

Willits Weekly

Online & Print



A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

Donations Accepted Edition No. 525

Thursday, November 2, 2023

BOS asked to rescind auditor's suspension

By Mike Geniella, October 31, ava.com

Mendocino County supervisors sat silent as they were chastised Tuesday for arbitrarily removing elected Auditor Chamise Cubbison from office without a hearing.

Chris Andrian, a noted Sonoma County lawyer, ripped board members for denying Cubbison due process on October 17, and damaging her professional reputation based solely on District Attorney David Eyster's decision four days earlier to file a felony charge against her for "misappropriation of public funds."

Andrian charged that the board's unusual action underscores how the Cubbison case is "more political than legal."

The supervisors' controversial move, said Andrian, poses a threat to independent oversight of county finances. In 54 of California's 58 counties, the auditor-controller is an independent, nonpartisan elected office established to provide various accounting and property tax administration services to the county government, special districts, schools, and cities.

Read more of **Cubbison** Over on Page 2

Annual count finds 23% fewer homeless persons

Submitted by Mendocino County Social Services

The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care has released its results from the 2023 Point-in-Time Count, an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in Mendocino County.

More than 30 volunteers took part in this year's Point-in-Time Count, which was held on the evening of January 27, 2023. The data collected on that night is organized and submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is typically approved and released back to the community in late summer.

In 2023, the total number of persons experiencing both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness counted in Mendocino County was 633 individuals, a 23% reduction from the prior year.

Although a Point-in-Time count is important to establish some dimension of the problem of homelessness in our local communities, the method is

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



Above, from left: A sweet tribute to a baby, Frankie M., who passed away in 1891 at the age of 22 months. Jane Camp, one of the Stone Story speakers, stands with the DeCamp grave she chose to explore due to the similarity in name. A headstone for James Frost, a member of one of Willits' two long-time feuding families, similar to the Hatfields and McCoys, rests just across from a member of the opposing family, the Coates. Below: Norma Hanson smiles next to the headstone of one of her Stone Story subjects: Nellie James, a feisty Willits resident who not only divorced her husband, won custody of her children, but also was an ace shooter, frequently taking out coyotes. She was born in 1881 and died in 1926.



Photos by Maureen Jennison



At left and at left, below: Carol Cox, left, Norma Hanson, and Jane Camp, right, look at the only grave in the Little Lake Cemetery that is oriented north and south, as opposed to east and west, like the others, due to the nature of its owner, L.E. Kenworthy. The marker reads: "Civil War. Dec 4 1904. Buried North-South because he had cared for wounded from both sides."

'Stone Stories'

Learn about historical persons from Willits' past, now interred at Little Lake Cemetery

Nowhere is history more tangible than it is standing face-to-face with a headstone bearing the name of your hometown, the street you live on, or one whose name is the same as your own. While not many people think to spend time pondering the lives and stories of those buried in these graves, there are rich tales, dramatic turns, heartbreaks, and lasting legacies associated with so many of the names engraved on the stone monuments, you just have to find some time to learn about them.

You could pop onto the internet, do research at the library or museum, ask elders in your life, or you could spend an afternoon learning about many of those buried at the Little Lake Cemetery by attending the "Stone Stories" event, put on by a team effort of the Willits Chamber of Commerce, the Mendocino County Library, and the Mendocino County Museum.

While the second-annual, rain-or-shine event is free of charge this year, thanks to the chamber's sponsorship, reservations are still required to attend. The event will start at 3 pm on Sunday, November 5, and will be held in three sections of the Little Lake Cemetery. Standing room and some chairs will be provided, but everyone is encouraged to bring an umbrella! Librarian and Genealogist Benjamin MacBean will guide guests through the cemetery as about 10 actors share stories about 10 to 15 of the historical persons buried in the cemetery and share details about their lives, families and legacies.

Museum volunteer Carol Cox started researching the stories last year and conferred with Mendocino County Museum Administrator Karen Mattson, who included possible additions, and then started deeply researching the narrowed group over the summer.

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



Above: A trio of headstones from the James family, the earliest William C. James, father of Susie, left, and husband to Mary, right, passing away on October 23, 1876. Below, left: Three of the "Stone Stories" participants, Norma Hanson, kneeling at left, Jane Camp, standing at left, and Carol Cox, right, smile around the headstone of Samuel Baechtel at the Little Lake Cemetery. Below, right: A headstone from the local Broaddus family.



National company to buy Willits garbage hauler

Barbara O'Reardon Reporter willitsweekly@gmail.com

Solid Wastes of Willits owner Gerry Ward informed the Brooktrails Township board at their October 24 meeting that a national garbage outfit was buying out his local company.

The Brooktrails Community Services District received a notification letter from SWOW advising of Ward's intention to sell to Waste Connections, Inc. Staff is in the preliminary stages of gathering information on the Brooktrails franchise agreement with SWOW to bring forward its transfer to the board for consideration.

Brooktrails General Manager Tamara Alaniz said: "This is something that is coming before you tonight as an informational, introductory item. SWOW is selling to WCI, Inc., and WCI would like to assume the franchise agreement with Brooktrails."

"The other company seems to be established," Alaniz said. "Its subsidiaries are numerous and are throughout other areas."

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

BOS approves county hiring freeze

Jennifer Poole Editor & Reporter willitsweekly@gmail.com

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors approved an immediate hiring freeze at their October 31 meeting, "except for core mandated services in Public Safety departments and other exceptions on a case-by-case need supported by data."

The item, brought by Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams, also instructs departments to "remove allocated positions" and to "take action to reduce the number of management positions in departments where the management-to-staff ratio is less than 1-to-6 and other reductions in staffing."

The freeze also means overtime "is not to be authorized" except for core mandated services.

The item also authorizes the County of Mendocino's Chief Executive Officer Darcie Antle "to initiate departmental structural changes to increase efficiencies and cost savings."

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



Above, left: Rachel Wagener, emergency department manager, and Lauren Kornegay, ICU manager, help themselves to a meal of street tacos, with rice, beans and chips.



Above, right: The emergency department enjoys gelato from the event.

At left: Administrator Linda Givens, right, and some of the Redwood Medical Clinic team get ready to eat some delicious food from Taqueria Ramirez.

Below: Some of the med / surg team celebrates this amazing accomplishment together.

Photos by Maureen Jennison



Celebrating 11 total years without two prominent hospital infections at Howard Memorial Hospital

Submitted by Adventist Health Howard Memorial

Last week Howard Memorial was thrilled to celebrate a tremendous milestone for their team. They reached 10 years without a CLABSI infection in their hospital and one year without a CDI infection.

CLABSI infections are a bloodstream infection related to central-line placement in the body and CDI infections are a bacterial infection in the colon. Both infections can be common in a hospital setting and take much care by the entire hospital team to ensure that they are diligently working to prevent these.

Not only this, but they have a team of dedicated nursing professionals who have experienced training in best central-line placements that help ensure they are meeting each patient with excellent care and providing an environment with the least possible infection.

These team members who lead the charge in this effort are Annikka Ramsey, Damon Frank-Niesen, Amanda Hoyle, Wendy Kyncey, Lauren Kornegay, Katie Ott and Shelli Walker, all nurses ranging across all three departments in emergency, med / surg and ICU.

Along with this team, Howard Memorial is very grateful for the numerous team members who come in contact with each patient, providing medications and care, and assisting in keeping lines clean and accessible as they care for the community. Howard Memorial is also grateful for the amazing environmental services team that keeps the hospital clean and safe for all.

It really is a team effort to sure that they are raising the bar and keeping hospital-acquired infections to a minimum. So to have something like this as a 10-year and one-year milestone for these two infections is something monumental. A big shout out to the entire team for making the hospital the best it can be each day.

In honor of these accomplishments, team members enjoyed a fiesta from Taqueria Ramirez, complete with delicious tacos, rice and beans, and all the toppings as well as fabulous gelato and sorbet from Rosella's Italian Ice & The Ice Box food trailer. It was the perfect way to enjoy time with the team, celebrating, and saying thank you for their incredible work!

The rest of **Cubbison** | From page 2

banking institution. The concern relates to numerous accounts being held outside of the treasury, or in other terms are not within the control or oversight of the auditor/controller-treasurer/tax collector as the designated signor. Additionally, as I noted in my comment today, the other concern is these accounts have not fully been disclosed to the outside auditors for review."

Earlier, a large group of Cubbison supporters filled a small courtroom when the embattled auditor and Paula June Kennedy, the county's former payroll manager, were scheduled for a second time to be arraigned. Judge Keith Faulder allowed people to sit in the jury box because of the overcrowding.

The rest of **Homeless** | From page 1

complex and limited, and should be considered just one amongst a variety of sources of data needed to tell the whole story of homelessness. Nonetheless, a decrease of this magnitude very likely points to a positive trend in collective efforts to address homelessness in Mendocino County.

"Our communities have worked hard to address homelessness. Over the past several years, our local, state, and federal governments have invested in new affordable housing projects, expanded rental assistance programs, and developed new funding sources specifically for households with children experiencing homelessness," said Dan McIntire, co-chair of the Homeless Services Continuum of Care.

"Locally, our communities have significantly improved our communication strategies, including collaboration with our law enforcement agencies. It's gratifying to see those efforts, both financial and collaborative, reflected in the data. Our community needs and deserves to see the result of what is, ultimately, an investment by taxpayers."

The rest of **Freeze** | From page 1

The item was approved 5 to 0.

In response to a question from Third District Supervisor John Haschak about smaller departments that might not fit into the 6 to 1 ratio, county CEO Darcie Antle confirmed some of the smaller departments would not be able to eliminate management positions.

Supervisor Williams mentioned he'd first introduced this item in 2019, talked about how the flow of "free and easy" funding during the COVID pandemic had "masked" the problem, and described the county's situation as "a financial crisis," saying: "This coming year we can't pay for the county's staffing, there's no way."

Williams acknowledged a hiring freeze and the other directions in this item wouldn't solve the county's financial problems, but by taking this action now, "maybe it won't be quite as painful."

"We have to do it," he said. "We're going to have to reduce the size of the county footprint. I just don't think we should be hiring people if we know we're going to have to lay them off.... I know we need to fill those positions, there's a real need, but we're hiring people we can't afford, we can't even afford all the people we have today."



Mendocino County invites applications for:

- Community Health Services Specialist I/II**
\$41,038 - \$52,353
- Corrections Deputy**
\$54,184 - \$65,873
- Deputy Probation Officer I/II**
\$51,937 - \$69,617
- Deputy Public Defender I-IV**
\$81,785 - \$154,960
- Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II**
\$62,628 - \$87,214
- Eligibility Specialist I/II/III**
\$42,764 - \$63,232
- Juvenile Corrections Officer - Extra-Help**
\$24.38 - \$29.63 Hourly
- Registered Veterinary Technician**
\$52,832 - \$64,230
- Senior Program Manager**
\$92,705 - \$112,694
- Senior Program Specialist**
\$61,880 - \$75,233
- Staff Services Administrator**
\$73,320 - \$89,128
- Supervising Juvenile Corrections Officer**
\$61,734 - \$75,046

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

The rest of **Gala** | From page 5

working many 10-to-12-hour days to pull off all the amazing decorations.

"We got a lot more volunteers this year," said Halleck. "We were able to set them up with a section and give them just a basic idea on decorations and let them do whatever they want."

"It was so fun and beautiful to see how everything just came together perfectly. It was a lot of work, and now I'm enjoying the fruits of our labors," Halleck said.

"I couldn't have done all this without Lexi," said Hart, who stores the hundreds of pieces of decorations in a container at his house. "When you really enjoy doing something, it makes it a lot easier to put in the extra time. The volunteers helped a lot. Last year, we were able to get an early start on putting this event together."

"This year, we really didn't get an early start," Hart confessed. "We were under the gun for all aspects. The volunteers coming in saved the day. I was already here 12 hours a day. It helped that we had things figured out from last year."

The Willits Center for the Arts will be having a series of seminars and master classes over the next year thanks to a grant which is paying for 18 artists to create informative and artistic symposiums about how to affect the community through the arts. Go to: www.willitscenterforthearts.org to find out more about upcoming shows and seminars or to contribute or volunteer.

Willits Center for the Arts, located at 71 East Commercial Street, is open Friday through Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm. Call 459-1726 for more information.

The rest of **Stories** | From page 1

"I did a lot of the research using findagrave.com and newspapers.com, cross-referencing with the museum, the library, obituaries and the internet as a whole," explained Cox. "Obituaries would lead to names of family, and newspapers in the past used to have many more... details... on people's personal lives back then, so they are a great resource."

"One of the interesting tidbits I found in the Ukiah Daily Journal, November 24, 1899," Cox said, "thanks to Newspapers.com, was that of Mrs. Ellen McNameer, divorced wife of Thomas McNameer, who took up a subscription to provide the Little Lake cemetery with a well and a windmill, because it was impossible for grasses and shrubs to grow there without water," explained Cox. "The article continued: 'She raised \$100, and a bountiful supply of water has been obtained.... It takes energy and sticktoitiveness but not all have those traits of character.'"

"We have lots of new stories this year," said Mattson. "We're hoping the pioneer spirit of many of those buried at Little Lake Cemetery will encourage the community to come see the pioneer exhibit 'Her Side of the Story,' that we're holding at the museum, too."

"One of the families we're including this year is the Sawyer family who had such a strong pioneer story, and we will get to reveal info about the Sawyer School and talk about how the property where Little Lake Cemetery is located was donated by that same family. They, like many other families we will talk about, made lasting impacts on this town, and we are excited to help the community learn and spend some time reflecting about many of the similar and unique families that are a part of Willits."

A group of volunteers will be the ones sharing these stories including: Scott Ferleman, Courtland Wilson, David Pierce, Melissa Caughlin, Norma Hansen, Aileen Gaynor, Prana Roberts, and Jane Camp.

While these volunteers will be sharing the stories, Dave Montes, cemetery caretaker for the Little Lake, Willits, and Laytonville cemeteries, is looking for volunteers who might be interested in helping with some projects around the cemetery: helping with upkeep for some broken headstones, trimming some branches, and cleaning some headstones in need of care.

"It's a beautiful place to come and visit," said Montes. "But it's a lot of work to keep things looking fresh, and repaired, and I'm just one guy. I would love it if we could coordinate a few strong people to come help me repair some of the leaning and broken headstones. I need a hand hefting them up, gluing them in place, and setting some form boards to hold the stones while the repairs set. We also have several trees that could use a trim with loppers or a pole saw, and help dragging the branches to the burn pile at the south end of the grounds."

Cleaning the stones of moss, dirt and debris is also something anyone can come do to help honor those buried there; Montes noted that scraping the stones can cause damage, but the easiest and best way is to apply shaving cream, let it set for several minutes, and then use a large soft brush to gently scrub away the gunk. There's also water available on site to help wash the stones after scrubbing.

To volunteer to help at the cemetery, contact and leave a message for Montes at 707-459-5252. To learn more about the "Stone Stories" event, or to make a reservation for this Sunday's event, contact the Willits Chamber of Commerce at 707-459-7910.

"Hopefully, Waste Connections can go up a notch higher, and we will have better equipment," Ward said. "I've emphasized to them that we have a good reputation here, and I want that to continue. They are not buying the corporation. They are buying the assets. They do want the name and my Skunk." That mention of the SWOW logo brought solid laughter from all in the room.

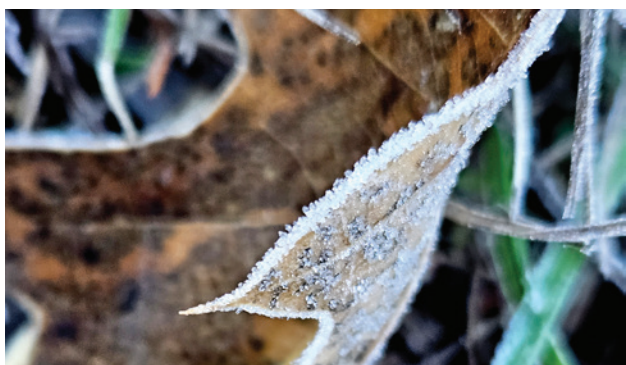
Editor's Note: More on the October 24 Brooktrails meeting to come next week. Also: Gerry Ward spoke to the Willits City Council last week, at their October 25 meeting, to give them the news about the new owner that wants to continue garbage services for the City of Willits. Waste Connections is already picking up garbage in the 95490 area outside city limits.

You deserve more reliable answers, faster.

That's why Adventist Health Howard Memorial features the latest tools to detect breast cancer at the earliest stages, including 3D mammography, a breakthrough in imaging and early detection. And we offer a team of experts who will get you the imaging you need quickly.

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Ice crystals attach to various surfaces, including a fallen oak leaf, above; a metal bolt, below; a plastic lid, further below; and a sprig of field grass, at bottom.

Photos by Maureen Jennison



Brrrrr ...

It was chilly!

The shady parts of the yard were laced with frost early Monday morning as temps dripped below the freeze line overnight. The warming temps made for an enjoyable afternoon, but the swing in highs and lows make it obvious that the colder times are looming. The National Weather Service out of Eureka also predicts rain coming, soon, too!

— Maureen Jennison



OBITUARY |

Hannah Ray

Hannah Cecilia Ray was born on May 2, 1968, and died October 23, 2023 from the onset of HLH, an inflammatory disease. She received emergency care at a Boston hospital but could not be revived. She was 55.



Hannah moved with her family to Willits in 1971, attended elementary, middle, and high school here, and graduated with honors from Willits High School. Matriculating at HSU, she distinguished herself in anthropology after having discovered a 7,000-year-old obsidian knife in Lake County, for which she was honored by the Pomo Tribe. Then as a college freshman she earned an A grade in a graduate course and got invited to a dig in Central America.

After attending Humboldt, she traveled to Boston and worked at Dragon Systems, a company then developing voice-activated printing, the harbinger of closed captions. When Xerox bought the start-up company, it stipulated that Hannah should facilitate the transfer. She later worked in educational computer programs, as a speech writer for an insurance corporation, and made her career as a copy editor for a Boston publisher.

Her marriage to Richard Epstein was long and faithful. They enjoyed living in Brighton, Massachusetts, close to Boston, one of the cultural centers of the world.

She will be remembered for her sunny personality, as an athlete in volleyball and baseball, the high school representative to the Willits school board, and an accomplished musician and extraordinary intellect.

Also a devout Jewess, she practiced the rituals of that faith. Her father gave his shofar, a ram's horn used on high holidays, to Hannah as a sign of respect and admiration for this religious constancy.

Hannah's death was preceded by her mother's, Judith Ann Heegler Ray's, in 2021, and is mourned by her three siblings, Lara Lynne Ellen Jones, Kenneth Paul Ray, and Avrah Arielle Ray; their families; and by her father, William Joseph Ray.

May her violin sound in Heaven.

OBITUARY |

Patricia Moeller

Patricia Ethel Myrhow Moeller passed on October 5, 2023 in Ukiah. On April 10, 1938 she was born in Valley City, North Dakota to Lorraine Pindall Myrhow and Harold (Pat) Lauritz Myrhow. When Patty was 7, the family moved to Cut Bank, Montana. Her mother was a fourth-grade teacher and her father was a watchmaker in his brother's jewelry store. Since she was an only child, she learned at a young age to make her friends a part of her family. When Patty was in junior high, her father passed away suddenly.



While in college she welcomed Wilson McGuire as her new stepfather and four wonderful stepsisters whom she knew well.

She graduated from Montana State College with a BSN, UC San Francisco with a MSN, and later received a master's degree in Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling. She loved patient care nursing as well as her 23 years as professor of nursing, and a five-year counseling practice.

Her nursing jobs took her to Bar Harbor, Maine, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Hawaii, Australia, and the Bay Area. Her love of travel took her to 12 different countries. Her marriage to Paul O. Moeller brought her three loving stepchildren, which she continued to cherish after her divorce from their father. In 1993 Pat moved to Willits. She retired from Community Care in Ukiah, and cared for her mother until her mother's passing. Pat's spiritual life was important to her, as were her friends that made up her "family." She often said how much she loved her life.

A memorial for Pat will be held on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 2 pm at Willits United Methodist Church, 286 School Street.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made, in memory of Pat Moeller, to Dalistan Care Home, 208 Scott Street, Ukiah CA 95482.

Eversole Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

It's holiday advertising time with Willits Weekly!

Willits Weekly will be doing our Mix and Match and Black Friday specials with reduced pricing to allow advertisements for a wide variety of budgets.

Mix and Match allows businesses to select the same or different sized ads, one per week, for six weeks, for a discounted rate when you commit to all six editions.

Those weeks include November 9, 16, 22 – yes, that's a Wednesday! – and 30, and December 7 and 14. Prices shown on the flyer are per ad, per week.

Here's an example:

11/9 – run 3.25" x 4" ad for \$50

11/16 – repeat same 3.25" x 4" ad for \$50

11/22 (Wednesday!) – choose bigger ad: a 5" x 8" ad for \$175

11/30 – repeat the 3.25" x 4" ad for \$50

12/7 – repeat bigger ad - 5" x 8" ad for \$175

12/14 – repeat bigger ad - 5" x 8" ad for \$175

Total Mix and Match = \$675 total for six ads and 6 weeks of online and in-print advertising! This is just an example of what one could choose to do.

Or run the same ad each week, or start small, end big, or start big and end small, or alternate, or whatever you want!

Black Friday is a separate promotion for those wanting to focus on the November 16 and 22 (yes, that's a Wednesday!) papers. Those special rates are also shown on the flyer on a per week basis.

Choose either two 5" x 5" ads for a total \$200; or one 5" x 5" ad (\$100) and one 5" x 10.5" ad (\$225) for a total of \$325; or two 5" x 10.5" ads for a total of \$550.

Design services are included in the price of the ad – or we can help size and run already-created artwork you may have on hand!

Email us if you're interested in participating! Please let us know by November 6!! willitsweekly@gmail.com or call 707-972-7047

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Willits Weekly's Black Friday Special

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 BF SPECIAL **\$225** (reg. \$300)

Ads to run Thursday, November 16 & WEDNESDAY, November 22, 2023
 Ad size commitment deadline: Monday, November 13, 2023

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 December 7 & 14

Mix & Match!

Pick a size or mix and match sizes for all six dates.
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3.25" wide x 2" tall \$30
 3.25" wide x 4" tall \$50
 5" wide x 5" tall \$100
 5" wide x 8" tall \$175
 5" wide x 10.5" tall \$225
 10" wide x 10.5" tall \$475

Ad size commitment deadline:
 November 6, 2023