

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
 Donations Accepted Edition No. 54 Thursday, May 15, 2014

School board rejects new bond

Mike A'Dair
 Reporter
 mike@willitsweekly.com

The Willits Unified School District trustees have unanimously rejected issuing a new bond to pay off the July 2010 Bond Anticipation Note issued in connection with Measure B.

The school board paid \$4.2 million in October 2013 to pay down the \$4.9 million BAN.

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

Willits High School accreditation stands

Mike A'Dair
 Reporter
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Threats to suspend the accreditation of Willits High School have been overturned, and the school will retain its six-year accreditation, Superintendent Patricia Johnson and Willits High School Principal Jeffrey Ritchley confirmed at a May 7 school board meeting.

Johnson said the threat to remove WHS's accreditation came from Samuel B. Hill, a longtime

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

Suspicious deaths in Laytonville

Sheriff's investigators are calling the deaths of two unidentified men discovered at a Woodman Creek Road residence east of Laytonville "suspicious" and a "possible homicide."

The men's bodies were found Monday morning by an unidentified person, who summoned sheriff's deputies. The bodies were discovered in a greenhouse containing some 180 marijuana plants between 6 inches and 1 foot tall, according to Sheriff's spokesman Capt. Greg Van Patten. Two travel trailers also were found on the property.

Both bodies were in "advanced stages of decomposition," Van Patten said.

Forensic autopsies were performed Tuesday in an attempt to identify the victims and establish the cause of the men's deaths.

Anyone with information that could aid sheriff's detectives in their investigation is urged to call the Sheriff's Office Tip Line at 707-234-2100.

This report based on press releases from the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office



Let there be stripes!

Caltrans completed its long-awaited re-striping project at the Highway 101 bottleneck Monday night. Crews painted lines on the now two-lanes-all-the-way-to-the-light highway, which was re-paved Monday night a week ago.

Caltrans spokesman Phil Frisbie explained that the reason for the week's delay was to allow the asphalt to "flash off" some of the lighter hydrocarbons – "that's the smell of fresh asphalt" – so that the asphalt gets a little bit harder, and the paint sticks better.

Drivers in the last week have been seen struggling to get back

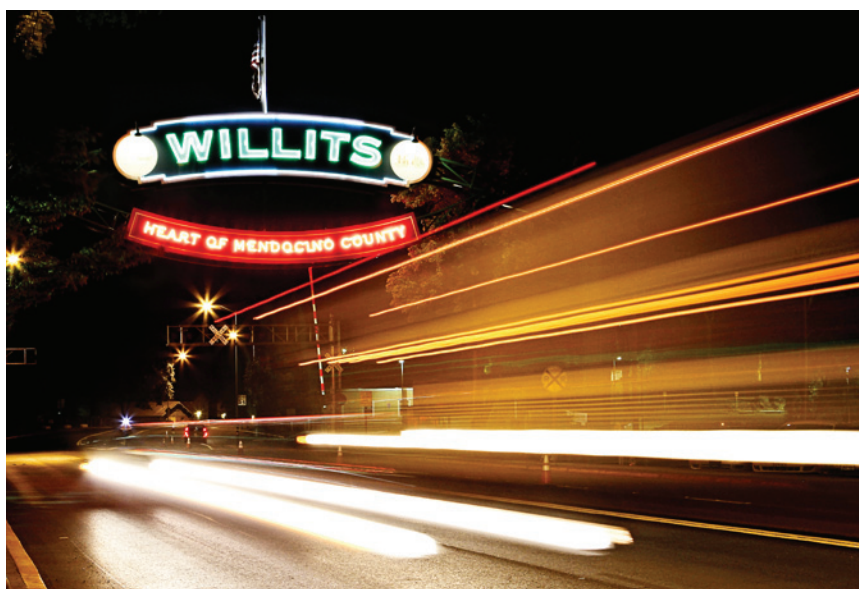
Read the rest of **Main Street**
 Over on Page 15

Above: The "Striper" passes under the arch, laying down the "skips" between the northbound lane and the Highway 20 left-turn lane Monday night.

Right: "Stripes" of all kinds were present on Main Street in the dark midnight hours, including these streaks left by the big dirt-moving trucks as they passed by the camera set to a long exposure.

Bottom: One of the signs alerting drivers to the new lane arrangement. Additional permanent signage can be seen on Main Street stretching between Holly Street and Highway 20.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Bypass Progress: One Year Later

An aerial view of the construction: May 12, 2013 and May 11, 2014
 See more photos on page 13



A look south across Commercial Street in 2013 (above) and 2014 (below). The Horsemen's Arena can be seen in the center of the images, and the Coleman Ranch is just out of view on the left side of both pictures. The elevated freeway's new construction can be seen in the bottom image.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Brooktrails vs. Willits court date 'vacated'

Talks continue in hopes of settlement

Brooktrails General Counsel Christopher Neary said Tuesday night that representatives from Brooktrails Township and the City of Willits are now having "intensive settlement discussions," but that no settlement has yet been reached.

Neary said that a court date associated with the trial in the lawsuit between Willits and Brooktrails, which had been scheduled to begin later this week, has been vacated.

Neary declined to comment further.

Willits City Manager Adrienne Moore confirmed that discussions are taking place.

"We've been engaged in ongoing settlement discussions," Moore said. "The city remains hopeful that a settlement will be reached."

– Mike A'Dair

Candidates look good at Grange forum

Mike A'Dair
 Reporter
 mike@willitsweekly.com

Little Lake Grange hall was packed May 7 to hear the four candidates for Third District supervisor explain why people should vote for them.

Each candidate – Clay Romero, Tom Woodhouse, Holly Madrigal and Hal Wagenet – answered nine questions from event organizers and eight questions from the public in a well-organized, well-orchestrated event.

"This is going to be a close election," said forum moderator, Sheriff Tom Allman. "So thank you very much for coming out tonight"

Read the rest of **Forum**
 Over on Page 15

City considers raising 'pool party' fees

Zack Cinek
 Reporter
 zack@willitsweekly.com

Temperatures are warming up. Want to go for a swim? Willits Municipal Pool is getting ready for pool season, with a push to hire lifeguards and front desk help for the summer months.

The city is looking to fill jobs for an office assistant, seven total certified lifeguard posts and five certified swim instructors.

The city is considering increasing fees charged for

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

It's time to get fire safe for summer

Zack Cinek
 Reporter
 zack@willitsweekly.com

It's a drier than normal spring this year, and Little Lake Fire Department Chief Carl Magann is advising area residents to cut tall grass and weeds for fire safety.

"The unusually warm spring weather combined with our lower than average rainfall totals, means we are certain our annual growth of vegetation will see early drying accompanied by an increased risk of fire for the 2014 fire season," Magann wrote last week.

The Little Lake Fire Protection District encourages homeowners and property managers to

Read the rest of **Fire Safe**
 Over on Page 4

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Above left: Tam Adams of Emandal shows off a black and white summer outfit.



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Above, right: The crowd at last year's Tea & Togs benefit.

At right: Model Angie Rodriguez of Willits walks down the runway at last year's show.

Far right: Linda Swensen from San Francisco, who came up to Willits to volunteer for the tea, holds a tray full of sandwiches.

Photos by Dick Graham



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Afternoon Tea: British food tradition of tea, sandwiches, scones and cakes.

Togs: Clothing, especially a set of clothes and accessories for a specified use.

This will be the third year of the Harrah Senior Center's "Tea & Togs" fashion show and afternoon tea. On Saturday, May 17, from noon until about 2 pm, there will be a gathering of (mostly) ladies enjoying little sandwiches, cakes, tarts, scones, fresh fruit and tea - with their own favorite teacups from home.

The tables will be dressed in white tablecloths with fresh flowers. This will be followed by a fashion show of some fun finds from the Senior Center Thrift Store, modeled by local ladies and girls to the accompaniment of Evelyn Swift on piano and commentary by Audrey Romer.

Admission is \$12. There will also be a raffle of four lovely baskets. All proceeds will go to support our Outreach program at the Senior Center. The Thrift Store will be open after the event for some terrific bargain shopping.

Call Willits Senior Center for reservations of large groups (six or more) at 459-6826 or go by the center at 1501 Baechtel Road to purchase tickets. Tickets should also be available at the door.

- submitted by **Kathy Neff for the Harrah Senior Center**



An aerial look at the bypass construction process

One Year Later

Above: The northern interchange area looking south towards town. The current Highway 101 runs along the right side of the images. Left: the view on May 12, 2013. Right: The view on May 11, 2014.

Right: A view of the current southern interchange area, looking northwest from the east side of the construction. Highway 101 comes from the left side of the image and wraps around back to the left of the construction.

Below: The southern interchange area looking south over the construction. The current Highway 101 comes from the right side of the images and heads south. The divide between north and south lanes of the current highway can be seen at the center top of each image.

Photos by Maureen Moore



See more images online at <http://photographpress.zenfolio.com/bypasstour>

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- Supervisors Carre Brown, Dan Hamburg & John McCowen
- Supervisors (ret.) Richard Shoemaker & Kendall Smith
- Fort Bragg Mayor Dave Turner
- Fort Bragg City Councilmember Doug Hammerstrom
- Ukiah Vice Mayor Mary Anne Landis
- Ukiah City Councilmember Benj Thomas
- Willits Mayor Holly Madrigal
- California League of Conservation Voters
- Mendocino County Teachers
- Sierra Club (partial list)

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Last Wednesday, Linda Buletti stood shaded beneath towering redwoods and watched as City of Willits employee Curtis Collicott hung a string of globe lights across Babcock Park's metal arch. The lights are the final touches on a multi-year community effort to restore the South Main Street park that commemorates Willits' beloved Dr. Raymond Babcock.

Kate Maxwell
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The park, originally created after his death in 1961, is located outside the hospital Babcock helped start and next to where his office once stood. A previous re-beautification effort led by Dusty Whitney in 1990 included the installation of the arch, along with planting bulbs and other landscaping, also via community fundraising efforts.

Over the last two years the restoration project has been aided through the coordination efforts of volunteers such as Buletti, Tom Woodhouse and Larry

Stranske, contributions from Dave Watts of Sanhedrin Nursery, who provided the plants around the fountain and drip irrigation, and community members who donated to the cause.

"In a town our size, it doesn't take much – just a few people helping a bit makes a huge difference," says Buletti. A private donor provided the lights, which are LED and low-wattage, with resin bulbs to withstand outdoor conditions. They will be on a timer to go on at dusk and will vary with seasonal changes.

The hardy plants and timers for irrigation, lights, and fountain, along with recycled water, mean the park is very low-maintenance. The only cost to the city has been the installation of an electrical box for the lights and affixing the lighting, done by Collicott along with city workers Jerry Campbell and Tom Bond.



City workers install new globe lights on the Babcock Park metal arch.

Photos by Kate Maxwell



Furry Friend

Hoping for a home Favorite George

Meet the very lively and handsome George! He is a 2 1/2-year-old American Bulldog/Boxer mix and a very smart and playful guy. He came to live with us last December, as he was found wandering alone near the railroad tracks – and sadly nobody came looking for him. He is one of our volunteer and staff favorites, and when you go to greet him he does a very endearing bow for you! George absolutely loves going for walks, and he walks right by your side.

Since he can get excitable at times, we would recommend a home with older children. George is already neutered, so he is ready to go home the same day you meet and adopt him. He has been here way too long, and we would love for him to be adopted soon! We hope you will come meet this very happy and affectionate guy to see if he would make a great addition to your home!

The Ukiah Animal Shelter is located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, and our adoption hours are Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.mendoshelterpets.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. Info: Adoption Coordinator, Katherine Houghtby at 707-467-6453 or houghtbyk@co.mendocino.ca.us.

Photo by Katherine Houghtby



Off and Running!

Sweetheart contest officially started May 1

Get your tickets for this year's Willits Frontier Days events now

This year's contestants:

Haley Schuck, 485-4043, haleyschuck@willitsunified.com. Read about her in Willits Weekly's April 10 edition.

Emily Leishman, 354-0260. Read about her in Willits Weekly's April 17 edition.

Calayan Knight, 841-6343, calayansweetheartcontestant.14@gmail.com. Read about her in Willits Weekly's April 24 edition.



Haley Schuck



Emily Leishman



Calayan Knight