

Willits Weekly

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits



By donation

Thursday, January 9, 2014

Edition No. 36

County declares drought emergency

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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County supervisors declared a drought emergency during the morning session of the board's first meeting of the year on Tuesday.

The declaration acknowledges Mendocino County is now entering its second year of significant reduction in rainfall, and "the entire Mendocino County economy is placed in great jeopardy because of the current water shortage due to its dependence on Lake Mendocino and Russian River water allocations.... [County government] must act proactively to prevent an imminent disaster."

"The adverse environmental, economic, and social impacts of the drought pose an imminent threat of disaster and threaten to cause widespread harm to people, businesses, property, wildlife and recreation in Mendocino County," the resolution continues.

In addition to approving the declaration of emergency, the board

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

Willits water: Making less go further

Zack Cinek
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With the city council on the verge of adopting a Level III or higher mandatory water conservation policy for homes and businesses, Willits water users are going to have to get used to doing more with less.

That next level of conservation means commercial and industrial water customers would have to reduce their water use by 15 percent, but not less than 100 gallons per day.

The policy limits residential users to 250 gallons per day for each occupied residential unit.

The code clamps down on nonessential uses of city water, including washing sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking lots, tennis courts, motor vehicles, trailers, airplanes or boats.

Refilling swimming pools, hot tubs and spas also is prohibited, according to

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



Above: Ian Fitzpatrick, Misty Gonzales, Rascal, and Louis Rohlicek stand by the Frank Grasse Dog Park sign with the \$1,000 check.

Below left: Misty Gonzales and Rascal watch as Willits Power Carhartt owner, Mike Garrity, wraps a present during the drive.

Below center: Rascal the dog. Below right: The \$1,000 check donated by Willits Power Carhartt.

Photos by Maureen Moore



All for the Dogs

City to consider wells to ease drought impact

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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The City of Willits is considering using existing or new wells to ease the effect of the current drought.

According to Willits City Manager Adrienne Moore, the city is considering three options. The first is to utilize water from two existing wells that the city already owns. These are the Park well and the Elias well. Moore said water from these two wells would be tested Monday of this week. Results are due back at the beginning of next week. Moore added that a temporary water treatment plant would likely need to be purchased and installed in order to make the water safe to drink. The total cost for this project would be approximately \$835,000.

The second avenue which is under consideration would be to use two privately owned wells, one of which is owned by Sparetime Supply, and the other of which is located at the old Coleman Ranch, which is now owned by Caltrans.

According to Moore, the third potential strategy to bring water to Willits would be to drill new wells and install a secondary treatment plant.

Moore said that using water from Wente Lake (also known as the Boy Scout lake), located about five miles east of Willits, is an option but she added, "It is not going to be quickly available to us."

Moore said that City of Willits staff has estimated that it would cost \$1.8 million to bring water down

Read the rest of **Wells** | Over on Page 4

Willits Power Carhartt donates \$1,000 to dog park

Anyone with dogs can surely attest to the wonderful resource that is the Frank Grasse Dog Park, located on East Commercial Street next to the Willits Skate Park.

With its continual improvements: colorful shade trees, running water, swimming pools, redwood benches and seating, the park has been an ever-improving work-in-progress since its start back in the fall of 2012.

The next soon-to-be-installed big improvement was made possible by Willits Power Carhartt's holiday fundraising efforts. Owners Mike Garrity and Misty Gonzales decided to focus their holiday fundraising on the Frank Grasse Dog Park this year, keeping the money local and helping out a great Willits cause.

Last year, funds were raised by offering pet owners a chance to pose their pooches with Santa Claus, and monies were donated to the county pound.

Read the rest of **Dog Park** | Over on Page 11



City set to make water conservation mandatory

The options for Willits' water consumers seem limited to using little water and praying for rain.

The city council is set to implement mandatory water conservation for homes and businesses, perhaps as early as this week.

Over the past months, water conservation has been mentioned by the city council and by individuals speaking to the council.

"I am very much in favor of water conservation," Councilwoman Madge Strong said. Strong has mentioned during meetings she favors boosting water conservation. "I think it is something we should do regardless of the current crisis."

There is no doubt the city will increase its call for conservation beyond the third level – as high as the fourth or even the fifth level, according to a report from City Hall.

Willits resident David Partch has been involved in Willits water concerns, currently and in the past. The city takes "kind of a reactive opposed to a proactive approach on water conservation," Partch said.

Partch thinks the city's allotment per household is higher than it should be. He and his wife, Ursula, maintain a large garden at their Willits home. Partch said their monthly use is about 3.5 units, well below the 250 gallon per day allotment (about 10 units per month) specified in the city's municipal code.

The couple water their garden carefully and have low-flush toilets in their house. "We do not do anything utterly amazing to save water," Partch said.

Hiring a water conservation officer for the city also could help increase conservation, Partch believes. The officer could promote a conservation program and assist customers in analyzing their water use – showing them how to save and help with financial incentives.

Strong sees potential for a grant program, similar to the county's PACE program, to retrofit toilets and help support local businesses in the process.

The city mailed flyers with its last water bills detailing how to save water in the kitchen and

the bathroom.

At DripWorks, Jerry Jordan, a founding owner of the company, said now is a good time to either not water at all or turn automatic timers down to 25 percent, just enough to keep plants alive.

Water catchment tanks and irrigating outdoors with grey water are two options for the newly water-conscious to consider.

"Greywater is going to be a huge thing very soon," Jordan said.

Water Saving Tips

Reporting from Facebook: In an ongoing conversation several Willits Weekly followers sent in some of their water-saving successes and thoughts about using less water.

Chela Pollard: "Okay everyone....do your rain dances, energize a gentle, steady rain that will fill our reservoirs and ask the rain angels to "do their thing"....We are conserving as much water

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

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from readers

Thank you from Christmas program

To the Editor:

Once again it's time to recognize the community of Willits as a whole and a few of our citizens individually for their generous help with the Willits Kids' Christmas Program.

First, though, is a very special thank you to Patrick and Susan Brown. For the past six years Patrick has headed up the local Toys For Tots program. He assumed this duty on the condition that all donations to their program would be used to help Willits children. Toys For Tots has been a major contributor to our program each of those six years.

This year I became concerned that toy donations would fall short of meeting our needs. Patrick arranged for shipping pallets of toys and other essential gifts to be delivered to our wrapping location 10 days before delivery. Those pallets contained hundreds of high-quality items that helped make our program successful again this year. Take a little time to give a round of applause to Patrick and Susan. With a bit of luck they will hear you and know that their efforts are appreciated.

For the last 21 years, the Willits Toy Run, organized by a group of local volunteer bikers, has kicked off the program. Their Toy Run is held the first Sunday after Thanksgiving. They accept donations of both toys for gifts and cash for the program. The community is invited to attend, and admission is covered by donation of a toy. The food is great, as is the music. It's a great way to relax a bit after a busy Thanksgiving holiday.

The Griggs family ... Mike, Christina, Mike, Jr. and Kerri, plus a flock of Colwells ..., never want any recognition for all the things they do in support our community so I can't ask you to thank them personally. However, if the opportunity should arise, give one of them a smile and a wink. If 50 or 100 people do this, maybe they will figure out that their secret has been revealed.

Every successful program has a few worker bees who do all those jobs that must be done but aren't very glamorous. So my daughter, Laura Deffendall (who takes her personal vacation time each year), Rick Maddox (the world's sweetest Okie), Ethyl Redmond (an energizer bunny if there ever was one), and Ann Hammond (personal shopper par excellence) all deserve a shout-out.

Another absolutely essential job is resolving the inevitable questions of clothing size, address, name conflicts, delivery times and on and on. This year Kat Harris volunteered to take on this responsibility and did a superb job. Kat's a keeper and I look forward to her help next year. (Hint, hint)

This year the number of days available to wrap was cut short by the Thanksgiving holiday falling so late in the month. I became very concerned and communicated our need for wrapping help to the local newspapers and, boy, did the community respond! Over 2,500 gifts were beautifully wrapped in a whirl of activity. We finished a day and a half before Christmas Eve; the earliest ever. My delighted thank you to all those wonderful people who volunteered for this task.

The crew that shows up for delivery is a great example of involvement by the entire community. Santas and elves, drivers and carriers, loaders and checkers ... these are the public face of the program and 'tis a great job they do. Brooktrails Fire Department, the Willits V.F.D., Chief Gonzalez (who notes on his application that he supplies his own Santa padding), Hal Wagenet (logistics king for the north 101 route) and this year newcomers Tim King and Mike Tobin and 50 or so others played this important role.

Finally I want to thank the Willits Rotary Club. Rotary supports our community every year in so many different ways. When you support Rotary fundraisers and events, you can be sure that you are enabling the club to continue to contribute to the betterment of Willits and its citizens.

This year, 435 children had a merrier Christmas than would have been without our community's outpouring. Warm clothing, shoes, bedding, rain gear (hope they use

it a lot), books, educational toys, games ... our community provides it all.

Bless ya every one, and be proud of what you accomplished.

Sandy Turner, Willits, Christmas Program coordinator

Empty faucets?

To the Editor:

Willits' third Town Hall Meeting will be Sunday, January 19 from 4 to 6 pm in the City Council Chambers. Water's going to be the topic of the day. Pretty boring subject, huh? That is until you look at the small puddle Centennial Reservoir has become and start to remember all the controversy water development ideas have created in the past.

Drill new wells in the valley? Will that dry up existing wells and what about arsenic in the water? How about a well in our watershed? If we find a way to increase our water supply, will developers want to build more houses? Conservation? Greywater? Water prices?

Lots of things to talk about. Lots of different opinions. Here's a chance to not only express your opinion but to bring ideas that could benefit us all. To start the conversation off, there will be short presentations by Scott Herman, who is a City of Willits water operator, and Robert Mellish, director of utilities of Brooktrails Township.

We look forward to seeing you January 19 at the Willits City Council Chambers. For more information call Carlin Diamond at 459-4850.

Carlin Diamond, Willits

The real culprit

To the Editor,

Let's set the record straight. Who's the real culprit in this bypass fiasco? Is it the protesters who, by Caltrans' tally sheet, caused it to spend \$4.6 million on police protection and other costs, or Caltrans itself, which is throwing close to \$200 million of taxpayers' dollars down the proverbial toilet?

In the mid '90s and again in 2007, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) offered Caltrans \$60 million to build a two-lane bypass around Willits to relieve congestion in town and get through-truck traffic off Main Street.

Both times, using fraud and intimidation, Caltrans District 1 insisted that only a four-lane freeway with I-5 sized interchanges could handle the traffic, that anything smaller would, by Caltrans' definition, be "functionally obsolete," and finally that the Federal Highway Administration wouldn't allow it to build a two-lane bypass.

So, when California voters supported a statewide \$20 billion transportation bond proposition, and again when federal stimulus money for transportation became available, Caltrans packaged its lies and sold them to the CTC.

(The first \$350 million request got pushed aside by competing projects elsewhere in the state, but construction money for the ultimate \$200 million "phase 1" request was readily granted.) That's \$140 million of our tax dollars wasted.

In the meantime, Caltrans had been on a mitigation property-buying spree in Little Lake Valley. Without any particular mitigation plan in mind and without any resource

agency consultation, Caltrans purchased 2,000 acres of private land in the valley (allowing sellers to assume that current uses would remain unchanged) for about \$16 to \$22 million, depending on which document you read. Approximately \$16 million for right-of-way acquisition came from Mendocino County's discretionary transportation funds.

Ultimately, the county spent close to \$33 million to keep up with its mandatory match of Caltrans District 1's bloated Willits Bypass budget. Assuming a proportional match for a \$60 million bypass, that's another \$26 million of our tax dollars wasted.

The resource agencies were unwilling to accept mere change of ownership as "mitigation" for the environmental impacts of the Willits bypass (Hello Caltrans?). Caltrans was now faced with trying to come up with doing something on its newly acquired 2,000 acres, much of which was already functioning seasonal wetland, that would compensate for the loss of wetlands, thousands of feet of denuded stream channels, lost wildlife and rare plant habitat, and the loss of 2,000 oaks and a recovering riparian forest. After years of trying to turn Caltrans' buying spree into a credible mitigation plan, a process whose costs remain hidden from the public, and with Caltrans continuing to refuse to shrink its bloated bypass, we have a "mitigation plan" with a price tag of close to \$40 million. A serious and focused mitigation effort that began by avoiding impacts would likely have cost taxpayers a fraction of the current plan.

The grand total that Caltrans District 1's intransigence is costing the public? Do the math. The protesters did.

Ellen Drell, Willits

Praise for Spartan Ron

To the Editor:

Kudos and congratulations regarding your fine publication. In a recent editor's note I learned that the Willits Weekly is supported by local advertisers. This piqued my curiosity as I am always interested in keeping as much of my business local as possible.

I enjoyed my walk through the pages with colorful photos and nicely designed ads. One especially caught my attention and gave me a chuckle.

I saw Spartan Bodyworks' Ron Karaglanis refer to himself as "The Pain Terminator." At first I laughed and thought it was funny. But then, I realized: "People! This guy is no joke!"

Willits has the great fortune of being home to two of the finest massage therapists on the planet. Ron and his wife, Laurie, are experienced, respectful professionals. I am so thankful that I have had the privilege of working with them for the past several years.

I had a couple of unfortunate, intractable injuries that left me in chronic pain. I had searched for years for relief and, luckily, a friend recommended Laurie to me. I worked with her for several months with great results until, at her suggestion, I started working with Ron.

Due to her enthusiasm, I got over my initial shyness. Within 15 minutes into our first session, I was mentally setting up a month's worth of weekly sessions. I felt like I had finally found the answer to my various problems.

Ron knows so much about human anatomy, movement,

Read the rest of Letters | Over on Page 9

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The Rules: LETTERS

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Letters from area residents, focusing on Willits issues, activities, events and people, have priority. Typed letters can be sent to Willits Weekly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490, but email is preferred.

Letters & Commentaries must have a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. No anonymous letters will be published.

Willits Weekly

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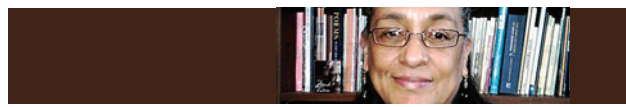
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COLJMN | Resendez Reads!



The Real 'Downton Abbey'

If you are a fan of the PBS series "Downton Abbey," now in its fourth season, you are part of a group numbering 24 million in America alone. I'm sure not all of those viewers have read about Highclere, the historic British castle and gorgeous grounds used for the filming of the series, but you might enjoy doing so.

Highclere has been the home of the various Earls of Carnarvon and the many domestic workers who kept the estate running for decades like a well-oiled machine. The current Lady Carnarvon, born Fiona Aitken, has written two delightful books about the actual inhabitants of the castle, focusing on the family members, the servant routines and the many dramas involving them all.

The first book is titled "Lady Almira and the Real Downton Abbey, The Lost Legacy of Highclere Castle" and was published in 2011. In this book we encounter the wealthy and beautiful Lady Almira, the fifth Countess of Carnarvon.

She is a product of the Victorian age who readily adapts to running a huge estate and hosting the ostentatious social events expected of their class.

Her husband has health problems which take him to Egypt for the winter. He uses this opportunity to pursue his interest in Egyptology and eventually, with the expert help of Howard Carter, finds the tomb of King Tut.

But before that historic discovery we get the build-up to WWI and the use of Highclere as a nursing hospital for the wounded soldiers, an important sequence in the fictional "Downton Abbey" story.

In the second book, Lady Catherine, the Earl, and the Real Downton Abbey, we follow the next generation. Lady Almira's son Porchey and his young wife, Catherine, take over the manor during the 1920s.

There is another influx of the rich and famous during horse parties, hunts and balls. Porchey is nothing like his father, preferring horse racing and dallying with the ladies to sifting through dusty books or archeological sites.

His wild social life is eventually punctuated by the events leading to WWII and the commandeering of Highclere this time as a sanctuary for young children sent out of London for their safety. I enjoyed both of these reads and I'm sure you will too!

As ever, whether you read electronically, on the paper page or listen to audio books, please utilize our library system and take advantage of our county's delightful local bookstores, both new and used.

Local poet, Fran Resendez, is retired from the former Leaves of Grass Books in Willits. Getting her first library card was one of the happiest days

20 years of bestselling Willits. Getting her first in her reading life.



Furry Friends

Hoping for a Home
Grinning Rudy

Meet Rudy, a boxer/pitbull terrier mix! This sweet boy is always grinning – and it's hard not to do the same when you're around him! Rudy is a beautiful boy who is very smart, affectionate and attentive. In his past home he lived with both dogs and kids, and he is great with all of them! Unfortunately he wasn't great with their family cat, so we need to find this great dog a cat-free home.

He is young and energetic and needs a home that is active and will include him in adventures and exercise. He also needs a home with a good fence so that if there are neighborhood cats wandering around, he can't get out and chase them! Rudy is a wonderful dog looking for his perfect forever home. He is 2.5 years old, and weighs 78 pounds. He is already neutered, fully vaccinated, and so he's ready to go home with you when you adopt him! Here is a link to more photos of Rudy: http://www.flickr.com/photos/rod_coots/sets/72157634798857827/

The Ukiah Animal Shelter, 298 Plant Road, is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. We have many other wonderful dogs and cats, awaiting their forever homes here as well. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.pawstoadopt.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. More info: contact Adoption Coordinator Katherine Houghtby at 707-467-6453 or houghtbyk@co.mendocino.ca.us



Photo by Rod Coots

Community News

Heartwarming stories & local tidbits

Submitted by North Coast Opportunities' Farm2Fork project



It's official: a trio of three local farmers will take over the 1-acre Brookside School Farm at Brookside Elementary School in Willits. Lucas Howerter and Amanda Senseman will co-farm the land, and Michael Foley will serve as mentor and advisor.

The trio has secured a full liability insurance policy, passed security checks to be on school property, and signed a three-year license agreement which can be renewed for another three years.

A dedicated team of Willits Unified School District staff and community volunteers partnered with the Farm2Fork project of North Coast Opportunities-Community Action, and together came up with the groundbreaking new concept of licensing school land to farmers to grow food for the school and community. At least 15 percent of the land must be dedicated to growing food for the schools, and the farmers will work with Christy Wisdom, the Willits school district's food service director, to decide what to grow. They'll start by plowing the field and planting cover crops this winter, with the first food crops going into school cafeterias in the spring.

"It's an innovative model for empowering new farmers with the support they need to be successful: land, equipment, mentorship, and marketing," says Susan Lightfoot, Farm2Fork coordinator. "We are so excited and are grateful for the leadership and vision of the Willits Unified School District for making this happen."

Brookside School Farm already has significant infrastructure, including a hoop house, vegetable washing station, rainwater catchment system, solar power, and some tools. Beyond the equipment and water provisions, Senseman and Howerter will be fully responsible for all expenses and for generating income from the land, a challenge they're both ready to face head on.

Senseman comes from Green Uprising Farm, where she

started as an intern five years ago. Howerter has been at Ecology Action for the past 2.5 years, first as an intern and then as a field coordinator at the Golden Rule Farm. Both have experience in environmental and nutrition education, and they both love working with kids. "We're passionate about providing the right kind of food to the most people possible," says Senseman. "Working with students will help us get more people educated and involved in the local food movement."

Michael Foley is an experienced farmer and businessman, and will mentor Senseman and Howerter as they get their new business started.

"With the three of them together, they have the experience, motivation and dedication to make it happen," says Lightfoot.

Brookside offers a unique entry point into the

Read the rest of Farmers | Over on Page 9

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In the Stars...

ARIES
Mar 21 - Apr 20
Aries, enjoy some well-deserved time off. Life has taken on a hectic pace of late, but some much-needed time to rest, relax and recharge has finally arrived.

TAURUS
Apr 21 - May 21
Taurus, hidden feelings come to the surface, and this will prove a pleasant surprise. Let things play out this week, and you will get some peace.

GEMINI
May 22 - Jun 21
Gemini, your friends are up to something and they want it to remain a surprise. Keep your distance, and don't let your curiosity get the better of you.

CANCER
Jun 22 - Jul 22
A temporary situation at work may alter your plans for a few days. Cancer. But don't let changes stop you from scheduling some down time with your friends.

LEO
Jul 23 - Aug 23
Leo, think things through before swinging into action. Run your ideas by someone close, and consider all of your options. This will ensure you make the best decision.

VIRGO
Aug 24 - Sep 22
Your confidence about the future is a byproduct of the past, Virgo. You have learned from past mistakes and are ready to forge ahead and turn your hard work into results.

LIBRA
Sept 23 - Oct 23
Libra, now is the time to address some relationship issues that you have been avoiding. Deal with them in a straightforward way, and you will glad you did.

SCORPIO
Oct 24 - Nov 22
A demanding schedule makes it impossible for you to be bored this week, Scorpio. However, if you desire a little time to decompress, you can fit it into your schedule.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov 23 - Dec 21
Sagittarius, while you may be anxious about the future, make sure you enjoy the here and now and not wish the present away too soon. New friends come into your life.

CAPRICORN
Dec 22 - Jan 20
Capricorn, react swiftly to stressful situations, but do so with a clear head and conscience. Once a situation has been resolved, take some time to recharge your batteries.

AQUARIUS
Jan 21 - Feb 18
Aquarius, do your best to hold up your end of a bargain with a loved one. If you are struggling, simply ask for more time or help to ensure that everyone comes out a winner.

PISCES
Feb 19 - Mar 20
Pisces, your foremost priority is to further your position at work. Rely on your strong work ethic and attention to detail.

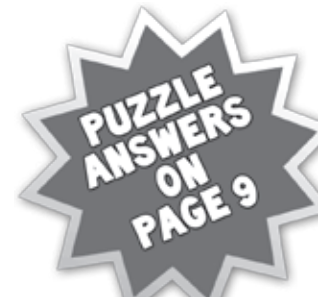
Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13											
16											
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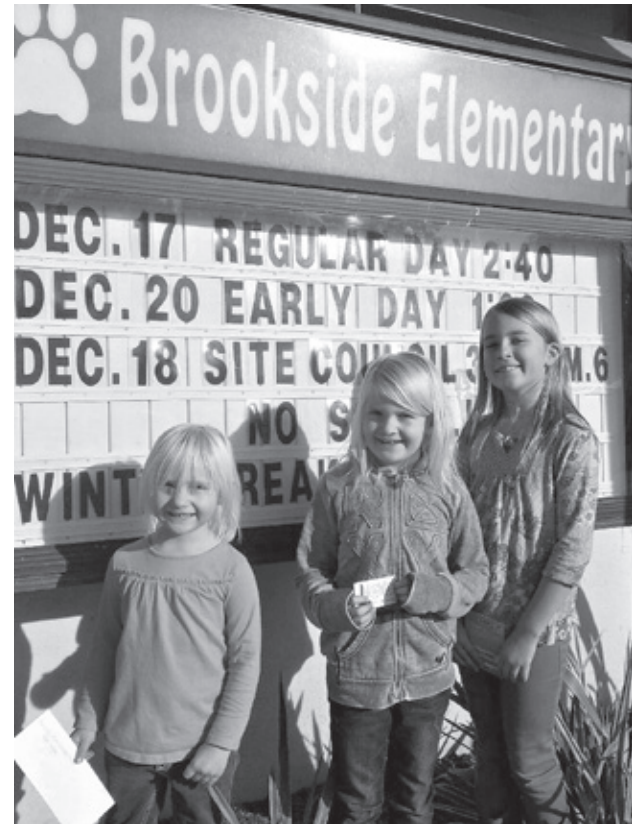
- CLUES ACROSS**
- NOHOW
 - Record (abbr.)
 - Hair detangler
 - '836 siege' of U.S.
 - Largest continent
 - Showed old movie
 - Clatter
 - Considered one by one
 - Chinese cinnamon spice tree
 - Frequently
 - 3 person 32 card game
 - Misaddressed mail (slang)
 - Expresses pleasure
 - Samba or basket rummy
 - Military leader (abbr.)
 - A citizen of Iran
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Carbon, radioactive or varve
 - Loss of electricity
 - Mass. Cape
 - Mediator
 - 1/1000 of a tala
 45. Players at 1st, 2nd & 3rd
 - Covered Greek portico
- CLUES DOWN**
- Informant (slang)
 - Olive tree genus
 - Armed conflicts
 - Am. Music Awards
 - Dance mix DJ Einhorn
 - Oxidation-reduction
 - Structure
 - Modern
 - Roman Conqueror
 - So. Honshu bay city
 - 8th C. BC minor Hebrew prophet
 - = to 100 satang
 - In active opposition
 - 007's Fleming
 - 26th century Spanish hero
 - Macaw genus
 - Slave rebellion's Turner
 - Cuckoo
 - From a time
 - Applies with quick strokes
 - Fasten with string
 - Teller replacement
 - Command right
 - Sea eagle
 - Most closely set
 - Dhabi, Arabian capital
 - Marten furs
 - Strike workers
 - Thyssenopter
 - Louise de la Ramee's pen name
 - King of Thebes
 - ___ mater, one's school
 - Time unit
 - Klutzes
 - Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
 - Front of the leg

Sudoku

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



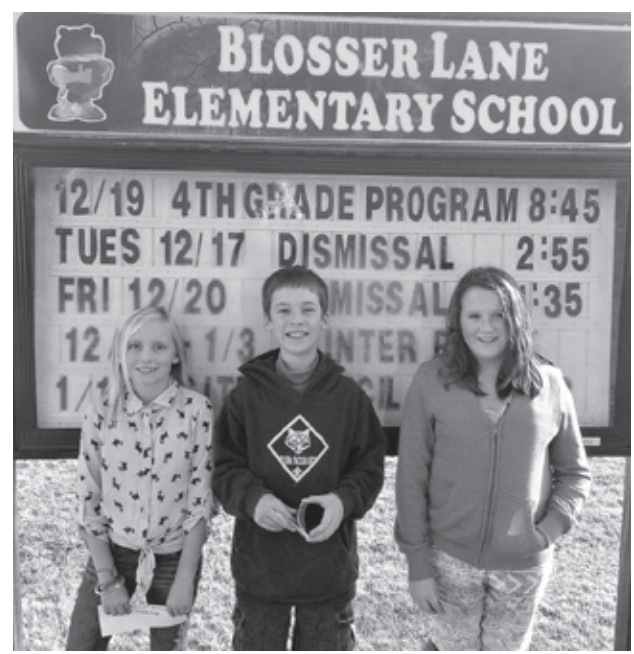
How To Sudoku:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a Sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using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



Walk-a-Thon Winners again!

Willits Weekly is re-running the photos of the 2013 Blosser Lane and Brookside Elementary School winners, as we received misspelled names for two of the Brookside students, which were printed in the December 19, 2013 edition. We apologize for the error.

Above: Brookside winners: Rayah and Makenzie Erickson and Shelby Bowen.
Below: Blosser winners: Samantha Jenkins, Quinn Harroun, Heaven Siderakis.



Almost halfway there!

Thermometer for Food Bank reaches \$15,875

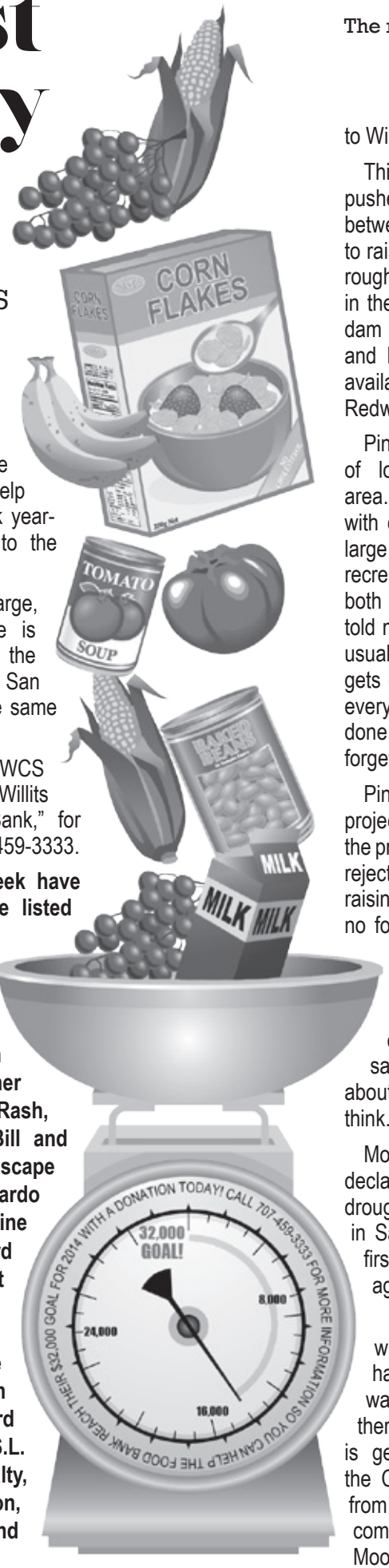
Donations to the Willits Community Services and Food Bank continue to come in from members of the community. Money raised goes to help support the efforts of the food bank year-round and provide vital services to the needy in the community.

No amount is too little or too large, and anyone wishing to contribute is welcome to bring their donation by the WCS building, located at 229 East San Francisco Street, or mail it in to the same address.

For more information, "like" the WCS Facebook page, found under "Willits Community Services and Food Bank," for updates, or contact WCS directly at 459-3333.

New donations in the past week have been generously given by those listed below:

Eric Acosta, James and Leigh Austin, Jeffery Brockrog, John Cross and Diana Cavendish, Dancing Madrone Soap Co., Jason Erlick and Carla Longchamp, Esther Faber, Helen Falandes and Clancy Rash, Frank R. Howard Foundation, Bill and Frances Gardner, Gary Owen Landscape Construction, Cathy Glycer, Gerardo and Barbarie Gonzalez, Pauline Grzanich, Henry Hanson, Edward and Audrey Kimmel, Margaret Koster, Ruth MacMillan Kozusyn, Paul Krause, Daniel Loughry, Mills and Suzanne Matheson, Debbie McCubbin, Umakant and Suman Mistry, North Valley Bank, Richard Padula, Padula Ranches, L.J. and S.L. Pasquini, Ponderosa & Sun Realty, Keith Rutledge and Nancy Simpson, J. Francis and William Schatz, and David and Laura Smith.



The rest of Wells

From Page 1

to Willits from Wente Lake. Third District Supervisor John Pinches pushed hard on the Wente Lake project between 2005 and 2010. His plan was to raise the dam at the lake, which would roughly triple the amount of water held in the reservoir. Pinches said raising the dam there would cost about \$800,000, and he added that the water could be available to either Willits or the town of Redwood Valley.

Pinches complained about the attitude of local government officials in our area. "The Boy Scouts were on board with doing it," Pinches said, "because a large reservoir there would mean more recreation facilities. But when I took it to both Redwood Valley and to Willits, they told me they didn't need the water. What usually happens around here is, everyone gets excited about the lack of water and everyone says that something has to be done, and then it rains, and everyone forgets about it."

Pinches said that the Wente Lake project is neither being actively pursued at the present time, nor has it been decisively rejected. He said that project designs for raising the dam do exist, but added that no formal agreement has been reached with the Boy Scouts of America.

When asked if there has been any interest in blowing the dust off of that old feasibility study, Pinches said: "Couple of people have asked about it, but not the interest you would think."

Moore said that Willits' request to be declared a disaster area because of drought conditions gained a lot of attention in Sacramento because Willits was the first city in the state to seek state help against the drought.

When asked if water use associated with Caltrans' Willits Bypass project has had a negative impact on Willits' water supply, Moore stoutly denied that there was any connection. "Caltrans is getting its water from the well on the Coleman Ranch. We get our water from our two reservoirs. Those are two completely different water sources," Moore said.

Hometown Business



Moving the Moose

Purple Moose consolidates to one location in Willits

Unique Mom-and-Pop stores are just one of the facets of Willits that keep things interesting in our small town.

Like an ever-changing treasure hunt, the Purple Moose Thrift Shop is happy to provide locals and passers-through with a selection of one-of-a-kind items, now all conveniently located at one shop: 1402 South Main Street.

With a large warehouse in the back providing storage for the goods waiting to come out onto the floor, the old Scott's Appliance building was doing very well for owner Judy Lovell, and she decided to combine her two original locations into one space earlier this month.

"We have some new goals at our store this year," explained Lovell. "But I am still buying huge estates and then passing the deals on to our customers."

With these large estate purchases, the "thrift shop" theme sometimes transforms into an "antique store" feel as well, with antique treasures from estate sales filling the shelves.

Unlike other local thrift shops, the Purple Moose does not accept drop-off donations; all store items are purchased by Lovell, then washed, sorted, priced and carefully displayed in the shop.

"We have been having difficulty with people dropping off boxes outside, leaving us to have to clean up and dispose of the unwanted items," explained Lovell. "If you have items you would like to get rid of, you can always contact us for a consultation, but please, don't leave unsolicited items outside."

Lovell says that if customers are looking for something in particular that they don't see in her own shop - believing in good karma and returned blessings - she and her staff will always encourage customers to check out the other local stores to see what they might have available.

If you haven't yet been inside the Purple Moose building located at 1402 South Main Street, stop in and have a look around and see what treasures you can find.

The shop is open Monday to Friday 10 am to 5 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm.

For more information, contact the Purple Moose at 459-1540.

Below from left: A kitty cookie jar inside the shop. A fully loaded truck of brand-new items arrived at the Purple Moose Thrift Shop Tuesday morning, and workers Shawn (left) and Dustin (right) helped to unload the goodies.

Where can one find a desktop-sized bust of President Lincoln? The Purple Moose if you hurry! The inside of the shop is filled with an ever-changing selection of items big and small.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Willits Weekly 459-2633

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Left: Erica and Craig Carson Jr. with their new baby girl, Khwina Makela Carson, the first baby born at Ukiah Valley Medical Center in 2014.

Below: A family portrait: dad Cody, mom Chelsea, big brother Evan and new baby, Mason Lee Cosner, the first baby born at the Mendocino Coast District Hospital in 2014.

Photo by Larry Wagner

First babies of the year

at Mendocino County hospitals

The very first Mendocino County baby of 2014 was born at 1:27 am on January 2 at Ukiah Valley Medical Center to parents Erica and Craig Carson, Jr. of Redwood Valley. Khwina Makela Carson is the first of 800 to 900 babies expected to be born at UVMC in 2014.

The first baby born at the Mendocino Coast District Hospital was Mason Lee Cosner, born at 1:59 pm on January 4, to Chelsea Brown and Cody Cosner of Fort Bragg. MCDH expects to help deliver about 180 "precious and beautiful" newborns in 2014.

"It's always exciting to deliver the first baby of the New Year!" said Dr. Karen E., obstetrician and gynecologist, who delivered baby Carson at UVMC.

For the Carsons, this baby girl is their miracle baby. In 2011 Craig Carson, Jr. was diagnosed with brain cancer and has



been undergoing treatment for the past two years.

"For us this is a real miracle, since neither of us thought we would be able to have another child because of the cancer treatment Craig has undergone," said Mrs. Carson. The Carsons' new daughter joins three siblings, Aliyah, 9, Yoosha, 5, and Cimewa, 4.

Young Mason Lee Cosner — 7 pounds, 11 ounces, 19 inches when he arrived — will enjoy the companionship of older brother, Evan.

MCDH nurses, Suzanne Bowen, RN, and Joyce Aston, RN, and nursing house supervisor Jeanna Cauckwell were in the delivery room when Mason arrived.



COME & PLAY!

<p>Mondays January 6th to February 24th</p> <p>Guys Night 4:00PM to 11:00PM</p> <p>Hourly Drawing from 4:00PM to 10:00PM for \$50 Cash!</p> <p>Last Drawing at 11:00PM for \$150 Cash!</p> <p>Ladies who earn 50 points, will receive \$15 Free Play Points can be earned all day</p>	<p>Tuesdays January 7th to February 25th</p> <p>Ladies Night 4:00PM to 11:00PM</p> <p>Hourly Drawing from 4:00PM to 10:00PM for \$50 Cash!</p> <p>Last Drawing at 11:00PM for \$150 Cash!</p> <p>Ladies who earn 50 points, will receive \$15 Free Play Points can be earned all day</p>
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100 Kawi Place in Willits 707-459-7330



Above: A fresh North Coast crab.

Photo by Maureen Moore

Hankering for some crab?

All-you-can-eat feast set for January 18

The 18th annual Willits Rotary Crab Feed is set for Saturday, January 18 from 6 to 10 pm at the Willits Community Center.

Dinner features "all the crab you can eat, plus salad, garlic bread and pasta," said Rotarian Ann Alumbaugh, with a silent auction, a live auction and live music, too. "It should be a fine time," she said.

A version of The Basics will perform "old Italian and romantic music," featuring Don Willis on accordion, Scott Wise on the drums, and "Bear" Kamoroff on upright bass.

The Rotary Club has ordered 600 pounds of cleaned crab this year, after selling 500 pounds last year. The event benefits two local good causes — 'split right down the middle,' Alumbaugh said. Half the proceeds will go to the Willits Senior Center and half will go to the scholarship fund for the Willits High School senior class.

Rotary Club members will be tending a bar offering wine, beer and mixed drinks. Pre-sale tickets are \$45; available from any Rotary member or at the Harrah Senior Center's front desk. For tickets or more information, please contact Alumbaugh at 459-1440.



Above: from left: Aidan Bryant, Nick Miller and Brandon Fanshier pose with assistant scoutmaster to Troop 212, Jen Dellett.

Photo by Jennifer Poole

Local Boy Scouts help clean up Christmas

Members of Boy Scout Troop 212 in Willits were out gathering 2013's Christmas trees to recycle on Saturday. "We had three crews out this morning," said Jen Dellett, assistant scoutmaster for Troop 212, whose crew was working Mill Street and the surrounding area. At that midpoint in the day, Dellett estimated the crews had picked up 40 to 50 trees. The service is an annual fundraiser for the troop, especially the Scout summer camp. Although the trees are picked up without charge, donations are gladly accepted. Boy Scouts Aidan Bryant and Brandon Fanshier on Dellett's crew, and Cub Scout Nick Miller (who was helping out), reported that people who put trees out where happily giving donations, too. Scoutmaster for Troop 212 is Ken Pedersen. To give additional donations or for more info about Troop 212, call Dellett at 972-9948.



Above: Aidan Bryant (left) and Brandon Fanshier pick up a tree on Locust Street last Saturday afternoon

Photo by Maureen Moore

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Night Shift wanted for Baechtel Creek Inn: 10:30 pm to 6 am. Must be detail-oriented, reliable, able to pass drug test. Apply in person at Baechtel Creek Inn.

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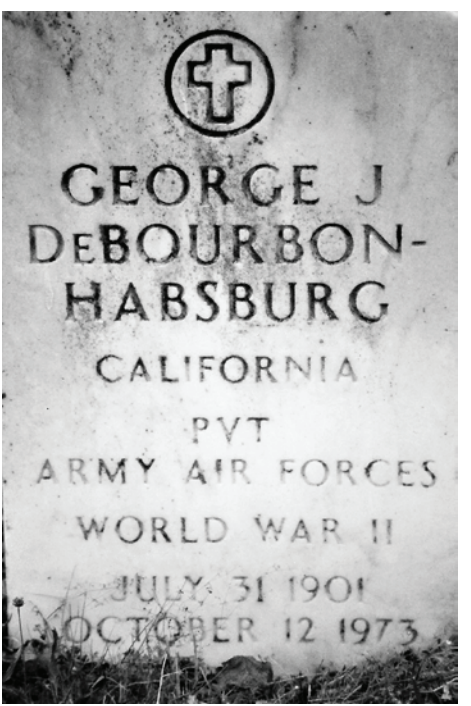
The rest of Letters | From Page 2

neuromuscular therapy, deep tissue and fascia work that I had rapid and amazing results. Thanks to his work, I have regained my mobility, coordination and quality of a relatively pain-free life.

What is really great is that my two adult sons have benefited as well. They had various sports-related injuries resolved, as have my daughter and son-in-law. It is so rewarding to see people that I care about feel better!

If you are suffering from an injury or just looking to improve your quality of life, give Ron a try. You really will be able to say "Hasta la vista" to your pain. Sincere thanks,

Melinda Zubak, Willits



Habsburg of Germany.

My history knowledge is that the DeBourbon part of his name came from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in Italy, from the Tuscan line of the Habsburgs.

I am curious if anyone knew him or knew about him? Did he live in Willits?

He was said to have had a sister, and his records said he was a painter by trade. Thank you. Please call 541-269-2454 if you have information to share.

Lucy Lea Lewis, Oregon

George J. DeBourbon-Habsburg

To the Editor:

I was visiting the Willits Cemetery on Highway 20, and came across this military headstone for George J. DeBourbon-Habsburg. I called Anker-Lucier Mortuary, and they had his honorable discharge, and mailed me a copy.

He was born in San Francisco, July 31, 1901, and he died October 12, 1973. His parents were Wilhelm & Marie DeBourbon-

Recipe from Elizabeth Sinofsky, owner of Mendocino Tea Lady in Willits

Mushroom, Onion & Butter Noodle Goodness

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups of mixed mushrooms (button, trumpet, exotic)
- Half of a large onion
- 1 package wide egg noodles
- 2 chicken-flavored bouillon cubes
- ¼ cup sundried tomatoes
- ½ stick of butter
- ½ cup fresh parmesan
- Salt and pepper to taste

Sautee mushrooms and onions in olive oil slowly, until nicely browned. Set aside.

Bring to a boil 8 cups of water with bouillon cubes. Cook noodles until perfectly al dente.

Drain.

Add sundried tomatoes to mushrooms and onions, then add butter to pan.

Add hot steamy noodles, and toss altogether until butter is melted.

Add salt and pepper, and sprinkle with Parmesan.

Serve hot.

Do you have a recipe to share?

Email us at willitsweekly@gmail.com with your original recipe.

Easy weeknight meal or decadent Sunday brunch recipes, we like them all! There's no cost to print them, and it's a great way to share your culinary skills and ideas with the community! Send in one today!

The rest of Farmers | From Page 3

business for new farmers. "It's hard for young farmers to find reasonably priced land or a good agreement to farm someone else's land," says Howter. "It's one of the biggest barriers to becoming a new farmer. Brookside will show us what it takes to really get a small farm going."

If successful, Senseman and Howter may decide to move on to farming their own land, in which case Brookside will be available to offer the same learning experience to other new farmers.

"My intention is to continue with the project as a small-scale farm incubator," says Foley. "If and when Amanda and Lucas decide to move on to their own land, Brookside Farm can be

used to mentor new farmers." According to Lightfoot, first-year WUSD Superintendent Pat Johnson was impressed with the innovative idea and offered her complete support for the new approach. Brookside Principal Olga O'Neill was also an early proponent of the project. "We're excited to see it become a thriving farm and expose our students to where their food comes from," says O'Neill. She's confident that the right group of farmers was chosen, saying, "They're so positive and passionate about what they're doing, and they have a realistic picture about what it's going to take to do this huge job." O'Neill adds, "They'll make great role models for our students."

Puzzle Answers From Page 4

N	O	W	A	Y		R	E	C		C	O	M	B			
A	L	A	M	O		E	D	O		A	S	I	A			
R	E	R	A	N		D	I	N		E	A	C	H			
C	A	S	S	I	A		O	F	T		S	K	A	T		
						N	I	X	I	E		A	A	H	S	
C	A	N	A	S	T	A		C	M	D	R					
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7	2	4	8	3	6	9	5	1
9	1	3	7	2	5	4	8	6
5	6	8	4	1	9	2	7	3
2	4	6	9	7	3	5	1	8
3	8	9	5	4	1	6	2	7
1	5	7	6	8	2	3	4	9
8	7	5	3	6	4	1	9	2
4	3	1	2	9	8	7	6	5
6	9	2	1	5	7	8	3	4

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Community News

Heartwarming stories & local tidbits



Young gymnasts at Gateway

Above: 2013 Gateway Gymnastics students on picture day in December: back row: Coach Cathy Warren, Lilly Michels, Tristan Wartell, Clara Mayhugh, Sami Jenkins, Courtney Potter, Kylie Jergensen, Amerah Potter, and Jazmyin Carrigg. Middle row: Sheridan Wood, Kendahl Potter, Cecily Potter, Charley Lamprich, Elena Arkelian, Mariah Rodriguez, Amya Michels, and Mateya Shuster. Front row: Sophia Leinwetter, Brodey Lamprich, Izabella Sims, Areya DeFluri-Goroux, Porter Garman, Kali Kristiansen, Sahejo Diallo, Jemma Apodaca, and Mariah Lavine.

Gateway Gymnastics is starting its 16th year of providing gymnastics classes for kids in Willits, said coach and owner Cathy Warren. The spring program started this week, but Warren says she is happy to add kids until classes are full. A total of about 55 students participate throughout the year.

Classes include a parent-taught "Tiny Tumbler" class, for the youngest kids (between 1 and 2 years old) as well as the classes Warren

teaches: a "Tiny Tumbler" class for ages 3 to 5, beginning gymnastics, and intermediate. Twelve classes are offered each week, scheduled from Tuesdays through Fridays. "The kids really enjoy it," Warren said. "Gymnastics helps kids gain confidence through physical activity, strength and flexibility."

Gateway is located at 275 Franklin Avenue; call 459-3855 for more information.

Photo by Richard Wartell

Master class on acting

Taught by Broadway actress/dancer, Linda Posner

What is acting and why do we act? Explore your dreams with dancer and Broadway/film actress, Linda Posner, in two "Acting and Auditioning" classes set for Saturday, January 18 and Saturday, January 25 from 10 am to 1 pm. Posner's classes are part of a series of Master Classes offered by the Willits Community Theatre over the next few months.

Posner, acting under her stage name, Leland Palmer, was nominated twice for the prestigious Tony Award: in 1967 for featured actress in a musical (Miss Jimmie in "A Joyful Noise"; she was also assistant choreographer for that production); and in 1973 for actress in a musical (Fastrada in "Pippin"). She also played Minnie Fay in the big Broadway hit, "Hello Dolly!"

Film work includes Bob Fosse's "All That Jazz" and "Valentino" with Rudolph Nureyev. On television, Posner played guest roles on "Love, American Style," "Laverne & Shirley" and "Rhoda."

Posner also taught acting at Mendocino Community College for 20 years.

After coming back to Willits from 10 years in San Francisco, Posner was invited by WCT to be involved. "The theater generously invited me to participate by directing something, acting in something, creating something," Posner said. "I realized that where I wanted to be involved was in an educational component, which I didn't think WCT had. That is where my passion and interest lies, with education and making involvement in the theater more accessible and

more appealing to more people."

After WCT's Donna Vaiano called Posner to say "Let's put together a workshop," the two sat and brainstormed with the other master class teachers. "We talked about offering 'a taste of theater,'" Posner said, "to introduce people to all the different parts of how a production was put together, and I said I was happy to do the teaching acting part of that.... I really like that we're drawing people in to learn and to enjoy in a safe and supportive environment."

Posner will share her extraordinary skills and knowledge, while demonstrating how to create believability in your character and how to develop comfort and confidence with your voice, emotions and motions while performing on the stage.

Improv and memorization techniques as well as auditioning skills and memorization techniques will be covered in her classes. In addition, participants will learn the difference between acting for the stage and acting for film.

Posner encourages potential students to come to both classes, but the classes are open to one-time students, too. "People can come take whatever works for them from the classes. I am offering this tray of 'foods,' that I feel are nourishing for an actor, a performer, and they can pick and choose what resonates and works for them."

These classes are open to students of all ages. For a full description of the entire series of Master Classes, including "Theater Tech" (with Joe Dowling and Kevin Moore), "Playwriting" (with Don and Ann Samson), and "Directing" with Bill Barksdale, see the website at willitstheatre.org or phone 459-0895. Workshops are scheduled through May.

Fees for each class are \$25 adults, \$15 students, with full scholarships available to cover all costs. Scholarship applications can be downloaded from the website.

Photo by Bill Barksdale

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The rest of **Tips** | From Page 1

as we can. We use buckets and pans to capture any water while we wait for the water to heat up in our sinks, then put them on our plants. It all helps. Our fingers are crossed...."

Jerry Jordan, DripWorks: "We should all CONSERVE, CONSERVE, CONSERVE! The little things that people do are definitely what add up! As you all know, spring is just a few months away which means it's time to start planting our gardens again. Please keep in mind that when watering a garden water waste can be a HUGE concern. Drip irrigation uses up to 50% LESS water than conventional watering methods and puts the water ONLY where it's needed...."

Flushing toilets less looks to be a popular and easy-to-do solution for those that want to save water. Pollard says that she and her husband are working hard to save water – many of their methods are mentioned in the list below. "We are all using up the water and if we can all do our part in conserving, it will benefit us all. Now, if the rain Gods would do their part,

we'll all be 'splashing' wonderful!"

Mike Tobin posted this list on Facebook of some strategies to help get us through the water shortage. "1.) If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down 2.) Turn shower on, get wet, off, soap up, turn shower on to rinse quickly, turn off. A Navy shower is three minutes. 3.) Shower every other day, unless it is absolutely necessary to shower daily 4.) Sponge/wash cloth baths...wipe down with wet cloth versus full shower or bath." Tobin, a retired sailor, says "Conserve, please, we all need drinking water."

Reader Gwen Markson writes: "Good morning WW. Our toilets are already the low water dual flush style. It may sound gross, but for a month now, if it just urine, I only flush every second time of usage. We're saving 1 1/2 gallons each time we're doing this. We always make sure we have a full load of laundry for the washer and also for the dishwasher, of course, but now I use the 'light' wash cycle instead of 'normal' for the dishes. I find the dishes/glasses are just as clean. Let's all hope & pray for rain!"

A gallon saved, a gallon earned

- Keep the water you run when you first turn on the tap, or are running to get warm, to water your indoor plants
- Same with water you rinse veggies with
- Veggies can be rinsed in a pan or sink without running water
- Select a properly sized pan for cooking
- Turn the water off when you brush your teeth!
- If you shave, do the same.
- Take it to the next level, and brush your teeth while showering!
- Stack clean dishes and rinse several of them at once.
- Low-flow showerheads make a big difference, or one that turns off if you're soaping
- Conduct a test: Replace your shower head if it fills a 1 gallon bucket in under 20 seconds
- If it's yellow, let it mellow – or, treat yourself to a dual-flush toilet: one with two buttons: little flush or big flush
- Designate one glass for your drinking water throughout the day: only one glass to wash
- Wash dishes right away, when it will take less water to get them clean – some of these water-saving tips require a clean sink, too
- When running a bath plug it first; adjust the

- temperature as it's filling
- Don't run water while using shampoo
- When washing your hands, turn off the water while lathering up (probably you will wash your hands more thoroughly this way, too!)
- Fix that toilet that runs!
- Save your ice cubes too – put them on a plant or let them melt in your plant water
- Save old pet drinking water for plants
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in your fridge
- Reuse water from cooked pasta or vegetables to water house plants – or even to start a homemade soup
- Shower uses four times more than a bath
- If you have young children, bathe them together
- Strive to reduce your shower time; take a 5-minute shower (or less)
- In the market for new appliances? Consider an "on-demand" tankless style heater or a high-efficiency dishwasher
- An on-demand water heater could go underneath your kitchen sink
- Test your toilet for leaks by putting food coloring in the tank. Also look to see if the flapper sticks open after a flush
- Pre-washing: If your dishwashing machine is

new, it can handle dirty dishes better than older models

- Go easy on the garbage disposal, start a compost pile – it saves gallons
- Thaw frozen foods without water
- When cleaning a fish tank, toss the water on some plants – they will appreciate the fertilizer
- Read your water meter to see what you have saved
- Look around outside and check outdoor faucets for leaks
- Keep your hoses in storage, and clean outdoors with a broom
- Cut grass high to help retain moisture
- Locate your master shutoff valve in case a pipe brakes
- Seek the services of a commercial car wash that recycles water
- When cooling off this summer with a sprinkler, be sure to water a spot that needs it
- For laundry, match the water level to the amount of clothes to be washed
- Again, if shopping for appliances, "Energy Star" washers can save up to 20 gallons per load
- Look into watering trees and plants with greywater



The rest of **Dog Park** | From Page 1

This year, Willits Power offered gift wrapping services for a small fee. Presents could be purchased at the shop – or anywhere else – brought in, and wrapped, and the money, which according to Gonzales never ended up being less than a \$5 per gift, was matched dollar for dollar by Willits Power. All funds went directly to the dog park.

"We had one guy who came in three times with bundles and bags of gifts," laughed Gonzales. "He said he only liked to shop places that offered wrapping, but since we were offering the service, he shopped all over and then kept bringing in the gifts. It was great!"

A total of \$500 was raised over the month-long fundraiser and, with Willits Power's matching \$500, a check for a full \$1,000 was presented by



Photos by Maureen Moore

Gonzales (and Rascal the dog) earlier this week to the dog park's Louis Rohlicek and Ian Fitzpatrick.

The money will be used to purchase two 12-foot by 21-foot stand-alone carport structures from Willits Power, one for the little or "shy" dog park area, and one for the main area.

The structures will not only provide shade in the hot summer sun, but protection from rain on wet winter days when Fido just won't accept "Come on! It's storming outside!" as an acceptable excuse not to go and frolic at the park.

A big thank you goes out to the staff, shoppers and wrappers who helped make this year's fundraiser a success.

The rest of **Drought** | From Page 1

also created a drought ad hoc committee. Supervisors Carre Brown (1st District) and Dan Hamburg (5th District) agreed to serve on the committee, which will coordinate communication and strategies between local jurisdictions, and the state and federal offices of emergency services.

Third District Supervisor John Pinches, who earlier in the morning had been appointed chairman of the board of supervisors, and who for years has aggressively worked to secure additional water for Mendocino County, declined to be a member of the committee. Pinches felt the effort would require a long-term commitment and that he would not be the best choice, since he is only going to be on the board for one more year.

Pinches also told the board he wanted it to expand its mission from reacting to the current emergency to securing additional water sources for the county.

"We as leaders have done no planning," Pinches said. "Not poor planning, we've done no planning."

"If you're not going to be serious about getting out there and getting a new supply [of water], then there is no reason to meet. Because we don't need a letter from the governor. We don't need a piece of paper from us, or from Russian River Flood Control, or from Redwood Valley. We need a new source of water."

Other leaders of local jurisdictions, including Willits City

Manager Adrienne Moore, Willits Mayor Holly Madrigal, Brooktrails Township General Manager Denise Rose and Bill Kohler of the Redwood Valley County Water District, said they wanted to be part of the committee. Their participation was welcomed, although the board temporarily stumbled when asked if it ought to be forming a Drought Emergency Task Force instead of an ad hoc committee.

County CEO Carmel Angelo told the board it would be more appropriate to form the committee, as stated on the agenda. That committee, she added, could easily be expanded to a county wide taskforce at the board's January 21 meeting.

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Right: While curious kitties can offer lots of moral support while checking your home's meter, their judgment on the triangle's reading is usually less than reliable for accurate decision-making.

Below and at bottom: Both of these meters show the blue triangle used to gauge water motion just to the left side of the red hand's base. Notice, in the top right photo on this page, that the triangle is more of a squiggly shape, faintly resembling the shape of a turtle to some, with one further-extending appendage which can be used in the same way as the triangle point in determining water flow.

Below right: A reminder of why checking for leaks and conserving water is so important: **WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF WATER AT OUR RESERVOIR.** Please do your best to help save what we can while we wait for rain.

Below far right: Water meters are identified easily by the "Water Meter" lettering on the metal door.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Above from left: While locating meter boxes can be difficult due to overgrown flora, once the lid is opened, the meter can be read right inside.

A leak, or not a leak?

A quick check of the meter can help save water, and your bill's bottom line



With the real threat of even tighter water usage restrictions looming, there's an easy test you can do to make sure your household isn't adding, unknowingly, to the problem.

Check for leaks by looking at your water meter.

Drippy taps and leaky hoses aside, less obvious leaks may still be active, in underground pipes, under sinks, unchecked garden faucets, or other places, wasting water and boosting up your bill.

Water meters are usually near the sidewalk in front of your home. They are usually submerged in the cement or buried in the edge of the yard, with a visible cement rectangle and metal lever door.

Carefully pull open the metal door and inside you will see the meter with dials and numbers and a valve where all the water coming from the meter can be easily shut off in the case of a large leak or emergency.

Take a moment and look at the dial; there should be a gauge, where numbers flip to register cumulative usage, and, in many meters, a little blue triangle.

The little blue triangle and the gauge are the keys to seeing if there are leaks.

Make sure that all the faucets, hoses, ice makers and anything else that use water are turned off, and check what the triangle is doing. Nothing? Good. That's a good sign, but you're not totally in the clear. Many small, slow leaks may not really be active enough for you to see the triangle "moving" at a quick glance or even see the numbers on the gauge flip.

Take a picture or mental note of where the triangle is pointing or make a dot with a marker where one of the points of the triangle is pointing, then stand there and watch it for about one minute. Has it changed position? What if when you look initially it IS moving? Rotating quickly – or slowly – around in a circle? Rut-roh. You have a leak.

Maureen Moore
Designer & Photographress
maureen@willitsweekly.com

If you're still not sure, take a picture of the gauge that registers cumulative usage. Then come back 15 minutes later and compare the numbers in the picture to what the gauge shows now: if they've changed, and nobody has used any water intentionally, you have a leak.

How fast the triangle moves indicates how fast the water is running. To see what a wild leak would look like, have someone turn the faucet on inside and watch the triangle spin. The same would be true if you had a large leak.

So what do you do?

SHUT OFF THE WATER.

The customer shut-off valve inside the water meter box will shut off all water to the house from the street. Go ahead and turn that off so water isn't being wasted while you decide what to do next.

Determining where the leak is can also be tricky if it isn't in an obvious location. Narrowing it down some is achievable by turning off the water valve at your home. The location of this valve is something to research now if you don't already know its location, but it can usually be found on the street side of the house. Usually water pipes don't run underneath a house, although they can. Have your landlord or another educated member of household show everyone where the valve is and how to completely shut off the water.

With the main water valve back on, go ahead and turn the house valve to the off position and go back and look at the meter. Is the triangle still moving? Then the leak is most likely between the street and the house. Did it stop? It's probably on the other side of the house valve then.

Next step is to fix the leak, if you're handy, or call a local plumber. Notifying the City of Willits is also a good idea, especially if the leak is in the area between the house and the meter.

If your meter looks different than the one described here, and you are still unsure how to check for leaks; if your water bill has increased while you are trying to conserve; or if you have a high-unit usage on your bill, call the city at 459-4601 and get the issue addressed and taken care of right away.



There's no reason to wait, and there's absolutely NO reason to waste water in this time of drought.

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SAVING MR. BANKS (PG13) 2hr 6mins
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SAT/SUN: 12:00, 2:45, 5:30 & 8:15pm

THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY (PG) 1hr 54mins
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