

Willits Weekly

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Fire season is coming

Mike A'Dair
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"Fire season isn't here yet, but it's just around the corner," said Deputy Fire Chief Jon Noyer during a Friday interview in Brooktrails.

Noyer said it was time for homeowners to undertake "defensible space" work around their homes – clearing out brush, grass and downed wood for a distance of 100 feet from residences.

According to Noyer, PG&E has provided grants for up to five Brooktrails residents so they can pay for defensible space work to be done. The grants are designed to defray defensible space costs for the elderly and for low-income people. Interested parties are asked to call the Brooktrails Fire Department at 459-4441.

Read the rest of **Fire**
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City-Brooktrails lawsuit tab about \$1.3 million

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The "Brooktrails versus City of Willits" lawsuit cost the city \$861,000 in attorney's fees, according to a report from the city finance director.

The amount is higher if costs for arbitrators and expert witnesses are factored in. Total cost of the suit is estimated at about \$1.3 million, the report stated.

Council members last Wednesday approved an extra \$100,000 to cover legal fees. The additional money was on the council's consent calendar for routine business.

Read the rest of **Lawsuit**
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Pot grower found dead; foul play not suspected

Carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected in the death of a 22-year-old Southern California man last week at a remote north county marijuana-growing operation.

Results of a Friday autopsy and blood and toxicology tests have yet to be revealed, but Mendocino County sheriff's Sgt. Shannon Barney said investigators could find "no obvious signs of foul play."

The body of Gerald Vitelli of Fullerton was discovered in the rear of a vehicle Thursday evening at about 7 p.m. after Mendocino

Read the rest of **Grower**
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Classic cars in front of Baechtel Creek Inn, the host of Saturday night's "Classic Metal" Chamber of Commerce mixer.

Photos by Maureen Moore

It's Memorial Day weekend, and Willits will be celebrating with the 34th annual Community Festival & Car Show Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm at the Rec Grove.

Veterans will be honored at 12 noon, as the American Legion Post 174 Color Guard presents "The Colors" at 12 pm, with the National Anthem and Jeff Whitby playing bagpipes.

Classic cars will be on display all day, with the awards ceremony at 3 pm. The Lions Club will be serving their "engine starting" breakfast in the park from 7 to 10 am.

Several members of the Willits Shifters car club – who help host the Willits Chamber of Commerce event – showed off their fancy rides at the Baechtel Creek Inn Tuesday afternoon. Shifters President Neil Orr, Jr. brought the well-

loved Willits Police Car, a 1954 Ford Crestline "that has been made into a Ford Mainline," the car aficionados said. "We pretty much duplicated the original Willits Police Car," Orr said, including making a decal modeled after the real "Willits Police Department" plates riveted onto the doors of the early law enforcement vehicles.

"Twelve of us spent six years of Wednesday nights restoring this car," Shifters member Jim Montalvo laughed. "We took every nut and bolt apart. Everything in this car is new. We put a Thunderbird '57 engine in it." But there's still more work to do: the red

police light on the top doesn't revolve. "We've got to tear

Read the rest of **Memorial** | Over on Page 13

Community Festival & Car Show Memorial Day Weekend in Willits

By Jennifer Poole



Clockwise from above: Willits Chamber of Commerce's Lynn Kennelly and Baechtel Creek Inn's Jan Rodriguez pose with handcuffs and a baton in front of the Willits Police Department car. Willits Shifters members displaying their classic cars: Marlin Press in his new Shelby Cobra 65 kit car; Neil Orr, Jr., driving the 1954 WPD police car; the burgandy convertible Shelby Cobra; Craig Styles in a 1964 Chevrolet Chevelle El Camino; and Jim Montalvo in his 1970 Plymouth Cuda.



REACH flights begin despite legal wrangle

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REACH Air Medical Services' red EC135 helicopter and crew is making flights from Elys Field, delivering patients from hospital to hospital and responding to 911 calls.

The helicopter began working from the airport last week. REACH had gained approval from the City of Willits in March to lease space for its operations.

"We moved the Ukiah aircraft up to the Willits airport on May 12," REACH Vice President of Business Relations Anna Blair said.

In January the Santa Rosa-based medical helicopter firm announced

Read the rest of **REACH**
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Water: How it works in Willits

Ron Orenstein
Contributing Writer

Part 2

Last time, I presented a brief overview of the City of Willits water system, touching on some of its components, the water holding capacity, and a little bit about some of the issues and problems that the city faces trying to assure a reliable, safe supply of water to city water customers. Now we'll talk about another aspect of the water equation: paying for everything!

It's one of those unfortunate "Facts of Life" that everything costs something; nothing is free, and part of providing things is figuring out how to pay for

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

Garbage

City still grappling with mixed organic waste

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Negotiations continue between the city and Solid Waste of Willits, which are in the process of bargaining for terms of a new garbage-hauling services contract.

The city and Franklin Avenue-based Solid Waste dickered in recent months over what to do with green waste, rates, contract details and whether or not to include Cold Creek Compost in the deal.

Read the rest of **Garbage**
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Board of Supervisors Report

By Mike A'Dair, reporter, Willits Weekly

Homeless avoid count

This year's census of the number of homeless people living in Mendocino County has yielded unusual results. According to reports from two count coordinators, homeless people were aggressive and non-cooperative, and in several instances had abandoned long-established camps on the day of the count. Possibly as a result, fewer homeless people in this county were counted than in a similar count taken two years ago.

The "Point in Time" count taken

Read the rest of **Count**
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Supes honor Judi Bari

Judi Bari, the Earth First! activist and a leader in the so-called "Timber Wars" that gripped Mendocino County from the late 1980s to mid-1990s, was honored Tuesday with a proclamation by the board of supervisors.

Bari and her companion Darryl Cherney were injured when a bomb exploded in their car in Oakland on May 24, 1990. Both Bari and Cherney staunchly denied having had prior knowledge the bomb was in their car. They claimed the bomb was planted there.

Read the rest of **Bari**
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BID framework starts to crumble

A campaign to block the reauthorization of Mendocino County's Business Improvement District has torn a hole in efforts on part of the board of supervisors to revamp the governing structure of the county's tourism industry.

The protest campaign surfaced Tuesday, when supervisors acknowledged hotel and inn owners in Fort Bragg and Point Arena had submitted letters protesting adoption of the BID.

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

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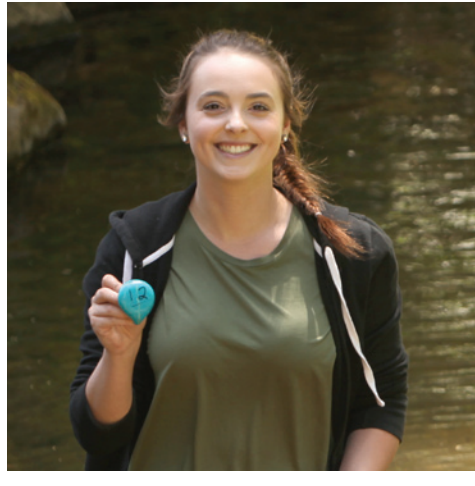
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Ducky Derby

Above, from left: Jorden Elliott holds the first-place duck; Tori Troum holds the second-place duck; Jorden holds the third-place duck; Robin Leler holds the last-place duck.

Left: Senior helpers Tori, Annie, Andrew, duck master Robin, Kira, Izabel, Jorden and Antonio.

Below: Seniors help guide the ducks downstream.

Since 1993, the Willits Sober Grad Committee has held an annual "Ducky Derby" fundraiser. In the derby, sponsored and numbered ducks float downstream towards a finish line to raise money for the alcohol-free graduation night party held every year at the Community Center.

Prizes are awarded to the first three finishers, and to the final duck to cross the finish line. This year, duck #145, sponsored by Tom Peterson, won first place and \$200; duck #347 took second place and won sponsor Sandi Young \$100, and duck #12, sponsored by Jennifer Barrett, won third place and earned \$50. The last place duck, #147, was sponsored by Dean Bauman, who won two nights at Ruth and Mike Dell'Ara's beautiful guest house in Caspar on the Mendocino Coast, along with a dinner.

Open House May 23rd 9am—3pm

Golden Rule Mobile Village Space #36

\$79,000

In the beautiful valley of Ridgewood Ranch sits the Golden Rule Mobile Village senior park. This beautifully maintained 2002 manufactured home has a new Trex deck off the master suite, new appliances, is recently painted and sits on the outer circle of the park with a spectacular view of the ranch from the back deck. Enjoy the peacefulness of this park in a beautiful home with tons of natural light.




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Several seniors from the Class of 2015 came to the Brooktrails Golf Course to carry on the tradition this year, and help wrangle the 400 ducks down the creek. Seniors included Antonio Amador, Izabel Hageman, Jorden Elliott, Andrew Hopper, Hailey Riley, Annie Romberg, Brandon Slater, Tori Troum and Kira Wear.

Heading the volunteers and donning the "duck master" hat was Robin Leler, who is the keeper and counter of the ducks and also does the annual pre-float to ensure all the "contestants" are in top floating shape before the race.

Monies earned from the sale of the ducks totaled a net about of \$1,206 towards the committee's annual goal of \$25,000. "Things are looking good thus far," said Sober Grad's Joyce Waters. "We're hoping donations continue to come in from the Community Letter, as well as other donations that make it all possible."

The money goes to help put on the graduation-night party offering new grads a safe place to spend and celebrate their big night and, of course, to help pay for all the prizes and swag given to the attendees.

The party will be held on June 11, and runs from 9:30 pm to 4 am. Attendees are required to stay the entire time to be eligible for prizes. Games, movies, henna, photos, food, casino tables and more all are available to help pass the time and to ensure fun is had by all who come.

Several \$1,000 cash prizes are given at the end of the night, along with big-ticket prizes that have included (in the past) recliners, mini-fridges and iPods.

Any adult who wants to come attend as a chaperone or to help decorate (starting at 9 am on June 11) or to clean up (starting at 4 am on June 12) is welcome to contact Willits Sober Grad to sign up or for more info. Call 459-0439 or email willitssobergrad@gmail.com. — Maureen Moore



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At left: above: At the finish line, the scramble to catch all the fourth-place through 399th-place ducks ensues.

At left: Ducks make their way down the "rapids" at the Brooktrails Golf Course creek. Photos by Maureen Moore

Lost Cats

I lost my cats
while taking them
to the East Hill Vet.
Clinic in Willits.
Spook ran in the
field to the right of
the clinic, Blue
Kitty ran across the
street on East Hill
Road under the
brown fence.
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see them!!




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