December 25, at 1 pm in Willits City Park, Community Crossroads will serve their 12 annual Christmas bag lunch meal in the park, featuring ham and turkey sandwiches and extras, including juice, fruits, nuts, treats, and more socks. Volunteers are welcome; financial contributions are needed: Call Shannon Demuth at 489-3044 for information. In case of rain, the Christmas meal will move to the Community Center across the street.



Tuesday, December 26
Tightwad Tuesdays at the Noyo Theatre: All 2D movies that are in their second week are \$5 on Tuesdays at the Noyo Theatre for all ages, all showings. This week's Tightwad movie: "Ferdinand." For showtimes: www.noyotheatre.com. 57 East Commercial Street. 459-6696.

Thursday, December 28

"The Cannabis Hour": Host Jane Futcher asks the question "How are you handling stress and the cannabis permitting process?" on this week's show, with guests, nursery owner Ron Edwards, cultivator Corinne Powell, and social worker and Flow Kana VP Amanda Reiman, sharing strategies for dealing with the feelings and forces creating stress in the cannabis community and beyond. Thursday, December 21, 9 am, on KZYX Radio, 91.5-FM. Will take questions at 9:40 am: 895-2448.

Friday, December 29

"Small Works Show": The final weekend for the December show at the Willits Center for the Arts, featuring the work of 30 member artists, including painting, photography, jewelry, ceramics, blown glass, fiber art, metal work and more. The show runs through New Year's Eve. Gallery hours: 11 am to 5 pm. Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-1726.

Shanachie Pub: The Dennis Chrip Band, featuring singer-songwriter Chrip on guitar and his full band, the show will feature Chrip and his full band. Friday, December 29. 9 pm. No cover. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

Saturday, December 30

Shanachie Pub: Richie Blue Band, featuring guitarist/singer/songwriter Richie Blue, a recent inductee into "The Blues Hall of Fame." Blue's music is rooted in the blues, with a blend of rock-a-billy, country swing, New Orleans swamp, and soul, too. Visit: www.richieblue.net. Saturday, December 30. 9 pm. No cover. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

Sunday, December 31

New Year's Eve Cosmic Family Band Benefit: On New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31 from noon until evening at Willits Community Center, 111 East Commercial Street, a benefit event for Little Lake Fire Department and Willits Food Bank. Admission by donation. Starting at noon, poets Robin Rule, Dan Essman, Dan Roberts, W.J. Ray, Linda Noel, and Mary Norbert Korte. At 2 pm, music with Sacred Songs and Body Prayers with Lynn, the Farmers Market Band, and more. At 5 pm, the Human Lightship leads with Sound Healing and Blessings for our Community Potluck. Bring a dish to be a part of this community gathering. Also available catered food by Seiji Sakai. There will be a Toy Swap, a Book Swap and a Clothing Swap, also local vendors and crafters, plus a raffle. After supper, evening music with Mystic Sol, Diane Patterson, Pick & Pull, Cosmic Family Band, and more.

New Year's Eve Bingo: Celebrate the end of 2017 with New Year's Eve Bingo at the Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Doors open 5 pm; games from 5:30 to 9 pm. \$20 buy-in includes meal and 1 pack. "Guarantee \$100 black-out!" Info: 459-6826.

New Year's Eve Bash at Al's Redwood Room: featuring: DJ Cosmo, drink specials, champagne, party hats and midnight balloon drop. Sunday, December 31. 8 pm to 2 am. Al's Redwood Room, 207 South Main Street.

Shanachie Pub: Two Worlds Fusion is a "power packed trio" from the Virgin Islands, Grenada, and the U.S. Sunday, December 31. 9:30 pm. \$8 tickets in advance at Shanachie Pub, or Main Street Music and Video. \$10 at the door. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street. Info: 459-9194.

COLUMN | At the Movies

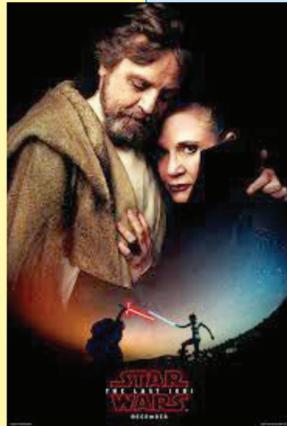
'The Last Jedi'

The Story: aka "Star Wars" Episode VIII. The wild card orphan Rey tries to convince Luke Skywalker to teach her about the Force, and to return to the rebels. He is the last of the Jedi Masters. His presence will bring the rebels hope. Supreme Leader Snoke, a Sith Lord for sure, is marshaling a final push to exterminate Princess Leia and her band of heroes. Meanwhile, Kylo Ren continues his progress into the powers of the Dark Side. Also, the ex-storm trooper Finn maintains his ambivalence about being a "hero." All these stories, and more, are stitched into the narrative to make an amazing adventure.

My Thoughts: This is the best "Star Wars" since "The Empire Strikes Back." What makes this edition of the saga so compelling is the complexity of the characters and their personal challenges within the overall drama. I was entertained and surprised for 2 hours and 32 minutes. The flick is long, but it is not bloated, and certainly never slow. There are funny bits, and suspenseful moments, and action action action. The sad sudden death of Carrie Fisher gently shades the entire flicker show. As a person, she was always ironically funny, sad and kind. And as an actress, I will miss her. That said, the ongoing trans-generational epic continues. All in all, a darn good time at the movie house.

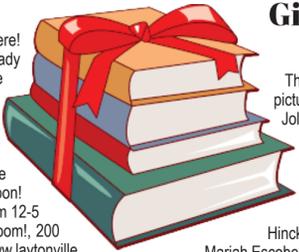
Parents: The movie is about courage and commitment, and the triumph of hope and heroism over the Dark Side. I think it is way too hectic, too violent, and too long for the little ones. But 10 and up seems about right. You all know your kids.

Willits Daniel Essman prefers his reality attenuated by the wisdom of the imagination.



Laytonville Book Room Book Sale

The holidays are here! In addition to our already ridiculously low prices, we have created holiday bundles of books for you at an even better cost! History, science, novels, kids. You can even make your own; we'll add the ribbon! We're open every Friday from 12-5 pm. See you at the Book Room!, 200 Branscomb Road. Visit: www.laytonville.org/friends-of-the-long-valley-public-library/



—Friends of the Long Valley Public Library

Senior Center Lunch

Week of December 25 through December 29

- Monday:** Merry Christmas (Closed)
- Tuesday:** Hot Opened Faced Beef Sandwich
- Wednesday:** Chicken Broccoli Alfredo
- Thursday:** Spaghetti W/Meat Sauce
- Friday:** Birthday Turkey Dinner

Harrah Senior Center serves lunch five days per week from 11:45 am to 1 pm. \$6.50 for those 55 and older; \$8 for those under 55. Includes soup, entree, vegetable, bread, dessert, and drink. 1501 Baechtel Road. Info: 459-6826.



Prescription Drug Abuse: A National and Local Epidemic

Tuesday, January 9

Avenues to Wellness presents: speakers Kyree Klimist, MFT, and Buffy Wright, program specialist, on Tuesday, January 9 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street. Prescription drug abuse touches everyone directly, or through a family member or friend struggling with chronic pain or drug dependency. In Mendocino County, an average of two people die each month due to unintentional overdose. That statistic, per capita, is twice the state average. "Please join us as we delve into this hidden epidemic." This discussion is free to the public, donations appreciated. Avenues to Wellness, a program of the Frank R. Howard Foundation, offers a speaker event each month. Call: 456-9676, or visit: avenuestowellness.org for upcoming speaker topics and a video archive of past events.

—Avenues to Wellness

WHS Girls Basketball vs. WHS Girls Alumni fundraising game Friday

The Willits High School varsity girls basketball team, pictured below with the championship trophy they won at the Jolly Roger Tournament in Point Arena. WHS player Kiley Butler won the all tourney award and Madison Forrester, won most valuable player. The team won despite ending the game with only four players on the court: Kiley Butler sprained her ankle, Morgan Riley broke her wrist, Madison Forrester injured her shoulder, and Eden Hincker-Tye fouled out. Back row, from left: Assistant Coach Mariah Escobedo, Jessica Buzzard, Madison Forrester, Araceli Arellano, Kiley Butler, McKenzie Gregg, Morgan Riley, and Coach Paul Riley. Kneeling, from left: Eden Hincker-Tye and Heidi Herold.

The WHS varsity girls basketball team will play against a WHS alumni girls team as a fundraiser for the girls basketball program on Friday, December 22, at 6 pm, at the WHS gym, 299 North Main Street. The public is cordially invited: Admission is by donation, and there will be T-shirts and baked goodies for sale, too, as well as a 50/50 raffle.



This Week at KLLG

Community members are invited to a Holiday Open House at KLLG 97.9 FM, "Willits Hometown Radio," on Saturday, December 23, from 12 noon to 4 pm – Santa from 1 to 3 pm. Plus "oodles of kid prizes!" Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street.

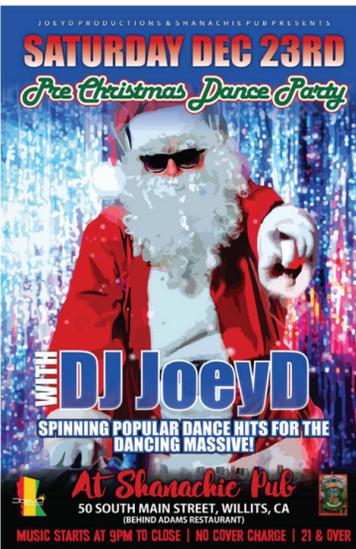
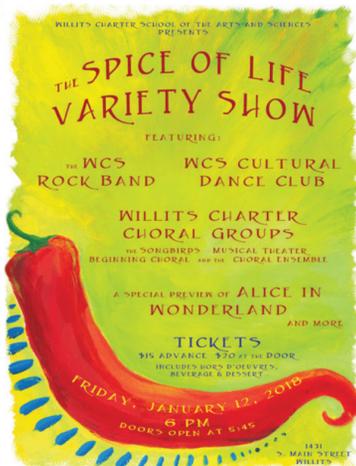
Willits Weekly's Holiday Break

Willits Weekly is taking our annual holiday break: This December 21 edition will be the last Willits Weekly of 2017, and we'll resume publication with the January 11, 2018 edition. Happy New Year to all!

Variety Show at Willits Charter School

Friday, January 12

Willits Charter School (WCS), 1431 Main Street, presents: "The Spice of Life Variety Show" on Friday, January 12 at 6 pm. The show features The WCS Rock Band, WCS Cultural Dance Club, Willits Charter Choral Groups (The Songbirds, Beginning Choral and Musical Theater Choral Ensemble), also there will be a special preview of "Alice in Wonderland," and more. The doors open at 5:45 pm. The tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Tickets include hors d'oeuvre, beverage and dessert.



County Offices Holiday Closures

All county offices will be closed December 25 and January 1, and will have other holiday closures. The Mendocino County Museum will also be closed December 24 and December 27-31. The Willits Library will also be closed December 26 and December 29-31. The public is urged to call a department's office number in advance to confirm the availability of services. Visit the county's website at <https://www.mendocinocounty.org> for departmental contact information. Please note: all emergency services will still be provided 24 hours a day.

Community Discussion

Sunday, January 7

Those considering running for Third District supervisor, Willits City Council, or Willits school board – and anyone who wants to be engaged in the process – are invited to a community meeting on Sunday, January 7 at 4 pm at The Hub, 640 South Main Street. Meeting facilitated by Jed and Carlin Diamond.

"We can make our town a better place for everyone. Our community is going through a time of major transition, and 2018 will be a crucial year for engagement to bring about the positive change we want to see. A number of elections are coming up that will impact our lives, and it's not too early to begin thinking about them."

Because seating at the Hub is limited, organizers are requesting RSVPs by Tuesday, January 2 at 459-5505, or email: Jed@MenAlive.com, or CarlinDiamond@gmail.com.

Willits Weekly Gift Certificates make great last-minute gifts

Give the gift of being in the know and up on the news about Willits this holiday season, with a gift subscription to Willits Weekly.

Take your choice of a six-month or one-year subscription via mail delivery to anywhere around the U.S., or home delivery, serving addresses within our greater Willits delivery area. Local subscriptions arrive Friday mornings.

One-year mail subscriptions are \$75; one year of home delivery is \$50. Six-month mail subscriptions are \$40; six months of home delivery is \$30.

Pick up a glossy gift certificate at the last Winter Willits Farmers Market before Christmas, this Thursday, December 22, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Or, feel free to call to arrange a pick-up, 707-972-7047.



Members of the Cosmic Family Band, including Jason Greenberg, center front, and Chris Cichacki, right front, with Little Lake Fire Chief Chris Wilkes, left, and members of the Little Lake Fire Department, including high school intern Ben Branscomb, Capt. Ned McKinnon, Firefighter Amber Compa, Firefighter Michael McKinnon and Firefighter Eli Owen.

A Cosmic Family Band New Year's Eve

Family fun, food, poetry, music and more to benefit Little Lake Fire and the Willits Food Bank

This New Year's Eve, the Cosmic Family Band hosts a family-friendly party and benefit for the Little Lake Fire Department and the Willits Food Bank at the Willits Community Center.

Everybody is welcome – admission is by donation. "Please bring what you can to support these two amazing services right here in Willits," says organizer and band member Jason Greenberg. "We will be accepting money as well as canned goods and non-perishable food items."

Willits Weekly Gift Certificates make great last-minute gifts

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Pick up a glossy gift certificate at the last Winter Willits Farmers Market before Christmas, this Thursday, December 22, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Or, feel free to call to arrange a pick-up, 707-972-7047.

"We've had nothing but a great outpouring of support from the community this Christmas," said Little Lake Fire Chief Chris Wilkes. "With the fires here and in Southern California, everybody realizes the amount of effort that's put in by the local fire agencies. We appreciate the support – it makes us feel good, and it keeps everybody going."

The local government strike team Mendocino County sent down to the Southern California fires, led by LFLD Deputy Fire Chief John Thomen, is still fighting the Thomas fire, after they were asked for at least another week's commitment, meaning the firefighters aren't likely to be home for Christmas.

"They won't be back until probably the 27th," Wilkes said. "It's such a huge fire; there's resources coming from all over the place." Wilkes said one grateful resident down south sent a message and photo of the Little Lake fire

engine down in Los Angeles County to the Little Lake Fire Department Facebook page, with a message of thanks for the firefighters of Willits.

Check the December 31 Calendar listing for more details or visit the Facebook event page for "Cosmic Family New Year's." The party starts with local poets at noon, live music from 2 to 5 pm, then potluck or catered dinner, more live music from 6 to noon, then an open jam until 1:30 am. Bands include the Farmers Market Band, Mystic Sol, Pick & Pull, Cosmic Family, and more.

Anybody who would like to be involved can contact Greenberg at cosmicfamilymusic@gmail.com or 919-473-3527. "We would love to have more local artists, healers, vendors and musicians," Greenberg said. "Volunteers to help set up or clean up are also appreciated. Thank you so much, community! Hope to see your smiling faces and open hearts there!"

Ongoing Events

Willits Farmers Market: Thursdays from 3 to 5:30 pm at Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Veggie, local meats and local grains, dinner, savory and sweet baked goods, gift items, jams and jellies, balsamic vinegars, local honey, artisan and fair trade chocolates, crafts, knitted goods and jewelry, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more.

Tools for Fire Victims at the Farmers Market: Every Thursday, the Farmers Market and the School of Adaptive Agriculture are collecting tools for those who lost their homes in the Redwood Complex Fire. Please bring donated tools to the Farmers Market on Thursday afternoons from 3 to 5:30 pm at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. If tools are dull, Keith Rosen will sharpen them during the market. If unable to transport tools, contact Market Manager Michael Foley 216-5549 to arrange pick up.

"Small Works Show": The December show at the Willits Center for the Arts, features the work of 30 member artists, including painting, photography, jewelry, ceramics, blown glass, fiber art, metal work and more. The show runs through New Year's Eve. Gallery hours: 11 am to 5 pm. Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-1726.

"Boots and Tattoos Ladies Night Edition": Friday nights at Al's Redwood Room, 207 South Main Street. Drink specials. No cover charge. Info: 571-9288.

Willits International Folk Dancing: Every Thursday from 7 to 9 pm. Learn recreational cultural dances from around the world. Beginners welcome. No dance experience necessary. No partner needed. \$5 per class. Willits Charter School, 1431 South Main Street. Info: Megan Wolf, 530-647-6512 or megster1989@yahoo.com

Twice-Monthly Parkinson's Discussion and Support Group: Meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 10:30 to 11:45 am. In the Conference Room at Willits Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Info: 459-1941.

Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Group: Meets every Tuesday at 6:30 pm, at the Muse, 31 East San Francisco Avenue. Info: 456-9425 or honemarin@yahoo.com.

Willits Community Drum Circle: 7 to 10 pm at the Saint Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, 66 East Commercial Street. Every 2nd and 4th Friday. Free. Everyone is welcome. Info: 459-4932.

Willits Library Activities: Wednesdays: 11 to 11:30 am "Play Group," and 3:30 to 5:30 pm "Lego Day" (bring your imagination and start building); Thursdays: 11 to 11:30 am "Story Time"; Fridays: 5 to 6 pm "Youth Game Night" (ages 10 to 14). Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: 459-5908.

Willits Seed Lending Library: Offering information on seed saving and gardening. Seeds of flowers, herbs, and vegetables are free to seed library members, and seed donations are gladly accepted.

AI-Anon Meeting: Thursday nights from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the Baechtel Creek Village Community Room (behind Rite-Aid) at the Evergreen Shopping Center. Saturdays at 10 am at St. Francis Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall, 66 East Commercial Street. "AI-Anon Family groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience strength and hope to solve their common problems. We believe that alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery."

Drop-In Knitting Circle: Every Saturday of the month, from 2:30 to 4:30 pm at the Willits Branch Library, 390 East Commercial Street. "Bring your own projects or your yarn and needles; we have people who should be able to help solve problems and/or help you learn to knit or crochet. Sign-ups are not necessary – everyone is welcome to drop in." Info: Lotus Baker at 456-9037, or lotusb3@earthlink.net.

Soroptimists International of Willits: Women's service club aimed at the betterment of girls and women. Meets second and third Tuesdays of every month, noon to 1 pm, at Old Mission Pizza, 1708 South Main Street, in the back room. Women interested in community service are welcome; new members are encouraged to join at any time.

Life Changes: Discussion and support group with Linda Posner, Wednesdays from 10 to 11 am. Harrah Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road.

Volleyball Open Gym: Baechtel Grove Gym, 1150 Magnolia Street. Sundays 7 to 9 pm, and Tuesdays at 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Some experience desired, but not required. \$5 per night; first night free. Info: Jeff at 354-1850.

Smoking Cessation Program: Free "Freedom from Smoking" class sponsored by the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital. Every Wednesday at the HMH Conference Room, 1 Madrone Street, 6 to 7 pm. RSVP to Jennifer Barrett at 540-4208. Walk-ins are always welcome.

Free Sheriff's Activity League programs: at Body Works Gym, 1511 South Main Street. Teen gym: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3 to 5 pm. Karate: Thursday, Little Dragons-ages 3 to 6, 5:15 to 6 pm. Youth Karate-ages 6 to 11, 6 to 7 pm; Tweens to Adults-ages 11 and up, 7 to 8:30 pm. All SAL programs free to the public. Info: www.facebook.com/MendocinoCountySheriffsYouthActivitiesLeague or Mike Tobin: 354-0565.

Shanachie Pub: Singer-songwriter Aaron Ford every first Thursday at 7 pm. No cover. Jazz Night every second and fourth Thursday, 8 pm. "Local musicians ... take jazz standards and infuse them with funk, hip hop, world, and free form jamming. The outcome is unexplainable." Open Mic Night every Wednesday. Sign up for the lottery from 3 pm, when the Pub opens, to 7:30 pm. "An eclectic array of local musicians and even performers from around the world!" 50 South Main Street, behind Adam's Restaurant. Info: 459-9194.

Laytonville Farmers Market: Mondays, from 2:30 to 5:30 pm at Harwood Hall, 44400 Willis Avenue, Laytonville. Local fresh fruits and vegetables, artisan goat cheeses, ranch meats, eggs, handcrafted clothing, live music and much more.

Willits Senior Center presents Holiday Bake Sale Dec. 22, 8 am. until?

1501 Baechtel Rd. Willits 707-459-6826





Above: Zebedah and Azarias (front), Savannah, Aubrey, Brandon and Isabel (back) attend the Willits Holiday Lights.

Holiday Lights

Christmas display at Commonwealth Garden draws 700 visitors last weekend

The families of Willits don't have to drive to the coast to see beautiful Christmas displays anymore. The Willits Holiday Lights just had its second year of delighting kids and adults at the Commonwealth Gardens of Adventist Health Howard Memorial. The event, the culmination of an idea from Ananda Johnson of the Howard Foundation and Holly Madrigal, past Willits council member, is gradually growing with the addition of new exhibits and sponsors this year.

Mathew Caine Features Writer mathew@willitsweekly.com The new spectacular light tunnel from Cici Winiger and Holly Sears of Adventist Health set the tone for the wonders within. As the families entered through the surrounding bath of lights, they got a sense of the adventures and eye candy that awaited them.

As the families exited the tunnel, they were encouraged to give a suggested \$5 donation per adult, to be split between the Willits Center for the Arts and the Commonwealth Garden, or to give a toy for the Willits Kids Christmas Program.

Continuing around the walk, the exhibits included a giant lighted iguana and a lovely unicorn from Keena Good and Glitter My World, stimulating for young imaginations. There was also a lighted milk wagon, created by Sparetime Supply, in which the little ones could sit and make believe. Last year, Willits Area Cyclists created a stunning igloo, made of bicycle wheels and lights. This year, the igloo turned into a light tent in which to play.

Farther around the bend, were two amazing glowing deer from the Howard Foundation and an exhibit from the Humane Society that included everyone's friend, Snoopy. The Humane Society's display also included a board with a painting of a dog and cat, with two cutouts for young faces to become animals for their parents' photos.

There were large lighted blowup sculptures of Frosty and Santa, donated by the Lovell family. Families could enjoy some hot cider or cocoa and delicious cookies at the softly lighted (and heated) kiosk at the top of the hill. While the parents were warming up in the kiosk or by the open fire, the kids could sit with Santa and tell him their wishes for the

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At left: A lighted unicorn from Keena Good and Glitter My World is a new addition this year.

Below: Kenna Good also made a giant lighted iguana that stimulates young imaginations.

At bottom: The Little Lake Fire Department engine was lit subtly, outlining its shape.

Photos by Mathew Caine



Above: The Sparetime Wagon, a lit-up truck filled with plants contributed by Sparetime Supply.

Below, left: A peace sign donated by the Willits High School Peace Club lights up an arbor. Below: Margie Handley and Ananda Johnson of the Howard Foundation sit with Santa. Below, right: Organizer Holly Madrigal and April Tweddell pose in the tunnel of lights provided by Cici Winiger and Holly Sears of Adventist Health.

At bottom: Graceful reindeer were donated by the Howard Foundation.



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The rest of 'Pot'ties

From Page 1

is connected to an approved septic system – can walk up to the house and use the bathroom there.

According to the revised ordinance, there must be either a path of travel between the facility (that is, between the building where cannabis is being grown or processed) and the structure (that is, the house with the bathroom), or an arrival space (i.e. a small parking space) at both the facility and the structure.

The second method of disposing of human wastes in cannabis cultivation or processing is to use "portable chemical toilets and handwashing stations, both of which must meet current disabled access regulations."

People who wish to use this method must submit a site plan to the Division of Environmental Health, showing that both the chemical toilet and the handwashing station are at least 50 feet from any property line, waterways, wells or springs.

In addition, landowners who wish to install porta-potties will need to show a service agreement with a licensed septic pumper to pump or remove the waste from the chemical toilet monthly, or as necessary, and submit a form to the Division of Environmental Health acknowledging the building where the cannabis is being cultivated does not have public access, and agreeing that "upon the cessation of the use of the facility, all portable chemical toilets shall be pumped to remove all septage and chemicals, and shall be locked and stored, or else shall be removed from the site."

County staff had come to the meeting with an additional provision that would have reinforced the perspective that chemical toilets are only to be used when the facility (or building) in question is being used on a seasonal, rather than a year-round, basis. However, supervisors rejected that limiting factor, removing the provision that the facility must be used seasonally. They also changed the staff recommendation that the porta-potties needed to be pumped every two weeks, instead saying the toilets will need to be pumped monthly, or as needed.

A few members of the public told supervisors they felt the new addition to the ordinance did not go far enough. Casey O'Neill of the California Growers Association said he did not see why the Division of Environmental Health did not OK the use of an "E-Loo" – which O'Neill described as a simple composting toilet that used solar exposure to a black plastic holding tank to burn up most of the waste.

"It's a big contained tank," O'Neill said. "You build a little outhouse on top of it. It's black and it sticks out in the sun and it gets hot and it dries all the material out. Most of it goes away, so there's very little material there. There's very little buildup. It would be an appropriate choice for Mendocino County."

Anna Farnum read a letter detailing a couple of major problems with the ordinance amendment. There are only three places in the county currently licensed to receive effluent from porta-potties, Farnum said: the Willits Waste Water Treatment Plant, the Tunsei Ranch in Comptche, and H and H Ranch in Point Arena.

"That means that all these portable chemical toilets that will be installed have to be pumped and hauled to only these three treatment sites," Farnum said. "Just the words 'portable chemical toilets' brings to mind the fossil fuel use in their portability and pump out and the 'blue goo' used to sanitize the waste, which needs to be treated itself to avoid contaminating any water sources."

The rest of Rent

From Page 1

Abney charged that in addition to the rent hikes, residents have been receiving intimidating letters from representatives of Boa Vida Communities, which bought Wagon Wheel in May – along with two other Willits area parks, Valley Oaks and EZ Living.

Abney said one of these representatives, Drita Bronkey, fired the Wagon Wheel on-site manager months ago and has failed to hire a replacement – a violation of California state law which requires a manager for a park with over 50 units.

"After our manager was fired, Drita's intimidation tactics began," said Abney, "which included posting threatening letters on people's doors, threatening to take legal action against them for various reasons – including overgrown landscaping, children's toys in the yard, empty flower pots – and even threatening to evict Mexican people who disagreed with her, another violation of California state law."

Abney said surveys she's conducted revealed that 68 percent of residents from Wagon Wheel and Valley Oaks make less than \$25,000, including many seniors, and are struggling to afford the \$110 per month space rent increase imposed on November 1. She noted Boa Vida representative Abe Arrigotti had told her residents should expect this type of rent increase annually.

"I've stepped up to help my friends and neighbors in this community of Wagon Wheel," said Abney. "I'm now asking you to step up to help us keep our homes by passing rent stabilization – because if you don't help us keep our homes, we will be living in your streets."

Abney pointed out that to move a mobile home costs between \$8,000 and \$10,000, and most Wagon Wheel homes aren't actually mobile, so it's generally not a feasible option for residents.

Karlee Shames, a volunteer for Golden State Manufactured Home-Owners League – a nonprofit organization that advocates for owners of manufactured homes in California – also strongly urged the council to consider rent stabilization.

"If you allow these predatory park owners to come in and take their homes away, where are they going to go?" she asked. "You're responsible for making sure there's some affordable housing."

Shames said her organization has been seeing problems throughout the state as big limited liability companies have bought up mobile home parks in recent years, pricing out residents who own the actual homes, then renting the spaces out at higher rates.

"These companies buying up parks [are] destabilizing our communities," she said. "Real people are getting hurt and they can't recover.... This is really essential protection for mobile home owners"

Shames noted more than 100 jurisdictions in California now have some form of rent stabilization, adding each city can tailor the type they would like to suit their needs, such as only applying them to mobile home parks.

She also pointed out that stabilization does not typically involve a "rent freeze," but rather sets the amount that owners would be allowed to raise rents annually.

Abney gave councilmembers a packet with her letter and several other documents, including examples of recent rent stabilization ordinances passed in Arcata and in Fremont.

Several other park residents also spoke about their plights regarding the new owners at the meeting. Every seat was filled in the council chambers, and many people were standing in the aisles as well.

Teresa Cordova, a Wagon Wheel homeowner, said she went to the offices of both state Sen. Mike McGuire and Assemblyman Jim Wood, and both told her there was nothing they could do to help.

"I'm feeling desperate," she said tearfully. "We need help, and I'm not the only person. This whole room is in that same situation. We are begging you for help. I don't know where to go anymore, I don't know what to do. Please help us."

Then-Mayor Gerry Gonzalez (Madge Strong was elected as the new mayor just after the mobile home park discussion – see "Mayor" article) and other councilmembers told the audience they would have staff undertake a thorough analysis of what actions the city might take and place it on the agenda for a meeting in January.

"I think affordable housing in this city is a really big issue," said Strong. "I would like to see this on our agenda and have our staff [investigate] what our options might be."

Before the public comments, Gonzalez explained the council could take no action on the item at the meeting, nor could they discuss it too much, because it wasn't on the agenda.

He also informed the crowd the council would be unable to take any action regarding Valley Oaks Park because it's outside city limits.



This photo from Friends of the Eel River shows some of the detritus from the Northwestern Pacific Railroad in the Eel River.

CTC: North Coast Railroad Authority needs 'a plan for the future'

By Hank Sims, Lost Coast Outpost

In its annual report to the California State Legislature, released Friday, the California Transportation Commission calls for the formation of a special committee to study and make recommendations for the future of the North Coast Railroad Authority.

The state agency, now nearly 30 years old, holds title to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks that run between Humboldt County and the Bay Area. Though some freight has lately been moving on the very southern end of the line, no trains have reached Humboldt County in two decades.

Back in July, the state commission – whose mandate is, in part, to advise the Legislature on transportation matters – held a hearing on the railroad authority's dire finances, and asked it to produce two documents: a business plan and a "shutdown" plan. The authority's response, if any, has apparently been unpersuasive.

"To date, the NCRA has been unable to produce a plan that makes the business case for its existence," writes the commission in its report to legislators.

The authority is in an unusual position: It is a state agency that is currently selling off state assets, in part to pay for an appeal of a California Supreme Court decision that held it to state environmental laws. At a meeting last week, the authority considered selling off its easements through Eureka's Balloon Track to Rob Arkley's Security National Servicing Corporation. That motion was tabled after objections from Caltrans, according to Richard Marks, one of Humboldt County's two representatives on the board of the authority.

Here is the NCRA recommendation, item No. 8, from the California Transportation Commission's 2017 report to the state Legislature:

"8. Create a committee of stakeholders to explore potential improvements to the North Coast Railroad Authority.

"The commission recommends that the Legislature create a committee of stakeholders involved in the development and operation of the North Coast Railroad Authority to explore various scenarios for the authority's future.

"NCRA was created by state law in 1989 to maintain and expand rail service to the North Coast area of the state. There have been a series of loans and grants of federal and state funds provided to NCRA to purchase right of way, rolling stock and other equipment, and make improvements and repairs to related facilities.

Supes liberalize some aspects of cannabis ordinance

In the last board meeting of the year, supervisors took significant steps in liberalizing aspects of the county's medical cannabis cultivation ordinance.

Mike A'Dair Reporter mike@willitsweekly.com

The changes were undertaken following suggestions from Chairman John McCowen, who brought topic after topic to the board, even though supervisors Georgeanne Croskey and Carre Brown both said they didn't want the items to be dealt with in the impromptu manner McCowen was using.

Croskey said she preferred that the issues "go back through the working groups and be vetted a little bit, and then come back to us with a recommendation." Brown said several times she felt it was difficult for her to fully understand the implications and ramifications of what was being discussed, since focusing on the cultivation ordinance was a "moving target" as far as she was concerned.

Nevertheless, McCowen persisted, and pushed through several policy decisions and board directives. It was McCowen's last meeting as board chairman. Next year, Fifth District Supervisor Dan Hamburg is scheduled to serve as board chair.

The board directed staff to accept permit applications from cultivators who live in sunset zones (a zoning category where cannabis cultivation will be permitted only until 2020)

"Between 1991 and 2008, the commission allocated Proposition 116, Transportation Planning & Development (Transit Capital Improvement Program), and Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding. The last reimbursement request by and authorized payment to NCRA by the department was processed in January 2012.

"In a recent presentation to the commission, NCRA leadership shared that the enterprise is having difficulty maintaining and expanding rail service, has never been self-sufficient, and is routinely unable to pay its obligations. The commission asked the NCRA representatives to provide a business plan identifying potential responsible directions the authority can implement moving forward. To date, the NCRA has been unable to produce a plan that makes the business case for its existence.

"Given the uncertain future direction expressed by the authority's management, the commission believes it is in the best interest of the state that a committee of stakeholders be formed to oversee the development of a plan for the future of this statutorily created enterprise."

In a press release issued last Friday, State Sen. Mike McGuire had this comment:

"We greatly appreciate the research and thought that has gone into the CTC's recommendation regarding the North Coast Railroad Authority," McGuire said. "Their timing is excellent. Our office has been talking with representatives on all sides of this issue over the last several months, and we believe it is indeed time to resolve the issues highlighted by the commission.

"In hindsight, the decision made two decades ago by state leaders to create a rail agency without some base level of funding was unrealistic. It is time for all of us to have an honest – and potentially difficult – conversation about exactly where it is practical for freight to operate on this line, and what is the highest and best use for the remaining miles of track."

NCRA Executive Director Mitch Stogner told the Eureka Times-Standard on Monday the authority plans to ask the Legislature to provide at least \$1 million to the NCRA in annual funding.

"We've been trying to get the state to embrace us for a long, long time," Stogner said. "This is an opportunity for them to embrace us, own us and support us."

Editor's Note: This story is reprinted from *lostcoastoutpost.com*, "Humboldt County's home page," and was originally published December 15, 2017.

and who do not qualify for a cultivation permit due to setback limitations. The presumption is some of these cultivators may be living in what could become an overlay zone, and that special rules applying to overlay zones might allow them to legally cultivate.

Growers who apply for cultivation permits in such circumstances, however, will be taking a risk. If, when they are created, the overlay zones don't include the property in question, or if the restrictions in the overlay zones will not be loose enough to allow that particular grower to obtain a permit, then growers who apply anyway may lose their permit application fee, which is not refundable.

The board directed staff to change the ordinance to allow growers to "mix-and-match" cultivation methods on one permit, so long as the total area of cultivation does not exceed the area of cultivation allowed in the permit. With this directive, growers may include outdoor, indoor and mixed-light styles of growing on one permit.

According to Laytonville attorney Hannah Nelson, this marked a significant improvement to the ordinance. "This is huge!" Nelson said. "You will still need separate state licenses, but at least you now won't have to pay separate local permit application and annual fees. Also, if you do this, you won't be using up more than

Read the rest of **Ordinance** | Over on Page 11



New Willits police officer sworn in Tuesday

The City of Willits swore in its newest recruit to the Willits Police Department, Officer Christopher D'Orazio, Tuesday afternoon at City Hall.

"I'm really happy and excited" to be working with the Willits Police Department, D'Orazio said.

Interim City Manager Bob Perrault did the honors, as Officer D'Orazio repeated the oath, with his colleagues attending to congratulate him along with Willits City Councilmembers Gerry Gonzalez (former police chief) and Larry Stranske.

"Congratulations on getting through the academy," Perrault said before the oath. "That's a challenge; it's not easy to do. And congratulations on selecting the profession you have." As a veteran of 30 years of public service himself, Perrault said:

"There's nothing more gratifying than public service, and public safety is at the top of that pyramid – to be willing to dedicate yourself to taking care of the rest of us..."

Perrault said that, despite media reports, "based on national statistics that I've seen, you should know that this country as well as this community supports you a tremendous amount."

D'Orazio was born and raised in Santa Rosa, and attended Police Academy at the College of the Redwoods in Eureka, graduating last week.

Before attending the academy, D'Orazio worked as a reserve fire engineer at Healdsburg Fire Department and an emergency medical technician for both Sonoma Life Support (American Medical Response) and Bell's Ambulance in Sonoma County.

Above: New Willits Police Officer Christopher D'Orazio stands with some of his new WPD colleagues. From left: Sgt. Ricco McCoy, Sgt. Kevin Leef (in rear), Officer Christopher D'Orazio, Capt. Justin D'Orazio (in rear), Officer Michael Bennett, Community Service Officer Brandon Tripp, and interim Chief of Police Stephen Willis. Below: New Willits Police Officer Christopher D'Orazio, left, gets sworn in by interim Willits City Manager Robert Perrault.

Photos by Jennifer Poole



OBITUARY |

Nannette Williams

Nannette Williams (Pulliam) died unexpectedly in an auto accident on December 11, 2017 in Willits, California at the age of 42. Nannette is survived by her husband, Danny Williams, of Willits, children Jerrod, Takota and Chayanne Paulson of Willits, parents Gary and Nancy Pulliam, brother Mike of Arizona, and grandmother Opal Holmes of Willits. She was preceded in death by her birth father, James Holmes of Willits.

Nannette Michelle Holmes was born on March 23, 1975 in Willits at Frank Howard Memorial Hospital to Nancy and Jim Holmes. Four years later she was adopted by her stepfather Gary Pulliam.

She married Russell Paulson, Sr., and they had three children. She recently married Danny Williams. She worked for a local supermarket and found her home at Frank Howard Memorial Hospital in the ER registration.

A memorial is scheduled for December 29 at 3 pm at the Willits Seventh-day Adventist Church. Chaplain Dennis Long will officiate the ceremony. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Nannette's life. Flowers and condolences may be sent to the church.

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



OBITUARY |

Matthew Stiles

Our beloved son, Matthew Daniel Stiles, born November 19, 1985, died of natural causes at the young age of 32 on December 10, 2017 in South Lake Tahoe. A lover of sports, a gifted athlete, a kind, patient and gentle soul – these are just a few of the unique characteristics that defined Matt during his brief stay with us.

Born in Healdsburg, Matt grew up in Willits, where he graduated from Willits High School as a highly recruited offensive tackle. He earned his AA degree at Mendocino College. He attended Fayetteville State University after earning an athletic scholarship and enjoyed being an assistant coach there for several years, as well.



Matt is survived by his mother, Cari Stiles, his father, Dan Stiles, and step-mother Felicia Stiles, sister Katie Stiles, grandmother Karen Hill, and grandfathers Bill Stiles and Ron McAdon, along with numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and second cousins. He also leaves behind his best canine friend, Brodie. He is predeceased by his grandmother Woodie Stiles and great-grandmother Erna Webb, who held Matt in a very special place in their hearts.

Matt touched many lives near and far and will be in our hearts and memories forever. He will be deeply missed. A celebration of Matt's life will follow in the New Year.

Howard Foundation awards Mendocino College Nursing Program scholarships



Four students attending the Mendocino College Nursing Program were awarded nursing scholarships by the Howard Community Healthcare Foundation on December 8, 2017. The scholarships were made possible this year by donations from the medical staff at Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, the Frank R. Howard Foundation, and the A. B. Guslander Masonic Scholarship Fund. This year's recipients, who each received a scholarship in the amount of \$1,500, are Mariah Escobedo, Lauren Kornegay, Kaitlan Gravier and Colin Hanzlik.



The scholarship program is available to both first- and second-year students of the Mendocino College Nursing Program. Upon graduation, recipients agree to work at the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital for a period of 12 months. Additional information and scholarship applications can be found at www.howardfoundation.org/scholarships.

– Submitted by the Howard Community Healthcare Foundation

2017 scholarship winners in the Mendocino College Nursing Program. At, top, left: Colin Hanzlik, and above, left: Mariah Escobedo. At right, top: Kaitlan Gravier, and at right: Lauren Kornegay.



The rest of Ordinance | From Page 9

one of your two allowable permits."

The board agreed in principle to the possibility of changing the ordinance to allow multiple parcels under the same ownership to cultivate cannabis on one permit – a potentially tricky change, since McCowen wanted the new language to specify the parcels had to be contiguous. Other board members agreed with McCowen, but Hamburg felt the issue was sufficiently slippery that it needed to be sent to one of the county's cannabis working groups for further refinement. The board agreed.

Supervisors also said they want county staff to come up with a way to avoid the prohibition against having a cannabis grow within 1,000 feet of a school, church or youth-oriented facility. The state restriction is 600 feet.

After McCowen queried the board, it appeared a majority agreed that some form of evasive strategy would be permissible on this point, if there were certain natural or manmade obstacles that separated the grow from the public.

However, supervisors were unable to reach agreement on how to include the evasion strategy into the ordinance. One choice was adding more permissive language to the ordinance – such as stipulating that a natural barrier, such as a hill or an impenetrable hedge between the grow site and "sensitive receptor," or an artificial barrier such as a fence, would be enough to trigger an OK on the permit, even though the grow site was less than 1,000 feet from the sensitive receptor.

The board also considered whether requiring an administrative permit in such cases would be the best strategy.

Deputy County Counsel Mathew Kiedrowski told supervisors he felt county staff should be given an opportunity to discuss the matter more fully before making a recommendation to the board.

Third District Supervisor Georgeanne Croskey said she wanted the county to stick to the 1,000-foot prohibition.

Staff surprises board, public

County cannabis team staff made two announcements on Tuesday that appeared to surprise both supervisors and the public. First, Deputy CEO Sarah Dukett told supervisors the county's cannabis team has crafted new language that will allow issuance of distribution licenses for transporting cannabis products. In some cases, cannabis transport will be permitted automatically, as an accessory use of the holder's license.

Dukett said applicants for that license will have to fill out paperwork to allow the

county to determine if the transporter is a distribution facility, or if the applicant is transporting cannabis as an accessory use to a business they are undertaking under a different license, or if the applicant is a cultivator, or a different license type, who simply wants to legally transport cannabis.

The new provisions, she said, just came out of the oven. "We literally finalized this today," Dukett said. "We'll get this out really soon, as soon as we re-do the application."

The second surprise was the announcement that county staff has finalized its revision to the county's Ag Exempt policy – a longtime thorn in the side of many growers, who have balked at getting cultivation permits forcing them to follow county ordinances requiring Americans with Disability Act compliance for accessory buildings. That compliance is not required for some buildings used for agricultural purposes; however, buildings used for cannabis production have not been considered ag exempt, even though cannabis production has been deemed agriculture.

County Planning and Building Services Interim Director Nash Gonzalez said his department would be ready to roll out the new interpretation of "ag exempt" right after the new year.

Finally, the board asked how the Ag Department was planning to deal with the backlog of applications, with a new year coming soon and a new cycle of applications and inspections expected to come with it.

The Ag Department has received 784 applications for cannabis permits, but has only issued 59 permits.

At least some of the problem will be taken care of automatically, since cultivation permits are good for one year after the date of issuance, and the embossed receipt the grower receives from the county after he or she has paid the application fee qualifies as a certificate that the applicant is in good standing with the county's cannabis program.

With the deadline for permits for the 2017 year set at June 30, 2018, this means in practice that growers who applied early in the year, and who may not receive a permit until March or April 2018, won't have to apply for a second permit until March or April 2019.

That realization brought a moment of levity to the board meeting on Tuesday.

"What does this mean?" asked McCowen.

"It means we get a free year," said a voice from the public.

"Don't say we never gave you nothing," McCowen replied.

Justin Todd of Willits, a math major at Mendocino College, boards the MTA bus to return home after a day of school. His travel is free thanks to a state grant to Mendocino Transit Authority to reduce auto emissions.



MTA extends free bus ride program for Mendocino College students

By Suzanne Pletcher, for MTA

The GI Bill and free transportation on Mendocino Transit Authority buses enable Justin Todd, of Willits, to attend Mendocino College. He's enrolled full-time as a second-semester math major after spending nine years in the Army.

The GI Bill pays his tuition at the college as part of a monthly educational benefit earned by members of the active-duty armed forces. He has a car but prefers to take the MTA bus to school.

"I want to study and be at school, but I couldn't do it without the student bus benefit," said the father of two young children. "If I had to drive, it would really affect me financially." He rides the 9:30 am Route 20 bus from Willits to Mendocino College and usually takes the 5:50 pm bus back home.

Enrolled students at Mendocino College are eligible for a sticker on their student ID that allows them free passage on any MTA bus throughout Mendocino County, and to the college's campuses in Fort Bragg and Willits.

The program is available to spring semester 2018 students. Once enrolled, they can ask for a sticker at the front desk of the college library to affix to the back of their student ID.

"MTA is dedicated to serving our communities in Mendocino County, and when we learned that funding was available to help us provide free transportation to students, we immediately applied," said MTA General Manager Carla Meyer. "College education is an important factor in lifetime success, and this program helps make college more affordable. As funding allows, we will continue to partner with Mendocino College and offer free transportation for their students."

MTA received \$41,878 for the college free-ridership program in 2016/17 as one of 125 transit projects totaling \$34.5 million that were funded through California's Low Carbon Transit Operations Program. LCTOP is one of several state programs that awards auction proceeds from California's Cap-and-Trade Program, and it focuses upon transit projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout California.

In its request for funding, MTA proposed to reduce emissions by attracting more students to ride the bus rather than drive to campus. In the 13 months since its inception in fall semester 2016, MTA buses gave 31,268 free rides to college students, saved 10,539 vehicle miles traveled, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 5.5 metric tons of particulates, as calculated using California Air Resources Board methodology. With money from an additional 2015 / 16 LCTOP grant, MTA has provided a total \$73,000 in transportation support for the county's college students.

"Free bus fare provides an important benefit to Mendocino College students, and we applaud Mendocino Transit Authority for spearheading this program," said J. Arturo Reyes, Mendocino College president. "There are other benefits too, including reduced auto emissions on campus and reduced demand for parking. Perhaps even more importantly, this partnership is changing the lives of our students. We hear stories daily from students who are eternally grateful to MTA for providing them the opportunity to attend Mendocino College!"

Mendocino Transit Authority provides safe, low-cost and convenient public bus service throughout Mendocino County. For more information, visit mendocinotransit.org.

Two die in Highway 101 crashes

A Laytonville man died Tuesday night and his female passenger suffered serious injuries when the 2004 BMW in which they were riding left Highway 101 north of the Highway 162 junction, plunged down an embankment, and struck a tree.

The car was driving north on the highway at about 10:25 pm when, for unknown reasons, it veered off the east side of the roadway, lurched down the embankment, and the driver's side of the vehicle struck a tree, according to state traffic officers.

The driver, whose name is being withheld pending notification of next of kin, was fatally injured, the California Highway Patrol reported. His passenger, identified as 24-year-old Ashley I. Sherman, no hometown given, suffered major injuries and was rushed to Howard Memorial Hospital for treatment.

"The cause of the collision is still being investigated, but alcohol/drug impairment is considered to be a factor in the collision," the Garberville office of the CHP said.

Laytonville Volunteer Fire Department and Caltrans personnel, VeniHealth Ambulance, Ukiah CHP officers and the Mendocino County Sheriff's Department responded to the accident.

Tuesday's mishap was the second of two fatal accidents that occurred on Highway 101 north of Willits this week.

On Sunday, a 61-year-old Upper Lake man died just after 11 am when he apparently lost control of his 1994 Jeep Wrangler while driving south just north of Valley Drive in Laytonville, the CHP reported.

The driver, Dalton McKay, "made an unsafe [left-hand] turn, causing the Jeep to travel across the center dividing line of Highway 101 into oncoming lanes of traffic," state traffic officers said. The Wrangler "continued traveling southeasterly onto the northbound shoulder" of the highway, and crashed down a grass-covered embankment, colliding with a tree.

McKay sustained fatal injuries in the crash. Personnel from the Laytonville Volunteer Fire Department and the Laytonville CalFire station responded to the accident, as did the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office.

The cause of the accident remains under investigation. This report was based on press releases from the California Highway Patrol.



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New Year's Eve BINGO

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Dec. 31, 2017
Door Opens at 5 pm

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(Includes Meal and 1 Pack)

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Guarantee \$100.00 BLACK OUT

The rest of Wreaths | From Page 3

Many of you here today have answered that call and have served our country well. We are here today to say thank you... When you see a veteran or an active duty member of the armed services, take a moment to say "thank you." We owe them our way of life and that moment is well-spent."

Roger Ham, commander of American Legion Post 174, said, "Today we show that we are committed to the united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America, as we remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach our children the value of freedom."

Following this, wreaths were presented by veterans of each armed service paired with young 4-H participants to honor various branches of the military and Merchant Marines. Each tandem walked up to the respective easels and placed the wreaths, saluting and showing respect. Following this presentation, Zack Ireland, of Sons of the American Legion, blew taps.

Next, Mendocino County Supervisor Georgeanne Croskey, a U.S. Air Force veteran, presented a proclamation from the board of supervisors recognizing the date, December 16, as national Wreaths Across America Day in Mendocino County.

After the speeches, the families were encouraged to take wreaths and place them on the graves of their loved ones who had served and honor them by speaking their names. The 4-H members placed most of the wreaths in order for those without families in the area to be remembered on the 504 local graves.

The morning's proceedings, although oriented to the military and their contributions to our country, were able to transcend politics. Sorrow for the fallen was replaced with respect and appreciation and the knowledge that they would not be forgotten.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Willits Planning Commission, at its regular meeting on January 10, 2018 at 6:30 p.m., to be held in Council Chambers, 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, California, will conduct a public hearing on the following matter at the time listed or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard:

CASE: Minor Subdivision #MLD 16-03.

APPLICANT / OWNER: Wayne Rogina

REQUEST: Minor Subdivision of an approximate 1.26 acres parcel to create a 0.70 acre parcel and a 0.56 acre parcel.

LOCATION: In the City of Willits, lying on the south side of Coast Street, at its intersection with Mill Street; located at 701 Coast Street; APN 006-120-44

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The request has been processed through the City Environmental Review Process and it has been determined that a Negative Declaration can be recommended.

Your comments regarding the proposed project are invited. Written comments should be submitted to the Willits Community Development Department, 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, California 95490, no later than 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, January 9, 2018.

Additional information regarding the above noted item may be obtained by calling Willits City Hall at (707) 459-4601, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Oral comments may be presented to the Willits Planning Commission during the public hearing. If you challenge the project in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Willits Community Development Department or the Willits Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing. All persons are invited to appear and present testimony in this matter.

s/ Dusty Duley, City Planner for the City of Willits

Publication Date: December 21, 2017

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JANUARY CALENDAR

MONDAY
POINTS DAYS
3X POINTS

All Players Club members will earn 3X Points from 10A to 10P on the days of the promotion!



Monday Night BINGO!

6pm-9m
 \$100 FREE PLAY
 up to \$200 Cash!



LET'S MAKE A DEAL HOT SEATS!

TUESDAYS 12pm-10pm
2X PER HOUR!
\$50 free play or pick a case to win anywhere from \$25-\$100 IN CASH ENDING BEFORE 10PM

Bingo!

THURSDAY

12PM \$100 FREE PLAY
 1PM \$125 FREE PLAY
 2PM \$150 FREE PLAY
 3PM \$150 CASH (2ND CHANCE \$50 CASH)
 7PM \$125 IN FREE PLAY
 8 PM \$150 IN FREE PLAY
 9AM \$175 IN FREE PLAY
 10PM \$300 CASH (2ND CHANCE \$100 CASH)

Players Club members must have earned minimally 50 points to receive a bingo card for the 12P, 1P, 2P & 3P bingo games.
 -Bingo at 12P for \$100 Free Play, 1P for \$125 Free Play and 3P for \$150 free play for each game winner.
 Players Club members must have earned minimally 80 points (throughout the day) to receive a bingo card for the 8P, 9P & 10P bingo games. Bingo at 7pm and 8P for \$150 in Free Play, the 9P game \$175 Free Play and \$300 in cash for the 10P game.
 Bingo Cards can start being issued at 11A for the 12P game, and 6P for the 7P game. The 1P, 2P, 3P, 8P, 9P & 10P cards will be issued after the earlier game has ended. If two customer's claim the win together, the prize amount is "split" between the two winners.
 For the 3P and 10P, there will be a "Second Chance Win". After a confirmed bingo for these three games (and the winning customer has been processed), the game will continue until a second "Bingo" is won, the the "Second Chance Win" customer will win \$50 Cash for the 3P game and \$100 free play for the 10P game. The "Second Chance Win" opportunity will be announced before each of the specific games.

FRIDAY NIGHT

Ticket Entry Drawings - 20 Points/Entry
 May start to redeem points for entries starting at 11A
 Each drawing time has a prize value to it!

PAYDAY!

PROGRESSIVE DRAWING

8:00PM WIN CASH FROM 8-11! \$100
 10:00PM \$200
 9:00PM \$150
 10:30 PM \$250
 11:00PM \$300

At each drawing (except the 10:30 & 11P drawing), an entry will be drawn from the Raffle Barrel. The winning customer will have approx. one minute to claim their prize. If the number is not claimed the money for the specific drawing will be forwarded to the next drawing for the night. For example; if the 8P drawing has no winner, the \$100 will be forwarded to the 9P drawing and will be worth \$250.
 For the 11P drawing, if there is no claim on the drawing, there will be an additional drawing. This process will continue until a winner has claimed the cash prize.
 Customers may win up to 2 times each week of this promotion.

JANUARY 19 BIG WINNINGS!

8pm -\$100 9pm-\$150
 10pm -\$200 10:30pm-\$300
 11pm-\$500

WEDNESDAYS
Roosters and OWLS

TWO SESSIONS;
MORNING SESSION: 8A TO 12P
 PLAYERS CLUB CUSTOMERS THAT PLAY \$50 WILL RECEIVE \$10 IN FREE PLAY VIA THE PLAYERS CLUB (ONCE PER SESSION)

EVENING SESSION: 6P TO 10P
 PLAYERS CLUB CUSTOMERS THAT PLAY \$50 WILL RECEIVE \$10 IN FREE PLAY VIA THE PLAYERS CLUB (ONCE PER SESSION)

RANDOM HOURLY HOT SEAT DRAWINGS
 9A TO 12P - 2 WINNERS/HOUR
 EACH WINNER WILL RECEIVE \$50 CASH
 7A TO 10P - 2 WINNERS/HOUR
 EACH WINNER WILL WIN \$75

SUPER SENIOR DAY BINGO

FRIDAYS
 11am • 12pm • 1pm • 2pm
GAMES
 50 points for bingo card and 50% off meal coupon.

SATURDAY FUN
JANUARY 6th-27th • HOT SEAT DRAWINGS!

Round #1:
 11 AM to 12 PM - 2 random winners per hour (6 winners total)
 Each winner will win \$50 in Free Play.
 Customers will have to play a minimum of \$20 to be eligible for Round #1.

Round #2:
 6 PM to 8PM - 3 random winners per hour (6 total winners)
 Each winner will win \$75 in Free Play.
 Customers will have to play a minimum of \$30 to be eligible for Round #2.

Round #3:
 9 PM to 10 PM - 3 random winners per hour.
 Each winner will win \$100 in Free Play.
 Customers will have to play a minimum of \$40 to be eligible for Round #3.

Round #4:
 10 PM to 11 PM - 3 random winners per hour
 Each winner will win \$150 in Free Play.
 Customers will have to play a minimum of \$50 to be eligible for Round #4.

All winner(s) must use their promotional "Free Play" by 2AM the night they won, or the Free Play will be removed from their account.
 Customers may win up to two (2) times each Saturday of this promotion.

Scratch Card Sunday!
10am-10pm!

Players Club members that earn minimally 40 points on each specific Sunday, will receive one (only one) Scratch Card (via the Players Club).
 Each Scratch Card will have a prize (cash or free play), which will be;

\$10 Free Play \$20 Free Play \$50 Free Play
\$75 Free Play \$100 Free Play
\$20 Cash \$50 Cash \$100 Cash

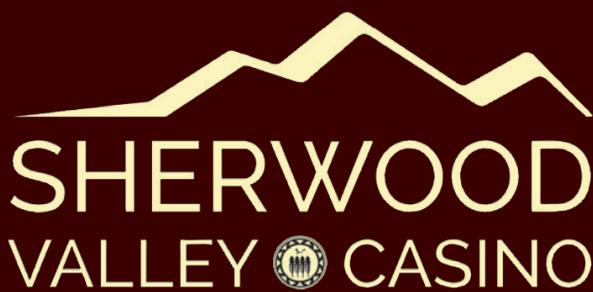
Customers may receive only one Scratch Card each Sunday for this promotion.
 All Free play that is won via the Hot Seat drawings must be used by 2am on the same gaming day, or the winnings (Free Play) will be removed from the customer's account

SATURDAY NIGHT CASH BINGO
JANUARY 27TH

7PM Game - \$150 Cash
 8PM Game - \$200 Cash
 10:00PM Game \$250 Cash
 11:00PM Game \$300 Cash

Sherwood Valley Rancheria Smokeshop

100 Kawi Place • Willits
 Hours: Monday-Friday 10am to 6pm
 Saturday 11am to 5pm • Closed on Sundays



100 Kawi Place, Willits 707-459-7330 www.svrcasino.com
 Management reserves all rights to cancel or alter any promotion with little or no notice.



Photos by Mathew Caine

Above, from left: Some of the folks who helped pull off the 2017 Willits Weekly Cookie Party: Scoops' Mychaela Nowlin, Ricky Carrillo, Lisa Davis, John Kvasnicka and little Wendy, in front, stand with Willits Weekly's Jennifer Poole, Maureen Moore and Jenn Drew. Three of the four judges – Brooktrails Fire Chief Darryl Schoeppner, Brooktrails Fire Department Deputy Chief Jon Noyer, and Little Lake Fire Department Fire Chief Chris Wilkes – await their cookie tasting trays. Veteran cookie party singer Nancy New (in grey at center) brought in her Just for Fun Choir to provide carols and songs for this year's event.

Cookies at Scoops

Bakers honored, prizes won, and merriment shared at Willits Weekly's 2017 Cookie Party

"Unbeatable" wasn't just written in jest in the comments section of Tam Adams' cookie entry form at Willits Weekly's Cookie Party on Friday. It proved to be true, yet again, as Adams' "Tom's Crack Bars" gave one of Willits' best bakers her third win in the annual Willits Weekly contest.

Deputy Chief Jon Noyer, Little Lake Fire Department Fire Chief Chris Wilkes, and Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman – who had to come to a unanimous consensus on one winner.

"We can only choose one?!" "We all have to choose one to agree on?!" "You mean a winner from each of us, right?!" "No?!" "Man, lemme taste that other one again!"

It was the people's tastebuds Adams captivated to win the People's Choice trophy this year; the Judges' Choice vote, which gave Adams victory in 2013 and 2014, named new Cookie Party baker – Alicia Logan – as their winner this year with her "Ooey Gooley Rocky Road Cookies."

After much debate on the patio of Scoops Frozen Yogurt and Deli, the venue for the 2017 event, the judges were able to agree on Logan's chocolate and marshmallow cookies.

Judges for the blind taste contest included Brooktrails Fire Chief Darryl Schoeppner, Brooktrails Fire Department

Read the rest of **Cookies** | Over on Page B5

2017 Cookie Party winners smile with their trophies, including Tam Adams, back left, winner of the People's Choice award for her "Tom's Crack Bars"; Alicia Logan, back right, winner of the Judges' Choice award for her "Ooey Gooley Rocky Road Cookies" (pictured at right); and Abigail Sherf, who won the first-ever award for "Prettiest Cookie" for her "Chocolate Chip Cookies."



Above, from left: Winners – bakers and non-bakers – of gift certificates raffled off by Scoops Frozen Yogurt & Deli at the Cookie Party. To go boxes of cookies were taken home at the end of the night. Tasters of all ages came to cast their votes. Willits Weekly's Maureen Moore smiles with her dad, Christopher Moore, on the Scoops patio. Below, from left: "Prettiest Cookie" judge Gerry Gonzalez explains just which cookie would win the award. The Bouthillier sisters show off their "Santa's Thumbprint Cookies." Cookie judge Gerry Gonzalez and Willits Weekly ad rep Jenn Drew (judges' assistant) watch as cookie judge Sheriff Tom Allman confirms that only one cookie can receive the winning vote. Cookie baker Danya Davis, also a member of the Willits Weekly crew, smiles with two tasters, Alissa and Ella Swinney Randrup, in front of her table of treats.



From the Sparetime family to yours

Merry Christmas!

We will close at 6pm Dec. 23rd and reopen at 8am Jan. 2nd

Have a fun & safe holiday!

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MENDOCINO COLLEGE

Crossword Puzzle & Sudoku



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

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!

Level: Advanced

RESOLUTIONS WORD SEARCH

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

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| BRAIN | DONATION | HAPPINESS | RELATIONSHIP |
| BUSINESS | EDUCATION | HEALTHY | RESOLUTION |
| CAREER | EXPLORATION | LIBRARY | RESUME |
| CLEANING | FINANCES | MASSAGE | SALARY |
| CLUTTER | FITNESS | MEDITATE | SHAPE |
| CONCENTRATION | FOODS | ORGANIZE | SOCIALIZE |
| CONFIDENCE | FRIENDS | PROCRASTINATION | STRESS |
| DEBT | GIVING | RAISE | TRAVEL |
| DIETING | HABITS | READING | WORKOUT |

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		

CLUES ACROSS

- Member of a Semitic people
- Certified public accountant
- Residue
- Sayings attributed to Christ
- The products of human creativity
- Listen to
- Longed
- No (Scottish)
- Descriptor
- Yankees' sensation Judge
- Zero
- Comics legend Lee
- Honorary title holder
- 'Uncle Joey'
- Graceful and stylish
- Pitching term
- Former Mets outfielder Jones
- One who avoids animal products
- Quick to learn
- Mechanism in an organ

CLUES DOWN

- Pie __ mode
- Portuguese cape
- Ottoman military title
- Movable frame used in burials
- Type of coal
- A treeless grassy plain
- Artist's workroom
- Assists
- Protein-rich liquids
- A song of praise to God
- Much __ about nothing
- Japanese city
- Atomic number 10
- Egyptian goddess
- Go places
- Having ten
- Complete
- Automotive belt
- Psyche
- Melodious bird
- Medical personnel
- Acquired
- Type of beverage
- Neither
- Spanish monetary units
- Small area of grass
- Your
- Diana __, singer
- Salt's partner
- Made of wood
- No longer alive
- Alaskan island
- Wild animal's resting place
- Swiss river
- Partiality
- 'Luther' actor Idris
- UNLV's 'Runnin' __'
- Criticize

POLICE LOG

December 11 to December 17

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled 181 incidents in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

December 11

10:59 am: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

2:10 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 300 block of East Hill Road.

3:07 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 700 block of South Main Street.

7:03 pm: Officers initiated a missing person investigation in the 100 block of Wood Street.

December 12

6:51 am: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person in the 100 block of Hazel Street.

7:23 am: Officers initiated a hit-and-run vehicle collision investigation in the 100 block of Holly Street.

9:17 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1400 block of South Main Street.

11:39 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.

2:35 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

4:59 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of West San Francisco Avenue.

7:36 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 700 block of South Main Street.

December 13

12:49 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 800 block of South Main Street.

7:39 am: Officers responded to a report of harassment near the intersection of Poplar Avenue and Holly Street.

10:46 am: Officers responded to a report of threats in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

2:17 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 1400 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

3:49 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1100 block of South Main Street.

3:56 pm: MARINO, Nicole Renee (34) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Madden Lane following a disturbance. She was arrested pursuant to felony charges of 273.5 PC (Corporal Injury to Spouse/Cohabitant).

11:40 pm: FLORES, Christopher John (40) of Laytonville was contacted in the 100 block of Marcela Drive. He was arrested on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct (alcohol).

December 14

4:45 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 200 block of Redwood Avenue.

11:08 am: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 100 block of Mill Creek Drive.

2:37 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 400 block of East Commercial Street.

6:09 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

6:16 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 800 block of South Main Street.

December 15

1:12 am: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in the 1100 block of South Main Street.

7:59 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of Bush Street.

8:19 am: Officers initiated a hit and run vehicle collision investigation in the 100 block of Baechtel Road.

12:03 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 400 block of Grove Street.

3:06 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 400 block of East Commercial Street.

5:21 pm: Officers responded to a report of several suspicious people in the 300 block of Robert Drive.

9:01 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 100 block of Bush Street.

December 16

12:22 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1500 block of South Main Street.

1:41 am: Officers responded to a report of an assault in the 200 block of South Main Street.

9:30 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Creekside Drive.

12:10 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of South Main Street.

5:23 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

6:58 pm: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 24000 block of North Highway 101.

9:13 pm: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.

December 17

11:41 am: Officers initiated a vehicle theft investigation in the 500 block of Raymond Lane.

6:42pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1200 block of Locust Street.

8:48 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 700 block of South Main Street.

Willits Weekly Gift Certificates make great last-minute gifts

Give the gift of being in the know and up on the news about Willits this holiday season, with a gift subscription to Willits Weekly.

Take your choice of a six-month or one-year subscription via mail delivery to anywhere around the U.S., or home delivery, serving addresses within our greater Willits delivery area. Local subscriptions arrive Friday mornings.

One-year mail subscriptions are \$75; one year of home delivery is \$50. Six-month mail subscriptions are \$40; six months of home delivery is \$30.

Pick up a glossy gift certificate at the last Winter Willits Farmers Market before Christmas, this Thursday, December 22, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Or, feel free to call to arrange a pick-up, 707-972-7047.



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*Warm wishes
for a bright
holiday season!*

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Photos by Frank Deuel

Above, left: Commander Bob Ireland, left, and retiring Commander Roger Ham of the American Legion with a table of toys destined for the Willits Kids Christmas Program. Above, right: Two of Santa's helpers from the Willits Wild Bunch, Kat "Tigger" Harris, at left, and Norma "No-No" Staley, receive the American Legion's toys at the Christmas Program's headquarters at the old Rexall building on Main Street.

Legionnaires give toys to Christmas program

The American Legion Post 174 in Willits decided to start a new tradition in 2017. This year instead of exchanging Christmas gifts with each other, each member would buy a toy for the Willits Kids Christmas Program. The group ended up with a table full of toys to donate.

Members of the Willits Wild Bunch volunteering at Santa's HQ at the old Rexall building on Main Street are working to be ready for Christmas, and volunteer gift wrappers are welcome. Stop by Rexall or call 707-972-8782 for more information.

— Submitted by Carol Deuel



Photos by Ree Slocum

Above: Mrs. Groom's class sings "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to a packed gymnasium.

Below: Jayden successfully plays a nerd in Mrs. Haschak's original play, "Good King Wenceslas, Revisited." He and Lukas have the facts and set everything straight.

At bottom: Anjelica works on her wreath while waiting to go into the auditorium.

Show of Festivity

Fourth-grade students at Blosser Lane put on annual holiday performance

The holiday performance put on by the fourth-grade students at Blosser Lane last Thursday was well-attended with family filling up the cafeteria and enthusiastically watching their kids perform. Some parents took time off of work to be at the show.

The performance, which included songs and skits, was kicked off by Ms. Valenzuela-Watkins' class singing "My Favorite Things." Mrs. Franco's class then performed "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." A musical version of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" followed, done by Mrs. Groom's class. Margo Singleton's class then sang "Silent Night," and all the fourth-grade classes joined in for "Frosty the Snowman," "Jinglebells," "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" and "Feliz Navidad."

A skit was then performed by Mrs. Haschak's class, titled, "Good King Wenceslas, Revisited." In this original and fun skit, a song about King

Wenceslas was constantly interrupted by questions from students about the lyrics.

"Stop, stop, stop! Good King who?" asked one boy. To which a girl answered, "Good King Wenceslas! Well, he wasn't truly a king but a duke who ruled in the Middle Ages in the land of Bavaria, what is now the Czech Republic. He was a kind and generous noble, beloved by his people, and this song tells the story of his generous spirit. Now, back to our song."

The performance ended with a reading of "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" by Miss Mey's class and a dance titled, "All I Want for Christmas" presented by the Christmas Dancers.

This festive event showcased the many talents of the Blosser Lane fourth-graders and was cute and fun. The holiday decorations, created by the students, helped make for a merry feel. The students and family members who attended appeared to have a great time.

Jackie Cobbs
Features Writer

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Above: Back row, from left: Alana Hastings, Darcy De Leon, Shauna de Marquez, Holly Sears, Laura Azevedo, Linda Givens, Jason Wells, Cici Winiger and Denice Brown. Front row, from left: Becky Hope, Judson Howe, Dennis Long and Kristina Mudd.

'A Circus Holiday'

Howard Memorial employees enjoy annual Holiday Brunch

Adventist Health Howard Memorial employees celebrated the holidays during their annual Holiday Brunch on Thursday, December 7. This year's theme was "A Circus Holiday," complete with a popcorn buffet, doughnuts, "ducks in a row," peanuts and other traditional "circus" food.

Staff had fun getting into their favorite circus character – the Ringmaster, Lion Tamer, Bearded Lady and Queen of Hearts, among others. Roots Restaurant provided a hearty and delectable breakfast with crepes, eggs Benedict and more!

— Cici Winiger, for AHHM

Above, right: Roots' Chef Kyle happily passes out handmade donuts – not your typical hospital food!



At right: Becky Hope checks out one of the request tags hanging on the tree at Roots.



Above: Ms. Valenzuela-Watkins' class sings an old favorite, "My Favorite Things." Below, left: To round off the set of performances, a well-choreographed dance to "All I Want For Christmas" was performed by the Christmas Dancers. Below: Lots of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends took photos and videos to keep the memories. At right: Mrs. Franco's special day class performs "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" with assistance from their helpers.

Photos by Ree Slocum

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CLASS MEETS: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. beginning January 29 thru March 18. Class meets at the Cal Fire Howard Forest Training Center, 17501 N. Hwy 101, Willits. No class the week of 2/19 – 2/23. Mandatory orientation: 1/10/18 9AM – 3PM @ Ukiah Campus Rm 4210. Fire Tech Material Fee: \$25 Credits: 7.5

For special enrollment instructions and materials needed, call the Admissions Office in Ukiah at 707-483-3191, or the North County Center in Willits at 707-459-8224. During the winter break (Dec. 15th – Jan. 8th) you can e-mail Theresa Gowan at tgowan@mendocino.edu for more information. Space is limited!

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The rest of Cookies | From Page B1

"I won't?" a shocked Logan replied when called with the news. "I can't believe it! I told my sister I was going to win [laughter]. These are one of my favorite cookies! Yay!"

Adams won her title by votes cast by the people attending and tasting all the goods brought in by local bakers for the December 15 event. Tasters wrote their favorite cookie number on a ballot – names of bakers were not revealed on the plates of cookies, though contestants were not sworn to secrecy! – which were tallied at the end of the night.

The evening's third winner was Abigail Sherf, a 9-year-old baker whose "Chocolate Chip Cookies" took the trophy for the first annual new category: "Prettiest Cookie." [Editor's note: Although the Cookie Party doesn't officially award second places, it's worth noting that this young baker had the second-highest number of votes in the People's Choice contest, too!]

"It's my mom's recipe that I love to make," said Sherf. This new category was in the hands of Willits City Councilman Gerry Gonzalez, who had the sole responsibility for bestowing the title.

Many bakers came to vie for the title this year: Emandal had three other participants in addition to Adams; Lucy Sharp made "Blackberry Chocolate Squares"; Kashaya Adams made "Russian Tea Cakes"; and Michelle Kluskiewicz made "Snickerdoodle Caramel Bars."

2015 Judges' Choice winner, baker Lisa von Schlegell, brought an entry of "Dziriante," an almond and rose-water flavored cookie from a recipe she adapted from The New York Times. Santa Calderon brought in a plate of "Churro Cookies," which she noted she made in honor of her daughter.

"My daughter loves churros so I made these for her," explained Calderon. "She moved to Los Angeles 18 months ago. I just miss her and the grandsons during the holidays!" Other bakers included Cassandra Andich who brought two entries: Ina Garten's "Oatmeal Pecan Raisin Cookies" and a comical, yet well-received "Lemon Failures" entry which was entered regardless of a small baking powder versus baking soda mishap. Danya Davis brought in her "Frosted Cranberry Shortbread" entry, and Maria Rogers brought in "Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies" as well.

Hannah, Gracie and Madison Bouthillier of Bouthillier's Construction brought in a plate of "Santa's Thumbprint Cookies."

"This recipe was given to the girls by their 90-year-old great-Nana," explained the girl's mother, Jamie. "And these are the cookies they leave out for Santa on Christmas Eve."

Adventist Health Howard Memorial's Roots Restaurant brought in three entries: "Chocolate Chip Pecan Cookies," "Orange, Almond and Cranberry Wedding Cookies," and "Chocolate Mint Cookies."

Grethen Moore brought an entry of "Soft Ginger Cookies." Moore was also the recipient of a free Christmas tree donated by Scoops for their raffle. Moore opted to gift the tree to Nancy New, veteran Willits Weekly entertainer, who brought her Just for Fun Choir to sing carols and other favorites this year. Many other raffle-winning bakers and event attendees received gift certificates to Scoops for a free scoop of ice cream or frozen yogurt, sandwiches or coffees.

"We want to thank Lisa, John and the staff of Scoops for hosting our event this year," said Willits Weekly's Jennifer Poole. "It was a great location for this annual holiday tradition, and we really appreciate their support."

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For more information on Tick or other adoptable animals, call Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County at 707-465-0123, check www.mendocinohumanesociety.com, or visit the shelter at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. Open hours: 1 to 5 pm, Wednesday through Friday; and 11 am to 3 pm, Saturday and Sunday. To volunteer or help take the dogs for a walk, please join us on Sundays at 11 am for an orientation.



COLUMN | WUSD Report Card



No more business as usual

By Mark Westerburg, WUSD superintendent

Sometimes we get stuck in ruts, and when that happens we forget to ask questions like, "Why do we do this the way we do?" Once the question is asked, people can't believe they've lived with an outdated or inefficient system for as long as they have.

This is what's going on in K-5 education in Willits right now. I brought together representatives from each grade level, as well as administrators, special education teachers and electives teachers, and I asked them how we might improve K-5 education. They are full of ideas.

Currently, elementary education in Willits (and most of rural Northern California) is structured substantially the same as it has been since the 1980s, and the time for change is long overdue. Happily, a lot of research has been done during the last three decades, so we can make data-driven choices about

Read the rest of Westerburg | Over on Page B7

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

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Worship Service & Children's Church - 11 a.m.
Mid-week Bible Studies
Potluck every 2nd Sunday
Alan Klier, Lead Pastor
459-3106

St. Francis Episcopal Church
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707-459-3066
Church Services / Communion 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.
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The rest of Westerburg | From Page B6

how to improve.

My goal as superintendent is to provide Willits students with every opportunity to thrive – to reach their potential, to discover their passions, and to master the skills they need to be successful in college and/or the career of their choice. To accomplish this, we're going to redirect our resources to help students while they are still young and haven't experienced the type of academic failure that can steal a child's confidence. We're also going to redirect resources so students who want to move ahead more quickly can do so.

Everyone knows that parents understand their children's needs better than anyone, and they want choices about how to meet those needs. With that in mind, here are a few of the options we're considering.

Looping
The first option is called looping. It provides continuity for children in grades 1-2 and 3-4. Children would attend school with the same teacher in the same classroom and the same classmates for first and second grades. Then students would move to the next level and remain with the next teacher, classroom and classmates for third and fourth grades. This continuity gives students, families and teachers a huge advantage over those who change every year.

Change is disruptive. When students are allowed to remain in familiar settings, they can focus on academics instead of being distracted by unnecessary social and emotional stresses. Students who know their teacher, their classmates, and their surroundings can get right to work. And staying with the same group for two years gives families a better opportunity to get to know one another.

Also, teachers can use their relationships with students and their awareness of their needs for two years, rather than trying to get to know a whole new batch of students each year.

Multi-age classrooms
Another option involves multi-age classrooms, where students from multiple grade levels learn together in a single classroom. We use this approach at Sherwood School to great effect, but since not everyone wants to hop on a bus and go to such a small school, we're considering including multi-age classrooms at other schools, too.

While it may seem counterintuitive, multi-age classrooms are especially good for both high and low achievers. Unfortunately, in a traditional classroom, when students struggle academically, it can be awkward to move them down to a level that works for them. In a multi-age classroom, they simply move to a different table to change the difficulty level – no stigma, no big deal. The same is true for the high achievers. If they are ready to move on, but their peers aren't, they can move to the next table up.

It's far easier to differentiate instruction and it appropriately moves students along academically, based on their mastery of a given subject rather than their age. Granted, teachers have to work harder to teach a multi-age class because they have to prepare lesson plans for multiple grade levels, but the rewards are great.

Transitional first grade

Yet another option is transitional first grade. You may have heard of transitional kindergarten, where kids are introduced to school with a year between preschool and kindergarten. The truth is, I think transitional first grade is an even better idea. Think about it. When kids come in to kindergarten, they're focused on socialization, number sense and phonemics. However, in first grade, they begin to learn to read and get into math functions like addition and subtraction.

For kids who are below average in kindergarten, a transitional first grade classroom would allow a slower-paced approach, so they could solidify the fundamentals. They would then move to traditional first grade at the head of the pack, feeling confident and capable, rather than frustrated and behind. Transitional first grade would probably include more boys than girls, because boys tend to mature more slowly in the early years. Why not deal with reality? Let's give kids the help they need when they need it.

Studies show that when children fall behind by the third grade, especially in reading, many of them never catch up. They eventually get routed into the special education system because of the gap between their achievement and their potential (as measured by their IQ).

More K-5 choices

Right now we separate our youngest students (K-2) from our third- to fifth-grade students. Some children need special education classes, and as part of that program they need to spend time with their non-special-education peers. Blosser Lane Elementary has classrooms uniquely designed for special education, but because Blosser does not include K-2 education, our youngest special education students cannot take advantage of them.

Although we're in the early stages of figuring out how we want to restructure our K-5 education in Willits, I'm thinking we need two K-5 sites with various options. We could provide some looping, some multi-age classrooms, and some traditional classrooms. We could also utilize our facilities better, allowing K-2 special education students to use the Blosser Lane classrooms and still have recess with students their own age who don't receive services, for example.

The restructuring of our K-5 offerings will allow more choices for parents. When I started as superintendent of Willits Unified, I recognized that we couldn't do everything at all our schools simultaneously. We started with curriculum changes in the elementary schools and structural changes in secondary schools. Now that we've accomplished those changes, we'll tackle the curriculum changes at the middle school and high school levels and the structural changes at the elementary schools.

Sometimes people get worked up about buzzwords like "STEM" and "project-based learning," and they ask if we plan to incorporate them in Willits. Programs are great, but they don't fix structural problems. Right now, we are in the three-to-five-year process of restructuring and updating curriculum. We already offer science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) classes, and many teachers incorporate project-based learning.

However, before I put money into a special classroom for STEM projects, for example, I plan to reintroduce music and art at the elementary level. First things first.

If you're interested in getting involved in the K-5 restructure, the best way is to join your school's parent-teacher organization (PTO). You can also just call me and share your ideas. We'll be sending surveys, emails and getting in touch in other ways to learn more about the types of changes parents and community members think would work best. Please respond to our inquiries so we can create programs that will work best for the students you know and love.

In other news: We have more high school graduates and a high school newspaper!

While we're certainly focusing on our elementary students, that doesn't mean we lose sight of our older students. To that end, we're helping more people earn high school diplomas. The state of California requires 180 credits to graduate from high school. Thanks to the Willits Unified School Board's decision to adjust credit requirements for Sanhedrin, we've been able to put high school diplomas within reach of more students, many of whom are focused on vocational rather than college courses of study.

Sanhedrin allows students to earn diplomas without completing certain classes that are required for university study, and to graduate as soon as their 180 credits are completed through Odysseyware, software that allows students to choose from hundreds of courses.

Also, for a short time, the state of California required an equivalency exam to earn a diploma, so even if you completed all your credits, you couldn't get a diploma if you didn't pass this test. They've since rescinded the requirement, but people who attended high school in California at that time and who didn't pass the test didn't get their diploma. We went back over our records and found 10 Willits students in this situation, and we let them know their diplomas are here and waiting for them. They earned them! We're hoping to present the diplomas to them at our next board meeting.

For those who never finished the required credits to graduate, we just received a grant from the Mendo Lake Consortium for Adult and Career Education that allows adults 19 and older to come in to Sanhedrin a few evenings a week so they can earn their diploma. The grant pays for the teacher, and we're happy to donate WUSD facilities to help people earn their diplomas.

Finally, in other high school-related news, be sure to watch for the resurrected Willits High School newspaper, The Wolverine, now into its second year of distribution as an insert in Willits Weekly several times a year. Thanks to art teacher Carolyn Bakewell for serving as advisor to these budding journalists who spend their free time interviewing and photographing students and others, so they can share the latest about high school life in Willits.

All in all, things are going well in the district. If you have questions or ideas about how we can improve, please get in touch with me at the district office.

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The Ukiah Animal Shelter is located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah. Adoption hours are Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm, and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. To view photos and bios of some of the other wonderful adoptable animals here, please visit online at: www.mendocinoshelter.com. More info about adoptions: 707-467-6453.

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

Willits Weekly's
CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

December 21 December 22 December 23

30% OFF
WATCHES & JEWELRY



Limited to stock on hand
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KIDS TOYS & GAMES



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Merry Christmas
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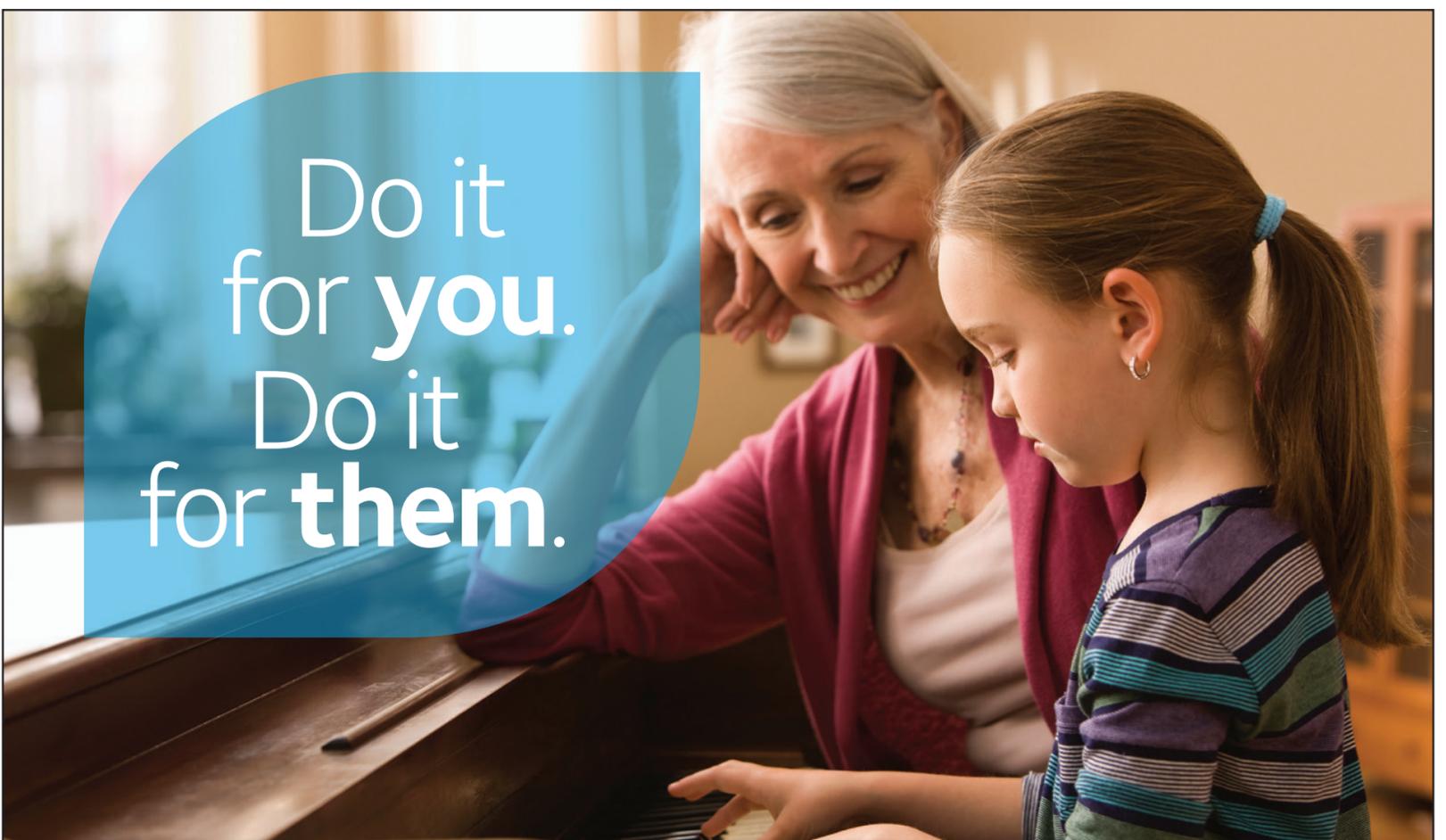


ARMING CALIFORNIANS SINCE 2013

Wishing Everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

David Oncale
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Even healthy adults and children can get the flu that's why the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get a flu vaccine every year. And now, we've made it easier for you to protect yourself and those you love against the flu. Stop by Howard Pharmacy and get a flu shot, no appointment necessary.

**Most insurance plans cover flu vaccinations.
 Ask our pharmacy staff about your specific plan**

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