

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

COVID was never gone

To the Editor:
Covid was never gone, and now it is BACK in a new form. We have a new variant of Covid, JN.1 that is sweeping through the nation on a new wave of the pandemic which is far from over. By wastewater levels of virus, this wave is second only to the omicron wave of two years ago. It is extremely infectious and highly resistant to the antibodies of prior infections and the original Covid vaccination. Only the updated Covid vaccine introduced in September 2023 shows significant reactivity to this variant. The new vaccine is reducing risk of hospitalizations by 60%. It is also thought to reduce episodes of Long Covid by 60%. I would predict that it will reduce deaths by 60%. Those of us that have never had Covid are finally succumbing to this particular one.

In the last 12 months, before this new variant, there have been four times as many deaths from Covid as from the flu. It's true that the death rate is greatly reduced from the worst of the pandemic, but there are still over 1,400 people dying weekly nationwide. People over the age of 65 and those with chronic medical conditions are highly recommended to get the updated vaccine. Thus far only 19% of eligible people have gotten the vaccine.

I get it, we are all sick and tired of the pandemic of Covid and getting vaccines. But don't stick your head in the sand, especially if you are over 65 or have chronic medical conditions such as COPD or asthma, cancer, immune disorder, anti immune treatment, or heart disease. And don't forget about your grandparents or aging parents – you want to protect them too. The vaccine is available at Safeway Pharmacy and Rite Aid. It is not available at the hospital or most clinics, but check with yours.

With variants giving us periodic gut checks, is there any hope on the horizon for a solution to these variants? The answer is yes with a new class of oral inhalant vaccines that is being developed that should be variant-proof. But for this year it is the updated Covid vaccine. Unless you are an anti-vaxxer, don't turn your back on the vaccine. It's been estimated that around 3 million American lives have been saved by our vaccine.

John Glyer MD, Willits

2024 WILLITS COMMUNITY PHONE BOOK

Ads, additions, corrections, please!

The deadline is approaching quickly for 2024 Willits Soroptimist Phone Book!

Soroptimist International of Willits members are busy putting together the 2024 edition of the Willits Community Telephone Directory to be distributed in March. Do you need to update, remove or add a phone number? Add a cell phone? Email willitsphonebook@gmail.com.

Those interested in advertising in or sponsoring the phone book, which is a fundraiser to support the Willits Soroptimist Club and its mission to support women and girls, including awards programs, scholarships, and donations, can also email willitsphonebook@gmail.com. The deadline for ads and changes is February 10, 2024.

– Vicki Ham, SI/Willits Phonebook Committee

The Rules: LETTERS

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Willits Weekly prints letters and commentaries about Willits and Third District issues, activities, events, and people. We print letters to the editor from residents of Willits and the Third District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once every four weeks.

Letters and commentaries must be submitted with a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

Willits Weekly

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Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, and continues to serve drive-through and walk-up lunches, too. Lunch is available Monday through Friday, from 12 to 12:45 pm, inside and outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Lunches are \$8; \$75 for a 10 lunch card for Senior Center members.

Thursday, January 18: Garlic Shrimp Pasta w/ White Wine Sauce, Garlic Bread

Friday, January 19: Chicken & Dumplings

Monday, January 22: Western Bacon Burger, Mac & Cheese

Tuesday, January 23: Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce, Veggies, Garlic Bread

Wednesday, January 24: Sweet & Sour Chicken over Rice

Thursday, January 25: Monterey Roast Beef Sandwich, Pickle, Chips

Friday, January 26: Turkey, Cranberry Stuffing, Veggies, Roll

Activities: Bingo every Friday night, 5 to 7 pm. Exercise class every weekday morning from 9 to 10 am.

Pancake Breakfast: every second Sunday, 8 to 11 am. \$10; \$9 center members; \$6 children under 8.

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

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

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

Homeless Services' Point in Time Count, January 24

Submitted by Homeless Services Continuum of Care

The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care will be conducting its annual unsheltered Point In Time Count which will be held on the morning of Wednesday, January 24. The Point in Time Count is mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and is used by the State of California and multiple federal departments to calculate allocations of homeless services funding.

The data received through the Point in Time Count will help our local community to identify needs and develop planning to engage and support those persons experiencing homelessness throughout Mendocino County.

The Continuum of Care is a group of agencies that consist of service providers, Tribal governments, non-profits, faith-based organizations, concerned community members, and Mendocino County staff. These individuals and agencies come together to help address the needs of those who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

The Point in Time Count undertaking requires a lot of individuals performing a lot of different tasks in preparation for this event, as well as surveying individuals and families experiencing homelessness throughout Mendocino County. We need volunteers to count along the coast as well as the southern and northern inland portions of Mendocino County.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at <https://Mendocino.PointInTime.info/>. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact Alex Werner with Applied Survey Research at alex@appliedsurveyresearch.org or (877) 728-4545.

Veterans Services Office move

Submitted by Supervisor John Haschak and Supervisor Glenn McCourty

There have been a lot of emotions regarding the move of the Veterans Service Office from a small house to within the Public Health building. We, Supervisors Haschak and McCourty, recognize that the move was conducted without appropriate communication between the county and the veterans and staff affected. In no way was disrespect intended. All involved have the utmost respect for our veterans and the service and sacrifice that they have given to our country.

The primary purpose of the Veterans Services Office is to help sign our local veterans up for benefits and programs that they qualify for, find service records and any help that may be required to assist both veterans and family members. This is a county program with match funding by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs. The program website can be accessed here: <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/departments/social-services/veterans-services>

The move was precipitated by the board of supervisors' directive to staff to downsize the number of county buildings and reduce costs. The Veterans Services house on Observatory Avenue in Ukiah had a homey feel. Veterans and staff felt comfortable in that setting. Yet there were some issues such as parking, public safety, and space.

Recently, the rent being paid for Air Quality's present building increased dramatically. The decision by staff was to get out from under the high rents. There existed unutilized space in the Public Health

Read the rest of **Veterans** Over on page 9

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT January 2024 update

As we enter the New Year, how does the county help its residents to thrive?

A \$12 million grant for a second access route for Sherwood Road was received. This is a Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program grant recognizing the changing climate and risks that one way in, one way out communities present. This is the first round of funding which will be for environmental analysis and design. The county's Department of Transportation will be managing the grant. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deal with these situations.

A second grant was also received which will be for second access for the Redemeyer Road in the east hills of Ukiah. More money is needed to complete these projects, but this is a huge first step.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and SB1 will also provide most of \$51.4 million for roadway, guardrail, and sign improvements on Route 162 from U.S. 101 to east of Poonkinney Road near Covelo.

Negotiations have been settled for SEIU 1021, the Deputy Sheriffs Association, and Law Enforcement Management. These deals will bring the employees to market rate as compared with other surrounding counties and jurisdictions within the next three years. To make this work, organizational restructuring will have to happen. This will mean greater efficiencies, elimination of some positions, and even departmental restructuring.

The General Government Standing Committee will consider changes to the 2024 legislative platform on January 24. This reflects the county's priorities for legislative advocacy at state and federal levels. If you have ideas for what the county should advocate, please let me know. I will be the chair again this year of the committee.

"Talk with the Supervisor" is the second Thursday of the month at 10 am at Brickhouse Coffee in Willits. I am available by email haschakj@mendocinocounty.org or phone 707-972-4214.

Sheriff Matt Kendall's 2023 Report

Posted by Mendocino County Sheriff

At the end of each year, I work with my Undersheriff looking over statistics and adjusting our responses to various crime trends. We often look over directions we have gone to ensure the needs are still being met and to determine whether we can place more effort in some areas which are problematic while trying to stay ahead of problems to come. I am happy to say Mendocino County is well below the national average on many of our crimes and as a county we have been trending in a good direction.

While we continue working on these issues, I am hopeful we continue to see a decrease in crime. I will list our statistics at the bottom of this article. (Visit <https://www.facebook.com/MendocinoSheriff> to see the chart with 2023 statistics compared to previous years). I would like to also encourage everyone to look over the Citizen Connect portal through our website.

Our Dispatch Center received 82,905 calls in 2022, and in 2023, we received 67,077. Not all calls to our dispatch generate investigations. Many are medical calls, vehicle accidents and information regarding events occurring in our communities.

Our calls for service which generated investigations remained within a percentage point of 2022, however have declined by almost 10% in the past four years. Please

understand although our calls for service have decreased, calls per deputy has increased as is the case with many agencies suffering staffing shortages.

Our homicides are down from 2020 however up from 2022. In 2022 we experienced only 3 homicides, while in 2023 we had 6. We have developed suspects and made arrests in nearly all homicide cases this year. We have one outstanding homicide suspect and one case which we have yet to develop a suspect in. Domestic violence cases rose slightly during 2020, however have declined since that time.

Robbery has also been on the decline since 2020, however we saw a slight increase over the past year. Burglary has also declined over the past few years. Assault with deadly weapons and crimes against persons are always a top priority, and we have seen these numbers fluctuating slightly over the past few years, however remaining fairly static from year to year.

Thefts and general larceny crimes remain high, and there is a disturbing trend of people and businesses not reporting these crimes. Thefts of mail, packages and thefts from retail shops has continued to rise across the state, and I am hopeful we can get these crimes under control. Recently one of our off-duty personnel had to intervene during an

Read the rest of **Sheriff** Over on page 11



Above: Shannon DeMuth and Jannie Longcrier pass out Brown Bag lunches at the Willits City Center on Saturday. Above, right, top: Shannon DeMuth's SUV is filled to the top with clothing and food for the unhoused population of Willits. Above, right, bottom: Jannie Longcrier shows a box of fresh kiwi fruit that was donated. At right: Jannie Longcrier shows the simple pasta and garlic bread lunches that are being distributed to the unhoused. At far right: One of Shannon DeMuth's clients seems to have her spirits lifted by her beautiful new umbrella.

Photos by Mathew Caine

Seeing the Unseen

Community Crossroads of Mendocino County supports the unhoused population of Willits and Ukiah with clothes, bedding and food

"I do this because the need is there. And no one else is doing it. My conscience just tells me 'do it.' I have a hard time being comfortable in my home, knowing people are out here. I just know what it feels like to be without a home," explained

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Shannon DeMuth, program coordinator and founder of Community Crossroads of Mendocino County and indefatigable friend to the unhoused population of Willits and Ukiah.

The people she serves have few defenders. They are people who have fallen on hard times, are mentally challenged, or just do not have the means to find regular housing, but most of all, they are human beings with the same needs and desires as the rest of the population, just not the tools.

They survive through the largess of people, like DeMuth, who are dedicated to trying to make their lives tolerable, and through their own learned wiles and street-wise education. They can be found hunkered down below the bridges (except when the rains make that situation intolerable), under overhangs and business doorways, in the entrances to accommodating churches, and other locations that afford them some form of shelter. Some even live in their vehicles, cramped but dry.

DeMuth understands their plight and has, along with her close friend, Jannie Longcrier (who gathers and sorts many of the pieces of warm apparel), made it her avocation and passion to serve those who have few champions. In her "free" time from

her position as therapist with the Tapestry organization, she travels the streets of Willits and Ukiah, to the places where her clients gather, and offers warm meals, clothing, sleeping bags, plastic bags, plastic sheeting, and anything to enhance their comfort and safety.

She also is able to offer "street medicine" by arranging video calls with Dr. Ace Barash. "If one of my clients was hurting," explained DeMuth, "he would sit in the front seat. I would call Ace. He would answer the phone no matter what he was doing. He knows that it is not possible to reschedule and the clients need to be handled right away.

"We'll video message and the client will talk about what bothers them, if something hurts or if they have gangrene in their toes, etc. I will take the best photo I can and send it to Ace, who will come to town the next day, pick up the client, and take them where they can be treated," said DeMuth.

On the Saturday on which Willits Weekly joined DeMuth in her rounds, she and Longcrier were enconced under the overhangs at the Willits Community Center, passing out free pasta lunches as it was her turn to participate in the long-running Brown Bag program. The program, along with several other free food programs, fulfills the need for good, nutritious, hot meals on Saturdays, when the other programs, Willits Daily Bread and the Willits Food Bank, are not able to serve.

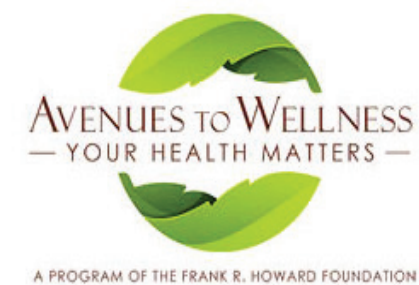
Read the rest of **Crossroads** Over on page 9



Above: Sally the dog enjoys being outdoors, not caring that her owner is unhoused.



At left: Shannon DeMuth drives around Willits and Ukiah in her Community Crossroads of Mendocino County vehicle, which she uses to deliver much-needed commodities and clothing to the unhoused.



Bereavement Support Group

This facilitated 8-week group provides an opportunity to learn the symptoms of grief, as well as to recognize the individual nature of its expression and duration. With a fuller understanding of the grief process and effective ways to cope, we can find meaning and move forward.

Beginning Thursday February 8
Time: 2-4pm
Willits Senior Center Register NOW
To register call:
Suzanne Piccetti-Johnson (707) 456-9676



Suzanne Wilson and Suzanne Piccetti-Johnson Group Facilitators



WOMEN'S HEALTH Healthy at Every Stage



Yearly visits are the best way to detect any changes in your health before they develop into bigger issues. We're here to care for you.



(707) 456-9600
LITTLE LAKE HEALTH CENTER
45 HAZEL STREET, WILLITS
mchcinc.org

We accept Medi-Cal, Medicare, Partnership and other insurance. MCHC HEALTH CENTERS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

Agape Bible Church
290 S. Lenore Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Where love is first and the Bible is central.
Sunday Services: 10:00 a.m. - Worship
Adult Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Info? 707-459-1905
www.agapebiblechurch.com

Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church
803 Coast Street
P.O. Box 489, Willits
Worship Service - 5:00 p.m.
Pastor Kris Strickland
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

Church of Christ

"What must we do to be saved?"
Acts 2:37
1095 S. Main St., Willits
(next to Super 8)
(707) 459-5023
Sunday Bible Study-10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship-11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service-6-7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study-7-8:00 p.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
265 Margie Drive
Willits, CA 95490
ALL ARE WELCOME
Sacrament Meeting
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Eckankar: The Path of Spiritual Freedom
• A University for Soul
• Spiritual Living Courses
• Spiritual Discussions
• ECK Light & Sound Services
More information?
Call 530-224-8703
www.eckankar.org

Grace Community Church
Celebrating Life In Christ
25 Hazel Street, Willits
Modified Worship Service 10 a.m.
Other ministries suspended for now.
For appointments call: (707) 459-3106

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
61 W. San Francisco Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Father Aaron Bandanadam
Mass times:
Wednesday-Friday 9:00 a.m.
Saturday-5:30 p.m.
Sunday-9:00 a.m. - English
10:30 a.m. - Spanish
Confessions on Saturday 4:45 - 5:15 p.m.
Or by appointment at 707-459-2252

https://saintanthonywillits.org/
saintanthonywillits@gmail.com
We Welcome All Walks of Faith

St. Francis Episcopal Church
1 North Main Street, Willits
707-272-0177
Sunday Service - 10 a.m.
In-person and on Zoom
Call for information.
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Bruneau

St. John Lutheran Church
Church Service:
Sunday 10:00 to 11:00
(707) 459-2988
24 Mill Creek Drive
ALL ARE WELCOME

Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church
707-459-5714
Friendly, open worship
Saturdays
Bible Study - 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.
Zoom Transmission Available.
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
399 W. Mendocino Ave.
All are welcome!

Willits United Methodist Church
Labyrinth and Peace Garden
A place to find comfort where all are welcome.
Pastor Rosemary Landry
Sunday Worship at 10:30 am
286 School St. (at Pine)
707-459-2855
www.willitsonline.com
www.willitsumc.org
Facebook: facebook/willitsumc

If you want to be included in this column please call:
April Tweddell
(707) 972-2475
april@willitsweekly.com

Thursday, January 18

"The State of Things": The Willits Chamber of Commerce presents "The State of Things," a community briefing, featuring the State of the State, with Ruth Valenzuela representing Assemblyman Jim Wood's Office; the State of the County, with Supervisor John Haschak; and the State of the City, with Willits Mayor Saprina Rodriguez. Thursday, January 18, 5:30 to 8 pm, at the Willits Community Center, 111 East Commercial Street. Refreshments served. Everybody welcome!



Willits Farmers Market: The weekly farmers market is indoors for the winter season at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Thursdays, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Local produce, local meat, farm fresh eggs, delicious meals, tasty treats, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. Tobin's Tales, story time at the farmers market, from 3:30 to 4 pm, with Library Assistant Tobin reading selected juvenile picture books. All are welcome.

Herbal Wellness Wagon: The Mendocino County Herb Guild and the Community Wellness Collective are bringing the Herbal Wellness Wagon to the Willits Farmers Market in January, upcoming on January 18 and 25. Herbalists, nurses, doctors, and other volunteers provide free services including blood pressure checks, health consultations, free herbal remedies and (always!) a cup of herbal tea. Find us in the hallway of Little Lake Grange alongside Nuestra Alianza. More info: 707 272-3373 or MendoCW@ gmail.com

Friday, January 19

Seed Sharing Events: Local Granges in Mendocino County are offering seed sharing events around the county in coming weeks. "Keeping Heirloom Seeds In Our Gardens & on Our Tables." The Mendo SeedMobile will be at every gathering with local seed giveaways. Friday, January 19 at the Laytonville Book Room, 200 Branscomb from 12 to 3 pm. February 10 at the Round Valley Library in Covelo, 11 am to 2 pm. February 25 in Willits at the Little Lake Grange, 10 am to 2 pm.

Clay Hawkins Duo at Shanachie: "Late Night, Boot Stomping, Road Music from the Heart" by slide guitarist and songwriter Clay Hawkins and longtime co-conspirator Andrew Robertson on the upright bass. Friday, January 19 at 8 pm, at Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.



Ongoing Events at the Willits Library

Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street.
Info: www.mendolib.org or 459-5908.
Willits Library will be closed Friday, January 26 for staff training.

Story Time: Tuesday through Friday each week, 10:30 to 11 am. "Start your morning listening to a story. Join us in the children's area of the library."

Penny University Coffee Klatch: Tuesdays, 11 am to noon. We will meet in the Willits Library meeting room to discuss various topics while enjoying a "cup of joe". Topics will range and will be announced ahead of time."

LEGO Club: Tuesdays, 5:30 to 6:30 pm. "It is LEGO time at the library. Bring your imagination and start building."

Willits Walk and Talk: Join the Willits Branch Library staff for a 20- to 30-minute walk around the neighborhood. Come enjoy a little bit of exercise as well as some pleasant conversation. All ages are welcome. Wednesdays and Fridays at 10 am; meet at the front entrance to the library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: www.mendolib.org or call the Willits Branch Library at 707-459-5908.

Games at the Library: Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month we will be bringing out the cards and board games. All ages & player levels welcome. Bring your own games to add to the fun!

Tech Help: Every first and third Saturday from 11 am to 12 pm: Is your computer on the fritz? Want to install a new app? Bring your tech questions and get help from the library's tech savvy volunteer

Spinning & Knitting: Every Saturday at the library; from 1 to 4:30 pm. "All skill levels welcome! Spinning circle 1 to 2 pm, Knitting circle 2 to 4:30 pm."

What's Happening Around Town

Saturday, January 20

Free Ceramics Workshops with Nancy New: Master potter Nancy New offers free ceramics workshops, "Make a Place for Yourself at the Table," at Willits Center for the Arts. Build and glaze your own place setting over two sessions, Saturdays, January 20 and 27, 1 to 5 pm (materials free). Limited registration: www.willitscenterforthearts.org



Health Services Meeting for Veterans: The American Legion, Willits Post 174, hosts an informational meeting with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Saturday, January 20 from 1 to 4 pm at the Veterans Memorial Building, 191 North Main Street. Veterans and their spouses are invited. Info on programs and services available from CMS and Health and Human Services, as well as open enrollment questions, part D coverage and organizational governance; plus a Social Security representative will provide insight on SS issues.

Laytonville Soup-In: Free community meal open to all, third Saturdays of the month, starting Saturday, January 20, from 2 to 4 pm, at Long Valley Garden Club, 375 Harwood Road, Laytonville. Donations needed, pantry items, financial support and volunteers: Call Heather at 707-354-4254.

Black Light Dance Party at the Grange: featuring electronic dance music, with a showing of "Interstella 5555," an animated music video that goes along to Daft Punk's "Discovery" album. Win prizes in the Black Light Costume Contest - pure white is great in black lights, as are some neon colors. \$5 admission includes non-toxic black light paint. Saturday, January 20 from 6 to 9 pm, Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Snacks and refreshments for purchase. All ages event; no alcohol served.

Forrest & Friends at Shanachie: Saturday, January 20, 8 pm, featuring Forrest Glyer and Malakai Schindel of Schindig, joined by some of the best local musicians and singer-songwriters around. Shanachie Pub, 50B South Main Street.

Sunday, January 21

4th annual Bob Colvig Invitational Wrestling Tournament: hosted by Willits Grappling Pack, for K through 8th grade. Sunday, January 21, at Willits High School, 299 North Main Street. Pre-registration

Covelo/Round Valley Community
Seed Swap & Scion Exchange
FREE Event - rain or shine
Indoor and Outdoor - dress warmly!
11 AM - 2 PM
Saturday, February 10
Round Valley Library Commons,
23925 Howard Street, Covelo, CA
Bring to swap or share: seed, scion, bulbs, plants, cuttings, excess tools, old gardening books...
You don't need to bring seeds or scion to participate BUT do label what you bring: type of plant, varietal name, and in the case of seeds, where and when they were grown!
This is a clean and sober, family-friendly event.
Check guidelines for seed and plant material prep: <https://plants.org/seed-swap-and-scion-exchange/>
Mendocino County Library
Free food for all!
Outreach@fbfoodbank.org
707-964-9404

MENDOCINO FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM
FOOD POP-UP
Willits
1250 Blosser Lane, Willits CA
Noon to 1pm
January 18th
February 15th
April 18th
May 16th
June 20th
Free food for all!
Outreach@fbfoodbank.org
707-964-9404

11th Annual Texas Hold'Em
POKER Tournament
Saturday, February 3rd, 2024

MENDOCINO COUNTY MUSEUM
NEW HOURS
STARTING JANUARY 31, 2023
OPEN 11 A.M. - 5 P.M.
TUESDAY - SATURDAY
CLOSED SUNDAY - MONDAY

only for wrestlers on TrackWrestling. All wrestlers that register before Friday, January 19 at 8 pm will have their name on the back of the shirt. Wrestling starts at 9 am; door fee \$5 adults, \$1 kids. Full concession. Info call or text Head Coach Wayne Shull at 707-489-8562.

Thursday, January 25

Willits Farmers Market: The weekly farmers market is indoors for the winter season at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Thursdays, from 3 to 5:30 pm. Local produce, local meat, farm fresh eggs, delicious meals, tasty treats, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. Tobin's Tales, story time at the farmers market, from 3:30 to 4 pm, with Library Assistant Tobin reading selected juvenile picture books. All are welcome.

Herbal Wellness Wagon: The Mendocino County Herb Guild and the Community Wellness Collective are bringing the Herbal Wellness Wagon to the Willits Farmers Market in January. See January 18 listing for details.

Friday, January 26

'Just Another Audition' opens at WCS: Willits Charter School presents Bryan Starchman's production of "Just Another Audition," a comedy that takes the audience backstage to witness the worst high school auditions EVER - where anything that can go wrong, does go wrong!



An overzealous assistant director and a slacker stage manager, along with a wacky group of wannabe actors, are left to cast their senior show themselves. What follows is a rollicking show full of accidental auditions, movie and pop culture hits reworked, bad songs, creepy clowns, overbearing drama mamas, and some slithering surprise guests. Runs January 26 and 27 at 7 pm; February 2 and 3 at 7 pm; and February 4 at 2 pm, at the WCS' new venue, 1431 South Main Street.

Cosmic Family Band at Shanachie: A local Mendocino County jam band, "sharing original music that is a reflection of being a part of this amazing community. Friday, January 26 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.

Saturday, January 27

KLLG Pledge Drive, Online Yard Sale: KLLG Willits Hometown Radio hosts a pledge drive and online yard sale, on Saturday, January 27, from 9 am to 3 pm. Tune in to 97.9 FM with our local programmers asking for your support while we spin tunes and tales. See pictures of items for sale at "KLLG 97.9 Willits Hometown Radio" on Facebook. If something interests you, call us at 707-459-5554 or email us at info@kllg.org during the pledge drive. Or check (and donate) at KLLG.org



Sierra Club meets in Willits: The Mendocino County Group of the Sierra Club invites you to our first public meeting of the new year, Saturday, January 27, 12 noon to 2 pm, at the Willits Environmental Center, 630 South Main Street. Bring your ideas, comments, questions, and a bag lunch if you'd like. Are you interested in reviving hikes and outings? Protecting old-growth and second-growth redwoods from logging? Exploring the Eel River Watershed? Learning more about healthy firescapes and how native people have tended these natural places for thousands of years? More info: Robin Leler at (707) 459-0155.

Donnie "Mississippi Saxophone" at Shanachie: Local harmonica (aka "Mississippi saxophone") player Donnie and his friends and fellow musicians play an improvisational variety of Chicago style Blues, Rock, Funk, Latin & West African music. Saturday, January 27 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.

Sunday, January 28

Cosmic Family Band at Shanachie: A local Mendocino County jam band, "sharing original music that is a reflection of being a part of this amazing community. Saturday, December 23 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.



Shanachie Pub Ongoing Events

Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street

Saturday Scramble: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday from 3 to 6 pm, hosted by Tyler B. Bring any instrument you can play and sign up to perform a 15-minute set with other local musicians. "Meet new musicians, discover new genres and explore your creativity!"

Bluegrass String Jam: Every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month starting at 3 pm - welcomes all Bluegrass musicians! An official jam for the California Bluegrass Association, "so you never know which members from out of the area may drop in!" To see 6 minutes of the January 6 jam, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ShanachieWillits/videos/1464720050757659>

Wednesday Open Mic Night: Shanachie Pub presents its popular Open Mic Night every Wednesday, featuring an eclectic array of local musicians and performers from around the world. Pub opens at 3 pm, and from opening until 7 pm, you can be entered for the lottery. Lottery determines order from which you pick your 20 minute time slot starting at 7:20 pm.

COLUMN | AT THE MOVIES

'Mean Girls'



Dan Essman
Columnist



The Story: The Broadway musical version of Tina Fey's satirical tale of innocent love and savage social cruelties that ruin high school for girls. Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) is a home-schooled ingenue. She's oblivious to social hierarchies, displays high competence in calculus, falls in love with a boy (who belonged to the queen bee bee-otch).

Eventually, adorable innocent Cady is corrupted by unfamiliar passions, by the dramas of competitiveness, snottiness, and jealousy. But this is a modern day (old-school) "comedy of manners," and Cady will regain her purity, if not her innocence. Then, all the mixed-up teenagers learn important lessons about surviving humiliations, and about respecting common decency.

My Thoughts: This is a great story, and boy! I'm so glad I'm not in high school! The flick is funny, the songs

are tasty and well-sung. The dancing is more frenetic than emotionally revealing. Of course, high school itself is frenetic.

The genuine emotional stripping within the dialogue and actions are revealing enough that we the viewers don't really need the choreography to amplify the moral-emotional struggles of the principal characters.

Parents: This is a movie that's for teens and up. It's a moral narrative of genuine importance. But don't bring the younger ones; they just won't get it. Also, it's a caution for parents who homeschool their children. Cady had never been to public school. She is emotionally lost. The story implies (by default) that children are better able to observe and to decipher ethical and behavioral conundrums through many years of interaction with other children.

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

Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop, February 4

Richard Tootreese Jeske will present and demonstrate how to properly prune fruit trees and grape vines for the home gardener. This Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop is set for Sunday, February 4, from 10 am to 2:30 pm.

Topics include heading vs. thinning cuts, summer vs. winter pruning, tree parts and health and vigor, sun requirements, tools, ladder-less orcharding, and what grows and produces best in our region.

The first part of the workshop will be indoors at the HUB (Willits Environmental Center/WELL), 630 South Main Street. After a short lunch break we will resume at Richard's home orchard on East Hill Road.

Cost: \$25. To register call Richard at 459-5926. Space is limited.

Willits Redwood Little League Spring Registration

Reminder that Baseball Registration for Willits Redwood Little League's 2024 Spring season is currently open. Registration closes January 31. So please get your players registered. Do it TODAY! Visit <https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1218965> for our registration website

Also, please sign up to be a volunteer at that same link. We are in need of many volunteer positions to make this year another success story for our kids!

- Posted by Willits Redwood Little League



DEAD ON THE CREEK
August 16 - 18, 2024
at Black Oak Ranch
Laytonville, Ca.
Friday: Crying Uncle, Caltucky, Boot Juice
Saturday: Garcia Grisman Revisited, Elliott Peck & Friends, Stu Allen & Mars Hotel
Sunday: Never Come Down, Broken Compass Bluegrass, Jerry's Middle Finger
Inquiries & Tickets: DeadOnTheCreek.net
For this is all a dream we dreamed...long ago

Ongoing Events

"In the Field" Exhibit: Mendocino County Museum's latest exhibit, "In the Field: Exploring Botany in Mendocino County," celebrates the study of unique plants that grow in our region, reflecting on the pursuits of Mendocino County botanists from past to present, featuring sketches, illustrations, photographs, and pressed specimens. Mendocino County Museum, 400 East Commercial Street, is open 11 am to 5 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. More info: visit www.mendocinocounty.org/museum

Willits Tennis Club: Meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 to 11 am at the Willits High School courts. New members welcome. Free. Show up or call 707-484-3385.

Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Group: Meets every week on Mondays, 6 pm, at the Muse in Willits, 30 East San Francisco Street. More info: 707-354-1866.

Willits Drum Circle: Every second and fourth Fridays at 7 pm. At St. Francis of the Redwoods Episcopal Church, Main and Commercial 7pm. Info: Bill Bruneau: 459-3390.

Brown Bag Lunch Program: Sack lunches served at the City Park (or across the street in case of rain) every Saturday from 1 to 2 pm. Come early to be assured a lunch! Provided by various churches and community organizations.

Shuffleboard Sunday at Flying Dog Wood Fired Pizza & Vinyl: "Sign-ups start at 4 pm. Games start at 4:45 pm. \$5 sign-up fee, teams of two, winner takes the pot! We'll have the games on all day. Beer, wine, pizza, we've got everything you need!" Flying Dog Wood Pizza, 65 South Main Street.

The Redwood Empire Food Bank: Twice-monthly drive-thru food distribution in Willits, second and fourth Thursdays of the month, located in the parking lot of the soccer and baseball fields, 9:30 to 11 am. Groceries to go, senior basket (for low-income seniors 60 or older), and diapers.

Willits Boules Club, Tuesdays and Fridays at 3 pm: The outdoor boules course is located across the street from the Willits Skate Park. Info: bbruneau@bbruneau.com

Free Kids Karate Classes at Body Works Gym: Sheriff's Youth Activities League offers a free karate program for kids at the Willits Body Works Gym, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 pm, for new students ages 7 and above. Use the back doors to enter. Special small child (Lil Dragons) classes only on Thursdays at 6 pm, ages 3 to 6. There is an annual \$20 SAL insurance/registration fee (waivable). For more info call or text Sensei Mike Tobin at 707-354-0565. Program is continuous year-round. Body Works Gym, 1511 South Main Street.

Edie Ceccarelli is turning 116
Come celebrate from 1-1:30 pm on Sunday, February 4 during a drive-by parade!

Parade Route: Go straight at stop sign of Haehl Creek Drive and Grove St. Take a left on Grove St. and continue to Edie's address of 414 Grove St. which will be on your right hand side.
How to celebrate: Drive through with a decorated car (signs, streamers, balloons, flags). Wave as you pass her house to wish her a happy birthday!
This event is hosted by the Holy Spirit Residential Care Home and the Frank R. Howard Foundation

NOYO THEATRE Willits, CA
57 East Commercial Street - Willits
707-459-6660
www.noyotheatre.com
Next Week:
POOR THINGS

MEAN GIRLS 2024
(PG)13 1 hr 52 mins
Fri.: 5:30 & 8:15pm
Sat.: 2:45, 5:30 & 8:15pm
Sun.: 1:45, 4:30 & 7:15pm
Mon.-Thurs.: 4:30 & 7:15pm
Movie Times for Jan. 19 thru Jan. 25

WONKA
(PG) 1 hr 56 mins
Fri.: 4:45 & 7:30pm
Sat.: 2:00, 4:45 & 7:30pm
Sun.: 1:00, 3:45 & 6:30pm
Masks Optional

THE BOYS IN THE BOAT
(PG)13 2 hrs 3 mins
Fri.: 5:00 & 7:45pm
Sat.: 2:15, 5:00 & 7:45pm
Sun.: 1:15, 4:00 & 6:45pm
Tues.-Thurs.: 4:00 & 6:45pm
OVER 21 CLUB - Luxury Recliners
Tightwad Tuesday Title for Jan. 23 is in RED. All tickets at just \$6!



Above: Officer Cary, center, with WPD colleagues and friends who shared the "Congrats" cake in her honor. Below: WPD Officer Cary with the Congrats cake she got last week for finishing her training program.

Congrats WPD Officer Cary

Today [January 12], Officer Cary completed her training program, and the shift (and friends) shared cake in her honor! Officer Cary will continue to build community relationships as she has throughout her training program. Please join us in celebrating her achievement and dedication to the City of Willits!

– Posted by Willits Police Department



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 Willits, CA 95490 Service: 707 459-0596
 willitspower@gmail.com Fax: 707 459-6369

CalFresh

Is a food assistance program. You can be on Social Security, have money in the bank, own cars and still receive CalFresh benefits.

Call the Senior Center to schedule an appointment to see if you qualify.

707-459-6826

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 SERVING THE COMMUNITY
 SINCE 1962

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 786 Redwood Drive
 Garberville, CA 95542
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 Tel 707.923.2179
 Fax 707.923.9550
 rcantua@farmersagent.com
 067822

Furry Friends Hoping for a Home

Toy-loving Noel

Scruffy-faced Noel is a work in progress. Noel is a smart, young dog who needs solid training, as it seems she's not had any structure in her life.

The good: Noel is playful, agile, and full of energy; we think she could be an awesome agility dog, but she needs to work on her focus. This scruffy-faced little girl is pretty entertaining, as she races around, flipping her stuffles. Her joy is infectious. She's been learning commands, and now knows "sit," and we're getting close to "down," "halt," "look at me," "leave it," "find it," and "NO!" Noel likes going on walks, racing around the backyard, and playing with toys – she REALLY likes her toys.

The bad: Noel is not totally housetrained, and she does not like being in a crate. She can get wound up and then play with her human the way she might with her canine friends – which means she tugs, pulls, growls and gets nippy. NO kids for Noel until she learns not to mouth people.

Noel does like to bark at people and dogs she sees outside the window. She's OK on leash, but she gets frustrated not being able to meet other dogs or being restrained. When that happens, she has a tendency to grab onto the leash and try to get her way by, again, tugging, rumbling, etc. She does bark at other dogs, but when given the opportunity to meet, she acts like she wants to play. Noel attached quickly to her foster people, and has separation problems.

In short – Noel needs a strong leader who can help her figure out her place in her pack. She needs a guardian who believes in her and will be firm, but always gentle. This adorable girl is not for first-time dog guardians.

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

Goofy Kylo

Are you in search of a loyal companion who loves off-leash adventures, has impeccable manners, and is a die-hard fetch enthusiast? Look no further than Kylo, the charismatic shar-pei mix who is eagerly waiting to steal your heart and find his forever home.

Kylo's foster parents describe him as a unique blend of goofiness and charm. One of his standout qualities is his off-leash prowess – a dream for those who enjoy long walks or runs in the great outdoors. Whether it's a game of fetch or a leisurely stroll, Kylo is your perfect partner.

He currently shares his foster home with a furry foster brother, learning the ins and outs of doggy socialization. He responds well to boundaries and rules, proving that he's not just a fun-loving goofball but also a well-behaved gentleman. Treats and toys are the key to Kylo's heart, making training a breeze. His motivation to learn and please his humans is truly heartwarming. Visit Kylo's instagram @kylos_journey_home for more!

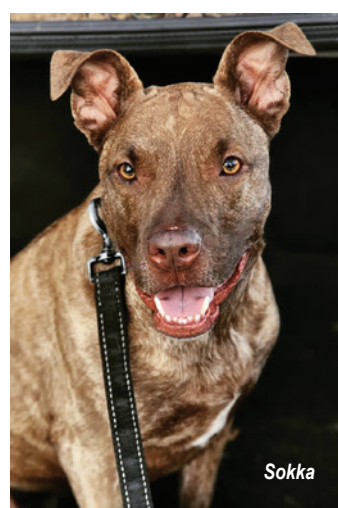
To learn more about Kylo or to view other adoptable animals, visit www.milofoundation.org or the Milo Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment. You can reach the Milo Foundation at 707-459-4900.

Wiggly Sokka

Sokka LOVES people! You can bet he'll greet you with a smile and butt wiggles... and even be happier as he gets as many scratches and scratches as he can! He has been to many foster homes while in our care and we have lots of info to share!

"Sokka has been the best houseguest!" reported one of his foster parents. "Sokka is housebroken, crate-trained, knows basic commands, and has a great personality. He's such a good boy in so many ways. Zero accidents in the house, and absolutely no destructive behavior (chewing, etc.). He has gotten along well with other friendly dogs who are chill and not super playful, he could coexist with another mellow canine friend." Help this guy find his forever family!

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino is located at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. Feel free to come visit us, no appointments needed! We are open Wednesday through Friday, 1 to 5 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm; closed Monday and Tuesday. Check out all of our available dogs and cats on our website: www.mendociniansociety.com, on our Facebook page, and on www.petfinder.com.



LEGAL NOTICES

WW467
Fictitious Business Name Statement
 2023-F0568
 The following person is doing business as Dead on the Creek, 26000 String Creek Road, Willits, CA 95490; (707) 459-3015; arborwood49@gmail.com.
 Registered owner: John Phillips, 26000 String Creek Road, Willits, CA 95490.
 This business is conducted by an individual.
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on October 15, 2004.
 FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on December 7, 2023.
 /s/ John Phillips
 Publication dates: January 11, 18, 25, and February 1, 2024.

WW468
Fictitious Business Name Statement
 2023-F0590
 The following person is doing business as Ron's Muffler and Automotive, 850 Blosser Lane, Willits, CA 95490.
 Registered owner: Loren Luedemann, 354 Coast Street, Willits, CA 95490.
 This business is conducted by an individual.
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on January 1, 2019.
 FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on December 20, 2023.
 /s/ Loren Luedemann
 Publication dates: January 11, 18, 25, and February 1, 2024.

WW469
Fictitious Business Name Statement
 2024-F0003
 The following person is doing business as Hair by Brittlyn, 91 South Main Street, Willits, CA 95490.
 Registered owner: Brittlyn Areana Barnett, 20211 South Main Street, Unit 9, Willits, CA 95490.
 This business is conducted by an individual.
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.
 FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on January 3, 2024
 /s/ Brittlyn Barnett
 Publication dates: January 18, 25, and February 1, 8, 2024.

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

The rest of Crossroads | From page 3

Each week, in rotation, a different entity, be it a church, individual, or service organization, prepares a brown-bag lunch to be served to the needy in Bud Snider City Park (unless it rains, then at the Community Center). This program, started by Linda Posner and her daughter, Pearl Maril, has been serving the community for many years.

"Not many people are coming out in the rain today," said DeMuth. "Their sleeping bags get to be around 50 pounds in the rain. Once they get wet, they don't walk with them. They just ditch them. We have some sheeting, sleeping bags, scarves, ponchos and jackets."

"We distribute at the nooks and crannies where the unhoused go. The ones who live under the bridges are flooded out, so it makes it easy for us to find them under the overhangs at Safeway and other places," said DeMuth as she prepared to begin her circuit around town to locate and feed the unhoused. She knows of the places where they can be found, through many years (since 2004) of serving and befriending those in need.

"One day in 2004, I was driving down Sherwood," DeMuth recalled the beginning of her quest. "It was two days before Christmas and I thought to myself, 'Where do the hungry people eat?' I called the Food Bank. I called the Senior Center. I called Cindy Savage with Willits Daily Bread. No one was having a Christmas dinner. All the organizations thought that someone else was doing a dinner."

"I picked my daughter up from school, went to an office supply store and bought a big roll of raffle tickets, raised about \$300 and made about 80 meals, fed people in Willits and Ukiah on Christmas. And we've been doing this ever since. That really made me aware of what people's needs are and nobody was invisible to me afterward. I would stop and ask what people needed. Finally, we started a non-profit, 501(c)(3)," explained DeMuth, talking about her organization, Community Crossroads of Mendocino County.

People have a choice when they see the unhoused. They can choose to turn away and ignore them, pretend they don't exist, or they, like DeMuth, can choose to fulfill an obvious need, make the unhoused feel seen, and bring some comfort into their lives.

To find out how you can help, contact DeMuth at 707-489-3044 or shannongdemuth@yahoo.com or visit the "Community Crossroads of Mendocino County" Facebook page.

The rest of Veterans | From page 2

Mendocino County invites applications for:

Administrative Assistant
 \$44,324 - \$53,872

Agricultural Commissioner/ Sealer of Weights & Measures
 \$125,112 - \$152,068

Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/ Sealer of Weights & Measures
 \$88,899 - \$108,076

Community Health Services Specialist I/II - Extra-Help
 \$19.73 - \$23.97 hourly

Corrections Deputy
 \$55,369 - \$67,308

Deputy Probation Officer I/II
 \$51,937 - \$69,617

Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II
 \$66,913 - \$93,142

Social Worker I/II/III/IV A-D
 \$48,942 - \$92,206

For a complete list of current job openings and to apply:
www.mendocinocounty.gov/jobs
 EOE

Marc Komer
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building which was sufficient for the Veterans Services staff but not enough for Air Quality. On that basis, the decision was made to move Air Quality and its employees to the Observatory Avenue space and move Veterans Services to a wing of the Public Health building.

Supervisors learned about this from constituent outrage. Concerns have been raised about the move, and we are trying to address these concerns as best we can. Some will say that we should just move the Veterans Services Office back to the house on Observatory. With the domino effect of the moves, and considering that the new facility has some advantages, our perspective is that let's make this new space the best it can be and that it be a space welcoming to veterans while fulfilling the needs of staff and veterans alike.

Supervisors and staff have been in communication since Supervisor Haschak led a tour of veterans and staff of the new facilities. Veterans did not like the sterile feel of the reception area and office space. They had suggestions for "owning" the area.

Working with staff, we have come up with accommodations to make a more comfortable and welcoming Veterans Services space. The entry will have a "Veterans" sign to replace the Public Health sign. Dedicated Purple Heart and Veterans Only parking spaces will be assigned. The doorway will have an automatic entry feature for wheelchairs. The glass enclosure for the receptionist desk will be removed. A couch and coffee machine will be installed in a mural and/or artwork will adorn the waiting area. Doorways and privacy screens are being installed in the hallway. We will be asking veterans about what they want in the outdoor quad area to make it a social environment. The planter boxes that were at Observatory will be moved to the quad.

Again, we express our apologies for how this move was communicated to veterans, but also feel that working together, we can make this a better place for our veterans and staff. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Willits Weekly
 Online & In Print

9	7	6	5	4	8	2	1	3
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CLASSIFIEDS

30 words for \$15 for 2 weeks

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

Firewood for Sale
 Firewood and Douglas fir poles for sale. FIR \$300/cord, OAK \$400/cord, KINDLING \$15/box (14x20). POLES (skinned and unskinned) for tips or building. Delivery \$45 near Willits, \$75 near Ukiah. Call (707) 456-0270, (707) 354-2244

For Rent
 4 bedroom, 2 bath, single-family home, newly refurbished, \$1650+ Deposit. Call: Lincoln Realty at 707-459-4599.

For Rent
 Office space, 200 sq ft, plus great room and shared waiting area, internet available, off-street parking, handicap ramp, utilities included. \$360/month. 707-354-2473

Free Home Trailers
 FREE - 2 home trailers approx 25' & 30' complete kitchen, dining area, bathroom & bedroom. FREE 1/24th-1/28 ONLY for pick up in Willits. Call for details: 760 505-1891.

Willits Weekly
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 The local newspaper
www.WillitsWeekly.com

The rest of Food Bank | From page 1

hygienic products, and more from a new location. After spending almost 30 years at the current location of 299 East San Francisco, they will be moving to 344 Railroad Avenue and starting to provide services on February 1.

The new space will allow for the installation of a new refrigerator unit, much to the delight of all the staff and volunteers, and the freezer from the old space will be brought over and installed. There's still plenty of storage space indoors for shelving to hold the dry and canned goods, and boxes of diapers and other hygiene products and more that are also distributed to those in need.

A shipping container is also located in the back for additional storage when needed.

"Previous director Jim Maril ran the food bank from the current location beginning in 1995," explained current Executive Director Ruthanne Volz. "It has served our needs well, but we have outgrown the building and land. The new rent cost will be comparable to our existing rent. Many thanks to Mike Griggs of Sparetime and his family who have helped to bring us over to their property which has many upgrades, including new paint and many other improvements. Thank you Mike!"

The move will happen Saturday, January 27 through Tuesday, January 30, and anyone who is interested in helping is welcome to call 707-354-3960 to sign up.

Volz will be retiring from her position this year, after being with the food bank for five years. If you or someone you know is interested in applying for the role of executive director, call 707-354-3960 or email wcsrav4@gmail.com for more information.

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Ante up for education at the Waldorf School's Annual Poker Tournament

Submitted by the Waldorf School of Mendocino County

Get ready to shuffle up and deal for a good cause! The Waldorf School of Mendocino County is hosting its 11th Annual Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament on Saturday, February 3, and it's sure to be a night of fun and fundraising.

The fundraiser is located at Sparetime Supply in Willits, 300 East Commercial Street. Players can get their game faces on and check in from 4 pm onwards. Once the tournament kicks off at 4:30 pm, players will compete for cash prizes, all while enjoying a scrumptious tri-tip dinner. The buy-in for the tournament is \$60, which includes dinner. Add-ons can also be purchased ahead of time for \$40. For tickets and add-ons, visit:

www.mendocinowaldorf.org/event-details/11th-annual-texas-holdem-poker-tournament

"The WSMC Annual Poker Tournament is one of the most fun and engaging community events in Mendocino County," said Allegra Foley, program coordinator at Caring Kitchen and a parent at the WSMC. "It brings people together to support the school in a delightful way. The proceeds from this event are essential to providing our students with the high-quality education the Waldorf School offers."

But it's not just a night of playing cards and munching on goodies. All proceeds from this event go toward the Waldorf School of

Mendocino County, an independent school that inspires young minds to grow and learn holistically. Their curriculum focuses on building life skills while nourishing the imagination through visual and performing arts, music, movement, games, and practical activities.

So let's get a full house and raise some money for these amazing kids!

The school is currently enrolling students for the 2024-2025 school year. For more information about the WSMC please visit <https://www.mendocinowaldorf.org>.

About the Waldorf School of Mendocino County:

Since 1972, the Waldorf School of Mendocino County provides preschool through 8th-grade students with an inspired education focused on cultivating the capacities of the whole child: body, mind, and spirit. The Waldorf curriculum nourishes the imagination and builds intellectual, emotional, and practical life skills through an integrated approach that includes visual and performing arts, music, games, and practical activities. The school aims to inspire students to become creative, compassionate, and responsible individuals. For more information, visit www.MendocinoWaldorf.org.

At right: Poker players and friends at a previous Texas Hold 'Em tournament and fundraiser for the Waldorf School of Mendocino County.



'Brainstorm': Celebrate WELL's 20th year, February 4

Submitted by WELL

As WELL – Willits Economic Localization – enters our 20th year, we can celebrate many successes, some projects are in progress, and there's still a lot more to do to promote the health and well-being of our community.

Calling on all influencers of the future and agents of change: Please join our open house and "Brainstorm" on February 4, at 4 pm, at the Willits Hub, 630 South Main Street, to envision projects and priorities for 2024 and beyond!

Over our 20 years, WELL has hosted hundreds of educational and inspirational events, bringing in world-renowned speakers as well as featuring many local innovators. We've learned about and implemented projects on issues from local food to water and energy, from emergency preparedness to health, from protecting our environment to local investing. We've even beautified our town by painting fire hydrants and trash receptacles (ongoing).

In 2023, having (mostly) emerged from the pandemic, WELL held a series of Building Community events, drawing in diverse groups and individuals who identified and started work on new projects. Like planting a garden, some efforts are perennial, some lie dormant or need more TLC, and some plants show up and thrive that you didn't even know about! Now it's again time to help grow our garden and plant new seeds!

WELL believes that localization is one key to facing globalization, economic disruptions, and the increasing threats of climate catastrophe. We need to have local resources, including human connections, to help each other through the challenges! We are all part of building a sustainable, thriving community. What do YOU want to see happen?

The Open House/Brainstorm on February 4 will also include a short WELL membership meeting, but everyone, whether you're a member or not, is welcome to come and participate!

For more information, contact Madge at 707-459-1493 or mstrong@willitsonline.com or Jane at janemccabe1944@yahoo.com.

WELL's 20th Birthday BRAINSTORM

Willits Economic Localization celebrates 20 years of COMMUNITY ACTION with an OPEN HOUSE and BRAINSTORM for all influencers of the future and agents of change

What is Willits doing right? What do we need to do better? Where do you want to fit in? MAKE IT HAPPEN

Sunday February 4, 4 PM
WELL Office, 630 S. Main St. Willits
2 doors south of Mariposa Market

There will be a brief WELL membership meeting. To include selection of Coordinating Committee members and approval of by-laws. Questions, email Madge at mstrong@willitsonline.com

Roofing applications available to fit any roofing need.

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The rest of Access From page 1

million for the second access route and \$12 million for Redemeyer Road. Haschak described this funding as "the first step of the process," and said county Transportation Director Howard Dashiell had said they'd be able "to do environmental analysis, review and design" with that funding. "Then," Haschak continued, "we will have to go out for more funding with the hope that as they committed \$12 million, they will see the project through. So, there's an RFP [request for proposals] right now that the Department of Transportation is working on to get the consultant."

Responding to questions from board members regarding the proposed route, Haschak said, "The route will begin at Primrose Drive and go out across, over the hills and come out where the northern exchange is." Board President Tina Tyler-O'Shea said, "This is excellent news. Thank you."

Beer-strewn trash

Brooktrails resident Maryann Gruneth went to the podium and introduced herself and her partner Flynn Mahoney. Over the past several months they began noticing beer-strewn trash throughout the area of Poppy Drive and have taken it upon themselves to clean up the trash. "It's a disservice to the natural beauty of our area," Gruneth noted, "and we wonder if there are any options available where we can work this out together."

After some discussion it was noted that it is the responsibility of tenants/ homeowners, where the trash lies, to clean up the trash scattered by bears, whether it is their trash or not. It is also the responsibility of tenants/ homeowners to not overload their trash containers. It was also strongly recommended that trash not be placed on the street for pickup until the morning, as bears are generally active during the night.

Supervisor Haschak noted that there was a \$13,000 grant provided by the Fish and Game Commission that has been provided to help subsidize the purchase of "bear proof cans" and, apparently during the transition of Solid Wastes of Willits being acquired by Redwood Waste Solutions, addressing the nuisance of the bears has been on hold.

The board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar Accounts Payable issued on or about December 21, 2023, for \$5,497.71.

Raise OKd for general manager

The board then focused on "Consideration of Amendment to the Employment Agreement with General Manager Tamara Alaniz." The board of directors concluded their annual employee performance evaluation in December 2023. In 2021, a 4% cost of living increase was provided to the general manager, which was her most recent salary adjustment.

Board President Tyler-O'Shea noted the amendment to the employment agreement, to raise the bi-weekly base salary of \$4,500 to \$5,576.92 effective January 1, 2024. Board Vice-President Rick Williams made a motion: "Compensation will be a biweekly base salary of \$5,576.92 beginning January 1, 2024." He further stated, "I do want, for public understanding, to say that the board had a conversation with the general manager where she asked for the increase, which resulted in the decision that she would not entertain offers to take a different job and would not solicit offers for the next three years, which was persuasive. It's the consensus of the board that she has been doing a very, very good job and that this request for the increase was more than reasonable. And the board had been remiss in not addressing this for several years."

Tyler-O'Shea added, "In consideration of the length of time that we've had the general manager under employment, this amount would bring her up to the cost of living that is appropriate for the time that we are in now." Williams noted that this will bring her salary up to \$145,000/year.

The rest of Commercial From page 1

profusion of suggested changes that were displayed in the Community Center, where local residents were encouraged to view and leave comments, which about 40 people did.

Some of the projects for Commercial Street have already been funded by grant money from the State of California. Many of the proposals, however, await possible future grant funds, if and when any grants are obtained.

Most of the already-funded projects are in City Park (Bud Snyder Park). Plans for the park include: a covered pavilion for the farmers market; a community garden; a mini water park (squirting nozzles built into a concrete "splash pad"); replacing the monument in the center of the park with tables for chess players; and an "updated" children's playground (Bickel's report states that the current playground equipment is "at the end of its lifespan").

Unfunded proposals include narrowing East Commercial in places, by adding bulb outs (extended curbs) at intersections to slow traffic. Better lighting at crosswalks. Bigger walkways and new signage leading to the county library and the county museum. A patio/plaza in front of Roots of Motive Power's Engine House. One proposal is to erect a second Willits Arch somewhere on East Commercial Street, to lure more people to drive down there. Another proposal is to move the city offices out of city hall and turn the building and parking lots into a "new civic center."

A few of the original proposals – cutting trees down, building a sloped amphitheater in Recreation Grove, and relocating ball fields – were widely rejected by community members and removed from consideration. The existing Vietnam war memorial that was inadvertently missing from the design proposal was reinstated.

Funding for the unfunded proposals – there are 150 pages of proposals on the city's web site – www.cityofwillits.org – would, hopefully, come from grants from federal, state and local agencies and non-profit and philanthropic organizations. Bickel named several possibilities. However, almost all of the grant funds listed in Bickel's report expired in 2023 or are expiring this month.

During public comment, one city resident asked about the ongoing cost to maintain the new projects in City Park, particularly the water attraction and the community garden. Bickel replied that grant funds are only for creating and installing projects, not for maintaining them, which will be a permanent additional city expense. City Manager Brian Bender said that the city would add the ongoing maintenance costs to future city budgets.

Part of the plan for the farmers market pavilion is to remove some of the grass from the park and replace it with "Grasspave," artificial material that can withstand damage from farmer's trucks driving onto the park grounds to set up at the pavilion.

Willits Weekly spoke to Michael Foley, longtime manager of the Willits Farmers Market, who had not heard about the truck-tire grass enhancement, but who pointed out that the proposed pavilion is too small to handle normal market operations. To Foley – looking over the bustling farmers market inside the Little Lake Grange, a crowded room much larger than the proposed pavilion – it was obvious that a lot more area is needed than what is planned. And refitting the trash bins in City Park with anti-crow lids would also help.

All four city council members (Greta Kanne was absent) were supportive of the project, but two city council members, Madge Strong and Larry Stranske, cautioned that residents of town may be more concerned with filling pot holes than putting new signs and wider walkways on East Commercial Street. Stranske added that a priority list of projects would be helpful in making decisions. Council member Gerry Gonzalez and Mayor Rodriguez both suggested making it more clear which projects are already funded and which aren't. Rodriguez added that she hoped any bulb outs at intersections would not be like the aggravating bounce-over-the-curb design of State Street in Ukiah. No one commented on moving city hall.

This meeting was a major step in learning about the project. No vote was taken. Mayor Rodriguez concluded by suggesting that another public meeting would be a good idea to give local residents one more opportunity to provide input into what is going to be a complex, multifaceted, long-term adventure.

The rest of Eyster From page 1

"I could be back in here in the middle of the criminal prosecution seeking his recusal based on what we expect will be new, more defined evidence," said Andrian.

Faulder said he understood that possibility "but I don't have enough evidence in front of me today."

Faulder then set January 18 for an entry of plea by Cubbison to the criminal charge she faces, and the setting of a date for a preliminary hearing when Eyster will have to publicly present any evidence he has to support the felony allegation.

Andrian has been seeking Eyster's recusal from the Cubbison criminal case because of his past public conflicts with her over his spending of public asset forfeiture funds and travel reimbursement claims. His "vendetta" against her mars her chances for a fair prosecution, claims Andrian.

Before ruling from the bench, Faulder cited a number of past recusal cases he had reviewed, but he said they offer specific examples of bias and not just conflicts in general. Eyster's denouncing Cubbison in public and on video before a criminal investigation was launched is not enough to show she cannot receive a fair trial, he said.

"The law in this regard is narrowly defined," said Faulder.

Faulder said he takes the Cubbison concerns "very seriously," but at the present time he concluded he lacked specific evidence to remove Eyster from overseeing prosecution of her.

Deputy state Attorney General Sharon Loughner made a video appearance Friday from her San Francisco office to argue against Eyster's recusal. Appearing with her was a new state deputy prosecutor, Caitlin Duprey, a former deputy district attorney in Eyster's office. Duprey later said she was there to "observe" a recusal hearing in her role as a new deputy AG.

Loughner verbally repeated state arguments in court filings surrounding a 1980 amendment to state Penal Code 1424. It declares a recusal of a district attorney "shall not be granted unless it is shown by the evidence that a conflict of interest exists such as would render it unlikely that the defendant would receive a fair trial."

Loughner said the law is specific, and that "appearances of conflict" are not enough to move forward with a prosecutor's recusal. She said the state AG's Office adheres to the intent of the revised state code, which was amended 43 years ago because of a "substantial increase in the number of unnecessary prosecutorial recusals under the 'appearance of conflict' standard" established by early court rulings.

It is the second time the state AG's Office has supported Eyster when questions about his possible biases have been raised in criminal prosecutions, this time with a fellow elected official he has publicly quarreled with, and before that a former local police chief accused of sexual assault who was never formally charged by the DA after the explosive case languished in his office.

An AG spokeswoman last week said the state Justice Department was aware of the local uproar over Eyster's attempt to prosecute a duly elected county auditor, and past allegations of conflicts of interests on the DA's part in relation to a string of local police misconduct cases that

provoked public outcry in 2022.

Still, that is not enough, according to Deputy AG Loughner.

"Recusals are very rare because the law is very narrow, and requires documented evidence," said Loughner.

About 25 to 30 Cubbison supporters showed up Friday and filled Faulder's courtroom in support of the embattled auditor.

Eyster acted against Cubbison after an investigation was instigated by the CEO's Office and conducted by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, and then his own investigators. A year passed before, on October 13, the DA filed a single felony charge of misappropriation of public funds against Cubbison, and the county's former Payroll Manager Paula June Kennedy. Before filing the charges Eyster apparently told Cubbison and her attorney he would only file a misdemeanor if she resigned and stepped down from her elected position. Cubbison, declaring she has done nothing wrong, said she chose to fight the criminal charges.

At issue is about \$68,000 in extra pay paid to Kennedy from October 2019 to August 2022. Eyster accused Cubbison of engaging in a "pay scheme" on behalf of Kennedy by using an obscure payroll code to allow payments that had not been officially authorized. No evidence has been presented that Cubbison personally benefited from the extra pay.

Cubbison contends that the disputed pay agreement was reached between now retired Auditor Lloyd Weer and Kennedy. The payments were largely made when Cubbison was only Weer's assistant, and not yet elected to succeed him and take control of the office.

Between the time when Cubbison was Weer's assistant and when she was elected as his successor, the Board of Supervisors, with the DA's encouragement, forced the consolidation of the county's formerly independent financial offices: Auditor/ Controller and Treasurer/Tax Collector.

The board action was taken despite objections from seasoned county finance employees and civic groups who feared loss of independent oversight if a new Department of Finance were associated with the board and the CEO's Office was put in place.

"The formal creation of a new county finance department appears on hold at the board level until a required election can be held for voters to decide, but critics contend that in fact it is already in place.

"The acting auditor now is a board appointee from the CEO's Office who could serve in that role for the next three years until Cubbison's term expires," said Carrie Shattuck, a candidate for the county board in the March primary.

"Where is the independent oversight we had before the DA and board acted?" Shattuck asked.

At the core of the Cubbison/DA case are her challenges to Eyster's spending, and his role in getting a fellow elected official suspended from office based on his move to criminally prosecute her. Eyster has quarreled with three different county auditors over his spending practices since he was elected in 2011.

Mike Geniella is a veteran North Coast journalist and former DA spokesman who worked part-time under contract until he terminated the arrangement in November 2021.

The rest of LLFD From page 1

be offered this month. This is a requirement for all firefighters.

Equipment

Our new Engine 5469 Type 3 is still being outfitted. The pump system is different, so trainings are held to review the system before being put into service. Our engines have thorough engine checks and are maintained weekly.

Editor's Note: Keep up with Little Lake Fire at the "Willits Fire Station 54" page on Facebook.

The rest of Sheriff From page 2

organized retail theft committed by several people at once in our county. This activity is occurring much too frequently.

We have seen a decrease in Coroner's investigations over the past four years. In 2023 We had 370 coroner's investigations of which 206 were natural causes, and 89 accidental deaths which include vehicles accidents, fire, airplane crash and overdose. Out of the 89 accidental deaths, 49 were drug overdose or death due to a medical condition which was caused by drug abuse. Narcotics are still responsible for over 50% of our accidental deaths.

We had 22 coroner's referrals which are deaths that are often natural, however are mandated to be investigated under the government code. These deaths, however, are not limited to investigations when a person hasn't been seen by a physician within 21 days, or died of a communicable disease. We have several cases which are pending classification which will be completed within the next couple of months following pathology results. We also had 25 suicides which is an extremely high number of deaths for our county.

Mental health cases in which a person was taken into custody under 5150 WIC remain much lower than years past. This is mainly due to the partnership we have formed with the Mendocino County Behavioral Health Department. We began the dual response unit in 2021 and have continued working with highly trained behavioral health specialists. Our numbers dramatically decreased following the implementation of this team, and although we were up slightly from last year we are still down over 50% from 2020. I am hopeful we will see these numbers continue to decrease.

Arsons continue to be a huge concern for Mendocino County. We have seen a significant reduction in arsons over the past several years. We have also solved several arsons which were prosecuted by our District Attorney's Office; I believe this has helped us reduce these numbers.

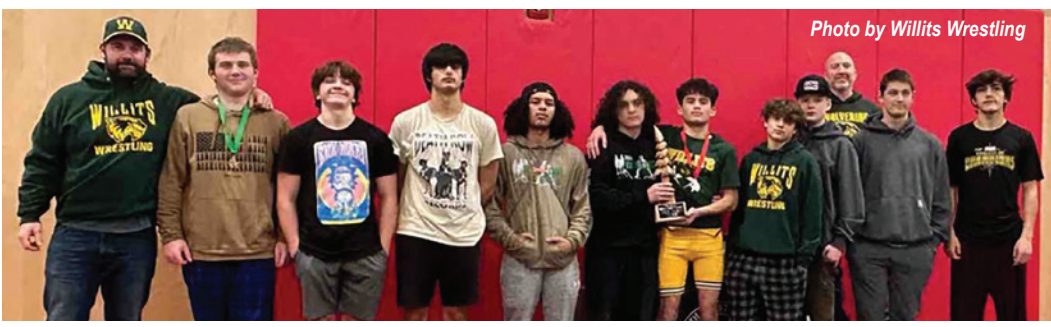
We are still seeing a significant number of missing persons in Mendocino County. Much of this is due to the availability of outdoor activities such as hiking, hunting and fishing which Mendocino County was always a little famous for. Our search and rescue team has completed many searches and continues to be a great asset for our communities. They were recently honored with the donations of safety jackets from the Rotary Clubs in Mendocino County. The volunteers have given us countless hours and truly serve their communities.

In the Mendocino County Jail, we received 4,105 bookings and released 4,171 subjects in 2023. Our staffing continues to increase, and we are working with many partners to serve the needs of those incarcerated in our facility while keeping our communities safe. Our Corrections staff has worked tirelessly and continues to serve us well.

Our inmate services staff has continued to serve our inmate population and our communities by providing opportunities through accountability. We were able to fill the Restorative Justice coordinator position by hiring Buffey Bourassa who has been a key addition to our team. As we continue into 2024, I remain hopeful we will reduce crime and work together with our communities to make Mendocino County a safe and welcoming place.

Sports Roundup

Willits basketball and wrestling teams are determined to win



Above: Competitors in the North Coast Classic tournament hold their third-place trophy: from left, Coach Brian Bowles, Ely Bowles, Deon Smith, Corey Rocky, Christian Ramirez, Rickey Ramirez, Jacob Livingston, Pancrazio Bertolino, Nikolai Ritchley, Coach Will Dunaway, Donald Glenn and Joey Smith.



Photo by Morgan Flint-Smith



Above, from left: Joey Smith aggressively takes down his opponent. Corey Rocky is pumped, celebrating a win taking him into the championship rounds. Donald Glenn puts legs in on his opponent.



At right: Paizley Dockins makes her way down the court with the ball.

At right, below: Lilly Glass makes a game plan with her teammates.

Below: The Lady Wolverines make history at the very first all-girls dual: from left, Bella Glenn, Stormie Nowlin, Dannyka Smith, Emelia Owsiany, Navaeh Jones, Lucy Vargas, Liz Meyer, Kendra Mottern, Coach Dana Karkar.

At bottom: The Baechtel Grove Middle School seventh-grade basketball team holds up their fifth-place winning consultation trophy: from left, Alissa Swinney, Kathia Southwick, Ella Randrup Swinney, Kiley Yokum, Lilly Glass, Paizley Dockins, Lillian Reid, Jade Sneed, Presley Tuttle, Coach Courtney Glass, Macy Barnes. Back row: Coach Taylor Buzzard and Coach Cara Tuttle.

Photos by Ava Dockins



Photo by Willits Wrestling



Baechtel Grove Middle School seventh-grade basketball girls made their grand entrance with confidence and positivity in the Mendocino County Classic Tournament at Willits Charter School this last weekend.

Sheri Dockins
Sports Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The first game was against Upper Lake. It was

only a 4-point loss, enough to kick these girls into overdrive, determined to win. Next, they played Fort Bragg with a dynamic win 20-8. Last was Mendocino with an edge-of-your-seat, utterly satisfying win 19-18!

Head Coach Taylor Buzzard, along with Assistant Coaches Courtney Glass and Cara Tuttle all agreed that "these girls stepped up their game, and played hard after the first loss." They were very proud of their girls for receiving the winning consultation trophy, and fifth-place status!

Macy Barnes played point guard and Lillian Reid played wing, and both received all-star trophies.

The Willits High School Lady Wolverines wrestling team traveled to Napa to compete in the 23rd Annual Napa Valley Girls Classic on January 6. This is one of the toughest girl's tournaments in the state. Willits tends to break through with wrestlers making it into the next day every year. This year was no exception as their first-ever girl wrestler placed this year! It was a big accomplishment for Bella Glenn, who placed eighth in the 235-weight class!

The Lady Wolverines also made their very first prowess contribution to the all-girl duals at the Queen of the Mat Dual held in Pittsburg on January 12. Bella Glenn, Liz Meyer, Navaeh Jones and Lucy Vargas battled tough to bring home second-place medals, along with Emelia Owsiany who

brought home a third-place medal in the tournament held there the next day.

This was a successful and monumental weekend for the girls as a team. "We made history this weekend with Willits girls' first-ever dual team! This is just the beginning for this program!" said Coach Dana Karkar

Willits High School Wolverines boys wrestling cast out on a new adventure this season by entering the Contest of Champions tournament held in Concord on January 6. This was a very smoothly run tournament, and the boys wrestled very well.

Corey Rocky and Donnie Glenn made it to the championship rounds. While they ended up coming in second, they displayed much skill and determination with very intense and riveting final matches. Joey Smith aggressively brought home a third-place medal, and Rickey Ramirez a hard-fought fourth place.

Thirty-nine teams traveled to this tournament. Our Wolverines came in fourth place!

Lastly, Wolverines Wrestling boys traditionally grappled in the North Coast Classic in Eureka this last weekend with many wrestlers working arduously through each match to bring home medals.

Corey Rocky, Rickey Ramirez and Jacob Livingston took second place. Joey Smith and Pancrazio Bertolino took third place. Christian Ramirez took fourth place. Ely Bowles took fifth place. The boys also brought home a magnificent third-place trophy as a team!

"Everyone is wrestling tough and showing improvement each week. The best part is, they are not satisfied with their success," said Coach Dunaway.

Have some game-time fun with 'Football Playoff Bingo'

If watching the football game itself is less interesting than watching people watch the game, this just-for-fun bingo card is for you! Leading up to the big game, National Football League teams will compete to be one of the two left standing to battle it out for the Champion title and Vince Lombardi Trophy at the Super Bowl LVIII, held in Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nevada on Sunday, February 11. Enjoy filling out this card for fun, as games are aired in the coming days!

- Maureen Jennison

Wears Team Colors / Logo	Exclaims "We needed that!"	Talks about team in next match up if this game is won	Swears	Asks why I'm looking at my phone
Tries to explain what a touchback is	Needs to get a beer	Reminisces about going to a live game	Strokes beard or mustache	Claps hands
Says: "We're due"	Brings out large foam finger, flag or foam fist	Free Space!	Paints Face/Body in Team Colors	Slaps leg or couch
Dances along for touchdown	Refers to the team as "We"	Exclaims "Booyah!"	Comments on the game's weather	Eats pretzels
Calls/Texts friend to talk about game	Complains about the Referee	Walks out of room in frustration	Goes to get another beer	Head in hands