

Willits Weekly

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

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Thursday, April 25, 2024



ATW talk on 'harm reduction' for substance abusers

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
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The experienced and caring staff members of Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network, aka MCAVHN, would like people to stop using dangerous drugs, but they are not going to tell them to do so. They know, through their years of personal battles and study on the subject that the "Just Say No" paradigm, made popular by Nancy Reagan, does not work.

They, on the other hand, place their efforts on creating "harm reduction," keeping people from self-destruction through means of reducing risks, so that their clients can continue to be alive, in order to finally make their own decisions regarding their health, hopefully leading to abstinence or greatly reduced usage.

On April 17, three MCAVHN staff members, Joe Ditto, Travis Meeks, and Aurelie Clivaz, participated in a forum at the Methodist Church, produced by Suzanne Picetti Johnson of the Avenues To Wellness, a program of the Frank R. Howard Foundation. They came to educate and to answer questions.

"I like to keep my pulse on local issues, and this is one of the most important because it's a life-or-death issue," explained Johnson. "It's a whole new world out there, and everyone needs to be aware of how serious it is. MCAVHN does substance use and opioid use awareness. They have an awareness project where they educate the community members and youth on substance

Read the rest of **Reduction**
Over on Page 10

Poker benefit for Little Lake Firefighters on Saturday

With fire season coming up, it's a great time to support the volunteers of the Little Lake Firefighters Association at their Texas Hold 'Em Poker and Tri-Tip Dinner Benefit Tournament, set for this Saturday, April 27 at Sparetime Distribution, 300 East Commercial Street. Buy in is \$100. Signups 4 pm; game play starts at 5 pm; tri-tip dinner at 7 pm.

Proceeds to be used to purchase items for the volunteer firefighters in Willits, such as web gear and training props (propane props and fire extinguisher education) for our community. Tickets at the door, or stop by Willits Fire Station 54, 74 East Commercial Street, to get advance tickets.



Photos by Maureen Jennison

Above: The two contestants that will run for the 2024 title of Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart include Willits High School seniors, Catie Spackman, left, and Elena Arkelian, right. Ticket sales will begin soon; check www.WillitsFrontierDays.com for the schedule and info.

Back to a real race

Two candidates will compete for the Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart title and crown for the 98th annual event

For the last five years, the title of Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart was awarded to the solo contestant who ran. While they did indeed have to compete in all the usual aspects of the competition, even without a person contending against them, this year, the race will get back to a friendly competition, with two girls looking to win the crown.

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Elena Arkelian and Catie Spackman have both placed their cowgirl hats in the ring, looking to sell tickets, ride well, speak eloquently, and demonstrate their knowledge of rodeo which will earn them the title of 2024 Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart.

The contestants will start selling likely on May 10, and will have tickets to the California Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association events and the Junior Rodeos; the barbecue; the Pancake Breakfast, Truck Pulls, and the new Bulls and Broncs event, too. They also sell tickets for the Sweetheart Raffle which includes a large selection of great prizes, all donated by the community.

Money raised by the Sweethearts' ticket sales efforts not only goes to support the functioning of the Willits Frontier Days events, but the contestants also get to keep a portion of their sales. Many contestants over the years have worked hard, treating their run as a serious summer job, and have managed to earn several thousand dollars,

which they typically they put towards schooling, vehicles, or advancing their rodeo careers.

Since two contestants will be competing this year, the winner will also receive a custom saddle from Willits Frontier Days, a perk that has been removed during the solo-contestant years. She will also receive the traditional silver tiara, silver belt buckle, and silver spurs, as well as a sash and flowers, and she will be entrusted with the perpetual American Flag leather chaps which, for several years, have been signed and passed down from the previous Sweetheart to wear during the 4th of July activities.

While both contestants are available to reach by phone (see below), be on the lookout for them at upcoming public events where they can offer tickets and make sales in person, too.

Willits Frontier Days always wants to remind the public and encourage family and friends to tell persons interested in purchasing tickets to contact the contestants directly, as it is the sole responsibility of the contestants to sell the tickets themselves. Selling assistance is not permitted, and online campaigning is not encouraged to try to keep things as fair as possible to both contestants.

Read the rest of **Sweethearts**
Over on page 15



Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart Contestants Elena Arkelian, above, left, and below, right, with horse Gideon; and Catie Spackman, above right, and below left, with horse Cinder, each hope their riding, selling and speaking skills will earn them the win of the 2024 title.



Photos by Maureen Jennison



BOS supports mobile tiny homes

Annie Evarts
Reporter
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Mendocino County, like much of California, has a housing availability and affordability problem. Alternative housing concepts like tiny homes are one way other counties in the state have used to help correct the problem. Tiny homes, as we know them from popular culture, can be mobile. They're low-cost to build and maintain, and they're energy-efficient. They can make the path to homeownership significantly shorter. They can also be used as inexpensive rentals to generate a second income, and because their footprint is so small, they can easily be situated in a backyard.

Julia Krog, director of Planning and Building Services for Mendocino County, presented possible regulations for the construction of mobile tiny homes at the April 9 meeting of the board of supervisors. Presently, in Mendocino County, there is no process for permitting a tiny home on wheels as a residential dwelling. Though there are regulations for building a house that is very small, or "tiny."

Read the rest of **Tiny**
Over on Page 13

City seeks input on new loan program for housing rehab

Submitted by Willits Community Development

The City of Willits is seeking community input to develop an owner-occupied home rehabilitation revolving-loan program to offer low- or no-interest loans to homeowners making under 120% of the area's median income. [Editor's Note: Median income for Willits households was \$45,592 in 2022, according to the U.S. Census.]

Generally, the program will provide rehabilitation home loans for activities which will prevent deterioration and extend the lifespan of the home.

This new program is made possible by approximately \$550,000 in funding awarded to the City of Willits through the state's Housing and Community Development Permanent Local Housing Allocation Program.

The community meeting is Wednesday, May 1 from 6 to 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 111 East Commercial Street.

Read the rest of **Input**
Over on Page 13

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Opposes parole for Troy Harden

To the Editor:

An open letter to Governor Newsom and the members of the Board of Parole: My name is Kenneth J. Brown, I have been a lifelong citizen of Willits, California all my life.

I strongly disapprove of the parole of Troy Harden, in our community. This murderer, Troy Harden needs to spend the rest of his life in prison.

He should not be released in our community. I beg you to reconsider the parole of this murderer, Troy Harden.

Kenneth J. Brown, Willits

Thank you

To the Editor:

The Willits Basket Beaters NorCal Winter Charity Series, "Willits Finale," was held on April 13 and 14 at the Brooktrails Golf Course. Sherwood Firewise would like to thank the Willits Basket Beaters for selecting Sherwood Firewise to be the recipient of a generous donation from funds raised at the Willits Finale.

This donation will be used to provide CAL FIRE approved address signs for vets, disabled, and elderly residents of the Sherwood Corridor community.

We would like to acknowledge the event organizers – Willits Basket Beaters Disc Golf Club members Joseph Haggard, Derrick Robbins, Jason Cabral, and Mark McKey; volunteers Shaun Holub, River Haggard and Marcus Newby; and the staff at the Brooktrails Golf Course, for hosting this successful event.

Tracey Douglas,
Sherwood Firewise Steering Committee

Exciting news for Willits

Posted by Willits Community Development

We're thrilled to announce that the City of Willits has been awarded a grant of \$3,813,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy to support the construction of the Willits Rail with Trail Project, which is part of the Great Redwood Trail initiative.

The project entails the construction of a 1.6-mile Class 1 paved multi-use trail within the City of Willits. This trail will eventually become a vital part of the Great Redwood Trail, connecting communities and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Here's what you can expect from the Willits Rail with Trail Project:

- 10-foot-wide paved asphalt surface with 2-foot-wide shoulders, accommodating two-way bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian travel.

- Trail amenities including trailheads, benches, interpretive signage, resting areas, crossing improvements, waste and recycling receptacles, and lighting.

This project will not only enhance connectivity and accessibility in our community, but also promote health, wellness, and environmental stewardship.

Stay tuned for updates as we embark on this exciting journey toward a more connected and vibrant Willits!

The Rules: LETTERS

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

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

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City announces settlement with former WPD officer Natalie Higley

Submitted by the City of Willits

April 18, 2024 – The Willits City Council and former Willits Police Officer Natalie Higley entered into a settlement agreement, effective April 18, 2024, for the dismissal of Higley's lawsuit against the City of Willits in which she alleged that she suffered damages from alleged acts including gender and sexual discrimination in her brief employment with the city.

The City Council determined that the settlement, which avoids a potentially lengthy, uncertain, and expensive jury trial, is in the best interest of the community of Willits.

The council met in closed session on February 14, 2024, and by unanimous vote conditionally approved the proposed settlement agreement pending former officer Higley's execution of a general release agreement. The agreement is now fully executed.

Online workshop on local road plans, April 25

Submitted by MCOG

The Mendocino Council of Governments has hired a consultant to update Local Road Safety/ Action Plans for the County of Mendocino, and the cities of Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits.

These updated safety plans will enable local jurisdictions to enhance safety for all modes of transportation for all ages and abilities and will aid in seeking state and federal grant funding to implement priority safety projects.

MCOG invites the public to a virtual public workshop on Thursday, April 25, 2024, from 6 to 7:30 pm, to hear a presentation on the project and offer input. The presentation will cover Local Road Safety/ Action Plan goals, preliminary collision analysis findings, high injury networks, and the project's online outreach platform.

For Zoom meeting access, to provide online community input, and for additional information, visit the project website at <https://www.mendoroadsafetyplan.com/>.

Updating the Local Road Safety/Action Plans require public outreach in order to improve road safety and reduce traffic fatalities, and gathering feedback from the community can help ensure the updated plans address their concerns and needs.

Your input is essential for the success of the updated Local Road Safety/Action Plans. Public input is due by May 3.

This project is funded with state grant funds provided by Caltrans. Contact MCOG project manager Loretta Ellard at lellard@dbcteam.net or 707-234-3434 with any questions.

Savings Bank hosts shred events, May 9 in Willits

Submitted by SBMC

Savings Bank of Mendocino County and Integrity Shred have teamed up to help prevent identity theft by offering the public an opportunity to shred outdated confidential documents at four shred events around Mendocino County in May.

Bring up to three boxes, each no more than 35 pounds, of documents for safe, secure, on-site shredding.

Additionally, to help shred hunger, non-perishable food will be accepted at each event for local food banks.

Times are 9 am to 11 am for the following dates and locations:

Lakeport: Thursday, May 2 at Savings Bank, 290 South Main Street

Read the rest of **Shred** Over on page 15

'Clean Canvas Event' at City Park, April 27

Posted by City of Willits Community Development

Join us for the First Annual Clean Canvas Event, "Celebrating Earth & Art," on Saturday, April 27 from 11 am to 3 pm at Willits City Park.

Get ready for a day filled with creativity, environmental awareness, and community spirit! We're proud to partner with the Willits Chamber of Commerce, Willits Center for the Arts, Mendocino County Public Health, and our grantor Clean California to bring you this fantastic event! Please submit your artist, vendor and sponsor applications by Friday, April 19.

What to Expect:

- Educational Demonstrations and Vendors
- Sidewalk chalk painting with Earth Day themes (FREE for all ages and levels of artistic experience)
- Litter abatement education
- Art competition judging at 3 pm
- Opportunities to learn about re-use, recycling, and reducing consumption

Invite your friends and family to celebrate Earth and art with us at the tail end of Earth Week! Let's make a positive impact together!

PROCLAMATION OF THE MENDOCINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Recognizing April 22, 2024 as Earth Day

WHEREAS, The first Earth Day was proclaimed in 1970 in order to foster public awareness of the need to protect the environment and conserve resources; and

WHEREAS, the year 2024 represents the 54th anniversary of celebrating Earth Day and this year's Earth Day theme is "Planet vs Plastic." The first goal is to bring widespread awareness to the importance of ending plastic pollution by helping everyone understand the impacts of plastic pollution; and

WHEREAS, Plastics are the most common type of marine debris. More than 200 species have been documented consuming plastic, and it is estimated that at least 14 million tons end up in the ocean annually. The breakdown of larger plastics in our environment leads to microplastics that are found nearly everywhere in our world including in the human body. The impacts of single-use plastics on the environment and public health are widespread; and

WHEREAS, some things that you can do to celebrate this year's Earth Day theme include:

- Supporting our pollinators by bringing native bees and other pollinating creatures in to your home garden and backyard
- Cleaning up litter and plastic in your neighborhood
- Planting a tree
- Replacing your lawn with native plants
- Conserve Water
- Recycle your food waste so that it can become compost used in gardens and agriculture businesses,
- Look up fun activities with your family and friends and implement them year round; and

WHEREAS, the County of Mendocino values its partnership with the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee and all the organizations in our community that work to create an environmentally friendly Mendocino County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mendocino, hereby proclaims April 22, 2024, as:

"Earth Day"

Signed, Maureen Mulheren, chair, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors



Above, from left: Student volunteers helped prepare and dish out the pasta, sauce, salad, and bread. Billy "Mr. Billy" Hetherington handled the auctioneer duties with an amusing flair. The meal consisted of comfort food: spaghetti, sauce, salad, and bread.

At far left: The first WECS Gala since COVID was sold out and filled with parents, relatives, and students.

At left: This father and daughter had to decide whether to cut into this work of art by Jackie Cobbs, or just admire it.

Photos by Mathew Caine

WECS Gala

Student performers star in sold-out benefit

This year's Willits Elementary Charter School's Gala was an exercise in directed and ad lib insanity and fun, not unique in the annals of The Gala, but the new classes of youngsters created a sense of déjà vu while bringing a set of fresh faces to the proceedings.

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
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The full house at the Little Lake Grange raucously cheered on the performances of the kindergarten through fifth-grade budding instrumentalists as they took the stage with their ukuleles, guitars, and recorders to the delight of proud parents and other relatives. It didn't matter that not every note was hit perfectly or that an occasional obvious sour tone escaped the instruments, in the hands of these enthusiastic but inexperienced youth. The important thing was that they tried, and that under the guidance of long-time music teacher Tyler "Mr. B" Balthrop, students keep improving throughout their years in the school.

"Kindergarten did 'Pen Pineapple Apple Pen,' then they sang with first and second grade (who played recorders)," said Balthrop with obvious affection for his wards. "Kindergarten and first grade sang 'You Are My Sunshine,' and we got the whole audience to join in. Third and fourth grades played together, the third on recorders and fourth on ukuleles, and they played 'Norwegian Wood' by the Beatles. Fifth grade played guitars with the Beatles' 'Blackbird,'" Mr. B said.

The show did not end with the formal music presentations, as Mr. B and WECS Director Charlene Bredder had a surprise in store for the attendees. The movie screen was lowered, and a video began to play, the now-legendary South Korean dance hit, "Gangnam Style," to which the mass of kids danced and followed the video to varying degrees of success. Mr. B said the students had picked out the video.

Of course, the real reason for having the WECS Gala was to raise funds for all the existential needs of the Willits Elementary Charter School. Ongoing repairs, classroom and grounds maintenance, and many other aspects of running such a facility all require money. The Gala raised money through the sale of tickets, which included a comfort-food dinner of spaghetti, sauce, salad, and garlic bread (provided by the kitchen staff at the school and by student volunteers), a silent auction (with generous donations from local merchants), and the sale of beverages.

But, as usual, the most fun and lucrative food event of the evening was the Dessert Auction, deftly conducted by the middle- and high school theater instructor Billy ("Mr. Billy") Hetherington, who breezed through his duties as master of ceremonies and auctioneer.

The cakes and cookies and brownies, provided by parents, were an inspiring selection of white and chocolate cakes, iced with various creative designs of flowers, gummy worms, G.I. Joe action figures, and pinwheels.

"I almost just think that's a piece of art," pitched auctioneer Mr. Billy. "Some of these cakes are so impressively, beautifully, wonderfully done. What you see coming around now is a berries and cream cake. Vanilla cake with a cream cheese mousse. Fresh berries. None of that frozen stuff!," he said. [This cake went for \$90, after some furious bidding].

Read the rest of **Gala** Over on page 6

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"This one is like spring incarnate," Mr. Billy enthused. "A chocolate cake, delicately held together with vanilla cream cheese, butter cream frosting. Inundated with Gummy Worms. Pinwheels." [This cake sold for \$65].

In the end, it was all about the parents showing and giving their support to their kids, by supporting the school where the children spend a good portion of their day. "This is our first gala since COVID, since 2020, so it's been four years," said Bredder.

"It's a very exciting opportunity to be back together again as a community and to celebrate the school. The school year has been going very well. We implemented a new literacy program to ensure that all of our students can read more proficiently by the time they graduate. We have a new math curriculum which we are very excited about. We've implemented new math teaching methods," she said.

"Our theater year is going amazing. We're gearing up for our next show which will be a talent showcase on May 17," explained Hetherington. "We have some original pieces. Caspar Silveira is going to be debuting a couple songs on the album he is recording in my radio-film class. We have some Shakespeare. The middle school class is doing some incredibly funny scenes, and we have a monologue or two. It'll be a fun show. Pay what you can."

In the end, the proud and amused parents filling the Grange had a great time, as did the kids. Money was raised, and people left with their stomachs filled with tasty pasta and the desserts, which were generously shared around the room.



Above: All of the classes joined in on a rousing audience participation performance of "Gangnam Style." At right: The WECS fifth-grade class played "Blackbird" on the guitar. At far right: Music teacher Tyler "Mr. B" Balthrop introduced each of the WECS classes and their songs. At right, below: Nefara acting as "the Yanna White of cakes," showing the dessert entries throughout the audience. Below: Cake makes kids happy, and there was no shortage of baked desserts available for bid. Below, left: The WECS third- and fourth-grade classes collaborated on "Norwegian Wood," on ukulele and recorder at the WECS Gala.



CDFW urges public to leave deer fawns alone

Posted by CDFW

Late spring and early summer is the peak time for California's deer herds to give birth to fawns, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a reminder to well-intentioned people to not interact with the baby deer – even if they find one that appears to be abandoned.

Adult female deer often stash their fawns in tall grass or brush for many hours while they are out foraging for food. "If you care, leave them there!"

"Each year dozens of fawns across the state have their lives shortened by well-meaning residents," said Axel Hunnicutt, Siskiyou unit biologist with CDFW's Northern Region. "For the first several weeks of their lives, young deer are left for extended periods by their mother as a survival strategy. People who interfere with this process always mean well but end up disrupting nature and the life of both mother and fawn."

Each year, CDFW and wildlife rehabilitation facilities are called to assist with fawns that have been removed from the wild by concerned members of the public recreating outdoors. With limited long-term placement options in zoos or other wildlife sanctuaries, the animals often have to be euthanized since they lack the survival skills to be released back into the wild and can become dangerous and difficult to keep as they become bigger.

To report an injured, sick or suspected orphaned fawn, contact your local CDFW regional office directly. Mendocino County is part of CDFW's Northern Region 1, serving Del Norte, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity counties, which can be reached at: (530) 225-2300 or askregion1@wildlife.ca.gov

Read the rest of **Leave Me Alone** | Over on page 7



Petite Jessie

Jessie is a beautiful and petite tabby girl, just over 2 years old, looking for forever love. Jessie is an indoors-only cat and currently enjoying the comforts of a foster home, where she settled in quickly, feeling very relaxed and happy, chasing feathers and mouse toys. She loves being near her people. She'll sit next to you on the couch and will sleep at the foot of your bed... but she's not overly needy. Jessie is a sweet girl who would be a wonderful companion in an adult home or with a family that has older kids (14+).

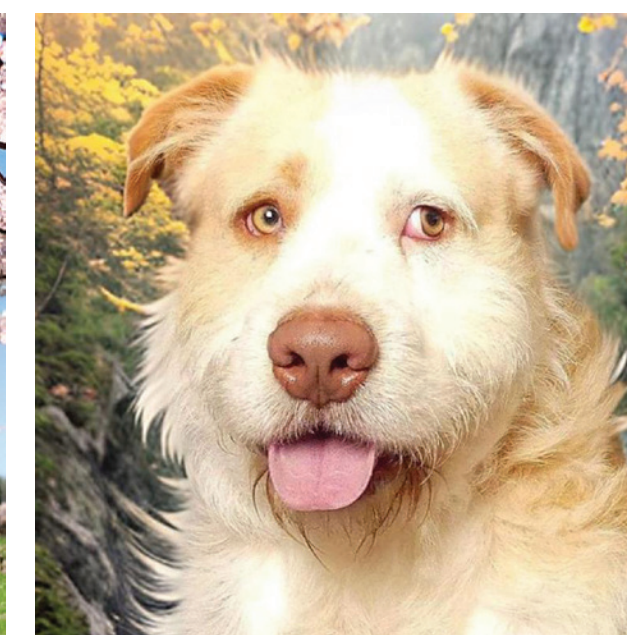
To learn more about Jessie, or to view other adoptable animals, visit www.milofoundation.org or the Milo Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary, west of Willits, is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment.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



Lovely Bobbie Sue

Bobbie Sue, a 2 year old female German shepherd, is sweet, happy and affectionate. At 70 delightful pounds, she's easy-going, has great leash manners, and she knows "Sit." Bobbie is mellow indoors and would make a great family dog. This lovely dog may like the company of a canine friend in her forever home.

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, is open to the public from noon to 5 pm Tuesday through Friday and 10 am to 3 pm (closed for lunch from 1 to 1:30 pm) on Saturdays. Make sure to pre-fill out the adoption application available at www.mendoanimalshelter.com. Call 707-467-6453 for more information.



Sweet Wooly

Meet our new friend Wooly! This sweet mixed-breed boy, about 1 year and 8 months old, is in search of a home where love is plentiful. Wooly is a big boy at 69 pounds, and sure is unique looking. He walks nicely on leash and is seriously adorable. You won't want to miss this special guy. Applications are being submitted now! Get yours in at mendocinohumanesociety.com. Contact our dog team at 707-485 0123, info@hsmc.org, or dogteam@hsmc.org with any questions about Wooly.

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

The rest of **Leave Me Alone** | From page 6

100+ Women Strong Inland Gathering

May 2

Submitted by Heidi Dickerson, for 100+ Women Strong

This year's 100+ Women Strong of Inland Mendocino County gathering is set for Thursday, May 2, from 5:30 to 7 pm at Dancing Crow Winery on Highway 101 between Ukiah and Hopland.

The three non-profits who will present at the gathering are: CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), the Historical Society of Mendocino County, and the Mendocino County Spay-Neuter Assistance Program.

Attendance is open to anyone who wants to participate in giving a financial boost to an inland Mendocino County non-profit. Refreshments are provided by the Caring Kitchen, a non-profit which creates nutritious meals and delivers them to cancer patients in the area. Dancing Crow wine and other beverages will be available.

At the 100+ Women Strong Gathering, each non-profit is allocated five minutes to make a presentation and five minutes for the audience to ask questions. After hearing from each of the speakers, everyone who has made \$100 donation will cast a vote for the non-profit of their choice. The non-profit with the most votes will walk away with \$10,000. Any donations above \$10,000 will be split between the other two non-profits.

CASA is a program of volunteers who are screened and trained to look out for the best interests of abused and neglected children of the community who are in the court system. The program has been in effect since 1994 and serves 60 children with continued care and attention until their case is concluded.

The Historical Society of Mendocino County has been a treasure trove of archival and other research materials about Mendocino County since 1956. Housed at a Victorian home on Dora Street in Ukiah, left to the HSMC in 1967 by the family of Judge William D. L. Held, the public resource is dedicated "to the preservation of archival materials relating to county and state history." In 1972, the HSMC built and donated the Mendocino County Museum to the county.

SNAP, the Mendocino Spay-Neuter Program non-profit, is dedicated "solely to offering affordable spay/neuter alternatives for dogs and cats in the hopes of bringing an end to the needless suffering they endure as a result of overpopulation." The all-volunteer organization holds spay and neuter clinics at Mendocino Animal Hospital. More than 800 dogs and cats are treated each year.

100+ Women Strong is an inclusive all-volunteer group. Anyone interested in attending the Gathering and hearing from three non-profits doing indispensable work in our community is welcome. To register, each attendee pledges \$100 on the 100+ Mendocino Women page at the Community Foundation of Mendocino County website, <https://communityfound.org/community/leadership-projects/100-women-strong-inland-mendocino> – hit the Donate button.

All previous donors to 100 Women Strong of Inland Mendocino County, who have not done so already, must redo their contribution information on the Community Foundation link. Pledging before arrival is high priority. But checks will be accepted at the venue.

Read the rest of **100 Women** | Over on page 11



Above: 100+ Women Strong volunteers gather for a photo.



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

the child into their family and embrace their fears, replacing them with love and a sense of belonging to something bigger than the bully who is creating that fear and a self-image of inferiority.

BACA has been proven successful in several areas. According to a study in the International Journal of Evaluation and Program Planning, "A four-year independent study by professionals in the field has revealed that BACA children achieve a statistical significance in: improved self-confidence, diminished regressive behavior, increased feeling of safety, empowerment to testify, better communication, reduced feelings of guilt, decreased negative behaviors, a sense of belonging, independence." The entire conclusion to the study can be found at: <https://bacaworld.org/>.

An estimated one-in-four children experience abuse, be it physical or mental, both equally as destructive. Mendocino County has a higher incidence of abuse than many in California. The Mendocino chapter of BACA was formed in 2014 and has been working tirelessly, always ready to empower children to be the best version of themselves. The organization began under the aegis of a licensed clinical social worker from Brigham Young University. BACA has grown into an international organization. There are over 200 chapters in the United States and chapters in Canada, England, Spain, Australia, Iceland and more.

To donate to BACA or to find further information, visit <https://california.bacaworld.org/mendocino-county-chapter/>. Their hotline number to report abuse and get the organization involved is 707-841-1354.

Children do not grow up in a vacuum. Their lives are shaped by their environment. Children need positive role models and a sense of empowerment and belonging and most importantly, love. The bikers of BACA help to provide them with a chance to mature, while belonging to something bigger than themselves and the people who would destroy their feelings of self-worth.

Above, from left: Preacher is president of the Willits chapter of BACA. Joker passes out literature that informs people about BACA. Hulk is a biker who can't help but enjoy helping kids. Virginia Jorge has been with the club since its early days and is also president of the Senior Center board.

At right: Pippen is this biker's favorite Peanut character, and also his chosen road name.

At right: Chaps joined BACA because she was concerned about the high instance of child abuse in the county.

At bottom: Longtime member Bones is the agency and child liaison, responsible for coordinating many of the actions.

Photos by Mathew Caine



A beautiful baby fawn curled up in the grass. Photo courtesy U.S. Department of the Interior, taken by Tom Koerner at the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota.

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Obituary

Neva Williams Hatfield

Neva Williams Hatfield passed away peacefully at her home in Willits, California on February 27, 2024. Neva was born in Oak Grove, Louisiana on October 22, 1938, to Warren and Georgia Williams.

In 1951, the family relocated to California where Neva lived a life full of adventure, resilience, and love. Neva was a devoted employee at Montgomery Wards, as a cashier at Star Super Market, and later as a secretary at Willits Tire Center.

Neva enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. She loved to sew, and she did so for family and lots of friends. She was a beloved daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, and friend. Her tough and compassionate spirit touched the hearts of many, and she will be deeply missed.

She leaves behind her husband, Ned (Sonny) Hatfield, son Kenny (Tabitha) Knight, stepson Steve (Janice) Hatfield, stepdaughters Angie Hatfield and Karla (Jim) VanHagen, grandchildren Matia (Dave) Gerstenkorn and Mandy (HB) Albright, step grandchildren Brian, Christopher, Joshua, Justin, Steven, and Ashley, and great-grandchildren Mayson and Silas Albright.

She is also survived by her sister Peggy Bloomquist, brother-in-law Nick Durupt, and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister Mary Durupt.

A graveside service honoring Neva's life will be held at the Willits Cemetery on April 27, 2024, at 11:30 am.

<p>BEST OF LAKE & MENDOCINO 2024</p> <p>Joseph Iaccino, DC, MS Chiropractor, Lakeview</p>	<p>BEST OF LAKE & MENDOCINO 2024</p> <p>Anne Martin-Ko, MD Pediatrician, Hillside</p>	<p>BEST OF LAKE & MENDOCINO 2024</p> <p>Steven C. Wirth, MD Family Physician</p>
<p>BEST OF LAKE & MENDOCINO 2024</p> <p>Family Physician Hillside, Dora Street, Little Lake, Lakeview</p>		<p>BEST OF LAKE & MENDOCINO 2024</p> <p>Medical Facility Hillside, Dora Street, Little Lake, Lakeview</p>

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Clockwise from above, left: Junior Officer Eva was able to experience a day of a Willits Police officer during fun 'Cop for a Day' event, including checking out the interior of the cruiser. Eva and her family pose with members of the Willits Police Department. Eva gets a tour of one of the department's vehicles. Traffic stops are common for the WPD, and Eva gets practice, with the help of Officer Gale, to approach the offending vehicle, and with filling out some paperwork in the department's parking lot. Eva waves from the passenger's seat as she cruises down Main Street in a Willits Police Department vehicle. Officer Gale and Eva chat in matching uniforms by a police cruiser.

Junior Officer Eva is 'Cop For A Day' at WPD

Posted by Willits Police Department

On April 17, 2024, the Willits Police Department welcomed Junior Officer Eva to be a Cop For A Day. Eva is 15 years old and has aspired to become a police officer and loves interacting with our officers. Over the past several months, Eva has become a great joy to all officers who love seeing and talking with her around town. Eva suffers from a rare disorder which limits her mobility. Nevertheless, this does not slow Eva down nor stop her from reaching her goals.

Recently, the Willits Police Department was made aware of her desire to join our police force. It is a great honor that such a kind, loving, and inspirational young woman would look to the Willits Police Department to spread her joy. Eva's application as a Junior Police Officer was accepted, and she began her patrol duties.

Eva arrived in full uniform and was ready to hit the streets. Eva rode passenger with Officer Gale, and made her way through town guarding against crime. Given Willits' beautiful community, Eva spent much of her time spreading her joy by waving at everyone. Eva spent most of the day letting people off with a stern warning, however this did not stop her from writing her first traffic enforcement citation.

Eva assisted Officer Gale with conducting a traffic stop in front of the Willits Justice Center. After contacting the driver and occupants, Eva believed the best course of action was to issue a traffic ticket. Eva conducted her very first traffic stop and citation all at the same time.

To keep up with what's happening at the WPD, follow the "Willits Police Department" page on Facebook.



Ruth McLarty, MD
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AdventistHealth.org/RMcLarty



Cristina V. Cueto, MD
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Dr. McLarty, PhD, is a skilled, board-certified general surgeon, caring for ages 2 and older with such common conditions as cholecystitis, diverticulitis, bowel obstructions and hernias. Dr. McLarty also specializes in colorectal surgery.

Dr. Cueto, is a skilled, board-certified general surgeon, and speaks both English and Spanish to best care for patients ages 18 and older. Some common conditions she treats are biliary disease, hernias, benign and malignant diseases of the colon and small bowel, soft tissue conditions and diseases of the breast.

Together, this experienced general surgeon team is available and ready to serve our community.

