

Willits Weekly

Online & Print

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

Donations Accepted Edition No. 58 **Thursday, June 12, 2014**



WHS has turned a corner

Superintendent Johnson says

Mike A'Dair

Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

Willits Unified School District Superintendent Patricia Johnson says she is feeling optimistic about the future of Willits High School, despite the recent mass resignation of the school's leadership team and a surprising number of letters questioning the direction the school is taking.

"I think [Willits High] is in a period of transition," Johnson said. "I think next year will definitely be better than this year. We have a new administrator, who is still trying to consider what the culture was at the school, and what it is. I think

Read the rest of **Johnson**

Over on Page 11

Caltrans moving Oil Well Hill power lines

Zack Cinek

Reporter
zack@willitsweekly.com

The sweet scents of Douglas fir trees, churned-up dirt and diesel exhaust were in the air on Oil Well Hill recently as contractors worked to relocate power lines from the site of Caltrans' potential borrow pit.

The contractor intends to take 900,000 cubic yards of dirt for fill at the northern interchange either from the site atop Oil Well Hill or from sawmill property north of Willits.

The California Highway Patrol closed off a north-

Read the rest of **Oil Well**

Over on Page 13

In Willits: Business license and building report

Zack Cinek

Reporter
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Permits have been obtained for construction of three new homes in Willits, according to a City Hall report on new building licenses.

Building permits were taken out for new single-family homes at 140 Haehl Creek Drive, 190 Haehl Creek Court and 409 Grove Street, the monthly report from Building Inspector John Sherman stated.

Whole-house remodeling

Read the rest of **Business**

Over on Page 11



The "Charlies," from left: Charles Christopher, Christopher Charles, Charles Richard and Charley Addisyn.

Photo by Maureen Moore

For the Fathers

Father's Day 2014 is this Sunday, and Willits Weekly is once again featuring fathers in our annual photo collage. Our readers submitted their own favorite pictures of the dads in their lives, along with love and well-wishes: see more photos on page 8.

The Lamprich family, above, gathered for a photo full of "Charlies" on a recent hot summer evening in Willits, to mark a now-four-generation-long naming tradition in their lineage. Father's Day seemed like a great time to showcase this cute group of Charlies.

"It has been a tradition for the first-born in the family to have 'Charlie' in their name," explained April Lamprich.

This is true for Great-Grandpa Charles Richard, 80,

then his son, Charles Christopher, 56, and then his son, Christopher Charles, 34.

Then, the youngest Chris' first-born was ... a daughter: the first-born female in 41 years on the Lamprich side, April explained.

Still wanting to keep to tradition, Chris and April named their little girl Charley Addisyn, who, now age 8, proudly carries on the name.

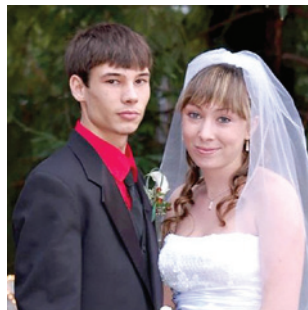
"When I have kids, I want to make sure to keep the name going!" laughed little Charley.

Willits Weekly wishes a Happy Father's Day to all the Charlies out there ... and all the non-Charlies, too.

— Maureen Moore



Johan Henckell with his son Maxwell.



Happy Father's Day Joseph Southwick.



Happy Father's Day Dad! Love, Gabe.



Father's Day photo of Bret and Torin Fraser.



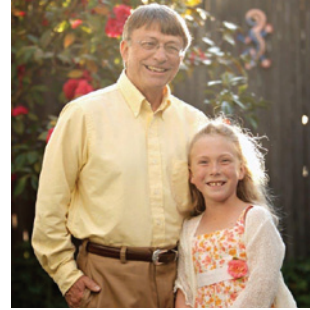
Happy Father's Day to Shelley Dorbin, love Brooke & Carmen.



Patrick Duncan and Kristen (Duncan) Hohn 2004.



Jade Frankum and Daniel Frankum.



Happy Father's Day to my Opa - Tom Schott.



Happy Father's Day from Emily Leishman to her dad, Randy.



Mike Tobin from daughters Melissa and Michelle.



Robert and Rylee Happy Father's Day! We love you.



Ricco McCoy from sons Coltin, Callen and Connor.

Walking with the ancestors:

Sunday tribal healing held at bypass interchange

Kate Maxwell

Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

"Everywhere you walk, our ancestors walked," tribal activist Edwina Lincoln told a group of almost 100 people gathered

at the northern interchange of the Willits bypass project Sunday, despite the 100 degree temperature. The group was there to perform a tribal healing ceremony to protect Little Lake Valley wetlands and archaeological sites in the path of bypass construction.

Many local activists, writers and musicians performed on stage on the west side of the highway, crossing over to the wetland construction site — with Caltrans' permission — to take part in traditional songs and ceremonies.

The diverse crowd was brought together through a coalition of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians and other native groups, which joined with environmental organizations such as Save Our Little Lake Valley, Willits Environmental Center and Redwood Nation Earth First!, all calling for a downsized version of the northern interchange.

The taps ran brown at some Willits homes last week due to work on water lines.

City crews worked to replace a part in a pressure regulator near the hospital and, on the same day, repair a leak on Highway 20.

For the job near the hospital, Public Works Director Rod Wilburn said the part in a pressure reducing valve failed and had to be replaced.

An electronic solenoid



Photo courtesy of Anita Blu Elliott

Read the rest of **Bypass**

Over on Page 10

Read the rest of **Water**

Over on Page 11

Leadership team quits

at Willits High

Mike A'Dair

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It's been a tough year at Willits High School. The assistant principal resigned in June 2013 and wasn't replaced. The school got a new principal in July 2013. At the beginning of the academic year, its junior counselor was reassigned to Baechtel Grove Middle School, prompting the senior counselor to resign on February 28 and take a job elsewhere, killing the school's highly regarded peer counseling program. In April, the school failed its mid-cycle review and was threatened with loss of its accreditation. And on May 16, the school's leadership team quit.

The leadership team was made up of the heads of the

Read the rest of **Quits**

Over on Page 11

Grocery Outlet

to move into LoBuck\$ building

Zack Cinek

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Grocery Outlet, a Bay Area-based bargain grocer, will be putting a store in the old LoBuck\$ building.

Grocery Outlet has taken out a building permit with the city to make improvements to the building. Work is estimated to cost about \$302,000.

The city wrote letters this winter to a number of grocery stores to let them know the LoBuck\$ building was available.

The grocer has been busy doing due diligence

Read the rest of **Grocery**

Over on Page 9

Brown water due to city repair work

Zack Cinek

Reporter
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Gravely concerned

To the Editor:

We are a group of retired Willits High School teachers with many satisfying years of experience in our school district. We have been following the changes occurring at WHS under the new administration and superintendent, and we are gravely concerned.

We are not against change; however, we are against the destruction and disruption of successful programs and the loss of a collaborative atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The morale of the school has never been lower. A current student told us, "The high school is falling apart." A parent told us, "The administration is not responsive." A staff member told us, "Teachers may not want to speak out publicly because they may be afraid of retribution."

In our 30+ or - years, WHS always has earned a six-year Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation. We were shocked to learn that at the three-year interim WASC report (standard procedure), WHS was threatened with the loss of school accreditation. This is extremely unusual; it has not happened in our experience and rarely happens anywhere.

We are aware that the high school has been given a year to address the deficiencies. The two glaring problems pointed out by the WASC committee were that the new administration wrote an inadequate report without faculty input and that the entire counseling program was cut and lost.

Since that time, no counselors have been hired, and the Leadership Team at the high school has resigned en masse. They feel that they have not been listened to and that the work that they do is disregarded. This is unprecedented. The work of this committee over the last 10 years has been critical in developing faculty/staff teamwork, inter-school curriculum, teaching "best practices," and the development and implementation of positive changes which supported students, parents, teachers and staff – in other words, the school as a whole.

The productive and collaborative atmosphere at WHS has been compromised by an undercurrent of anxiety and distrust. Previously administration, faculty, staff, students, parents and community were involved in decision-making. That does not seem to be the current case. Involuntary transfers, teacher experience and expertise often ignored, loss of experienced teachers, an over-extended staff, and fear of retaliation for speaking up create the negative tone.

No one thinks WHS was problem-free and perfect before; however, it was a good small town school getting a lot right. We accept the fact that the Willits Unified School District has financial problems, but we cannot allow finances to dictate and override student success. This is a school, not a corporation.

We cannot sit by and let go what so many have worked so hard to achieve. We should assess what is in place and has worked before gutting the programs – and many programs have been gutted. Our current students deserve to benefit from the supportive academic environment traditionally provided by our school district and community.

We all sent our children confidently to WHS. We question whether we would make that decision again. Parents in our community

The Rules: LETTERS

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Letters focusing on Willits and 3rd District issues, activities, events and people have priority. Willits Weekly prints letters from residents of Willits and the 3rd District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once a month.

Typed letters can be sent to Willits Weekly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490, but email is preferred. 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.

Willits Weekly

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What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from readers

are also asking the same question. Loss of students means the further dismantling of our community's high school. We ask parents, students and community members to become informed and act to save our school. Contact the trustees of the Willits Unified School District board, attend board meetings, or write the superintendent and the high school principal with your concerns.

Susan Walz, Sue Short,
Bill Southwick,
and Jackie Pealatero, Willits

Leadership Team

To the Editor:

[Editor's note: this is a letter sent to the Willits Teachers Association membership, written collaboratively by the Willits High School Leadership Team regarding their recent resignation, which was requested to be published by Willits Weekly.]

Dear Colleagues: Last Friday [May 16], the Leadership Team at Willits High School resigned. We want to thank you all for the honor of holding this position and also share our reasons for leaving at this time.

We started this year with the norms of mutual respect and best intentions. At this point, we feel with continued and renewed best intentions, we have not been listened to; we have not been effective in our roles as "leaders." We have a strong sense that we are no longer the "voice" of the teachers.

We feel that we can be more effective by focusing more time into our students, our curricula and our school.

The leadership team started about seven years ago with members attending the meetings at the Sonoma County Office of Education. Our task was to bring what we learned on Instructional Strategies and more recently Common Core back to our departments during PLC [Professional Learning Community] meetings.

From time to time, we were called upon to take on other responsibilities. You may recall that during the last month of school, 2013, we worked to come to agreements on issues like our bell schedule, tutorial and the length of time for staff meetings on Tuesdays.

This year, in addition to learning about Common Core during SCOE meetings, we were involved in the meetings with the WASC [Western Association of Schools and Colleges] reviewers and several job interviews. All of this involvement has given us insights and perspectives that others may not hold.

Some of us have spoken out at staff meetings and board meetings, with little action in response.

We hope that by stepping down, we can become more unified, and pull together to make the best decisions for our students, teachers – new and experienced – and our school.

Jill Walton, Trish Silva-Brown,
Marisela de Santa Anna, Carolyn Bakewell, Laura Herman
and Gwen Rasmussen, WHS Leadership Team

Thanks

To the Editor:

As we close the 2013-14 school year, I want to extend my personal thanks to all staff and community members, parents and guardians, and all students of the Willits Unified School District for the hard work and dedication to make this year a success. I think we can all agree it has been an "interesting" year, with lots of challenges and many

perspectives. In spite of these challenges, I have greatly appreciated the professional approach taken on the toughest of issues. I have noted the increasing sense that we have common goals and a dedication to enhance the educational opportunities and successes of our students.

We have accomplished a lot this year and have a lot to look forward to as we move into the 2014-15 school year. I truly believe that our best times are ahead. We have been able to resolve many of our internal challenges – not the least of which was the bond and related litigation. With the hard work of the WTA and CSEA, we have mutual resolution on both contracts. These accomplishments along with many others will allow us to move forward and focus on the challenges of the future.

I know that the state will continue to place demands on our school district while failing to provide sufficient funding to support student learning. But I believe that we – collectively – have put ourselves in the best position possible to meet the demands and move forward as a TEAM. I am proud to consider myself a part of the WUSD TEAM. Again, I sincerely want to thank the Willits community for their support of student learning and to wish everyone the best during this much-needed summer break!

Patricia Johnson,
WUSD superintendent

Thanks to Caltrans, CHP

To the Editor:

Save Our Little Lake Valley (SOLLV) and Redwood Nation Earth First!, sponsors, would like to thank Caltrans and the CHP for their cooperation in making the Ceremony to Protect the Wetlands last Sunday possible and safe. We appreciate the coordination and communication we received, and hope to develop more of this spirit as we offer viable solutions to the problems with the bypass as currently designed.

Freddie Long, Willits

WHS needs its own credentialed librarian

To the Editor:

[Editor's note: This is a letter sent to the Willits Unified School District Board of Trustees, which was requested to be published by Willits Weekly.]

From the WUSD Board Agenda for Wednesday, June 11, 2014:

"Approval of a Secondary Librarian job description for the hiring of a classified employee. The current vacancy created at the high school allows the district to reclassify this position for the upcoming school year. Working under the MCOE [Mendocino County Office of Education] library certificated credential the district will continue to provide library services to students and staff. Background: The district currently has a vacancy in the high school library. MCOE is moving forward with hiring a certificated librarian for all districts in the county to support non-credentialed positions within the districts. Hiring of a classified employee is a cost savings to the district. Funding/Source: Fiscal savings to the district Recommendation: Superintendent recommends approval"

This agenda item concerns me greatly. I was born and raised in Willits, attended Willits schools and raised my children here. All three of my children graduated from Willits High School and went on to graduate from college. I was fortunate during my career at Willits Unified to work as a library clerk at Brookside Elementary School and at the Willits High School Media Center as a library tech. My supervisor was Susan Jones. When I was a student, the librarian was Erma

Conant. Both Mrs. Conant and Mrs. Jones had teaching credentials. Both were credentialed to work in a school library, and both had master's degrees in library science. As professionals, both collaborated with teachers, coordinated use of the library, and designed instructional programs to introduce students to research.

In the later years, Susan Jones facilitated the use of technology in the library, even co-writing a major technology grant. She worked one-on-one with students and was able to impact student success both professionally and personally. Every student knew they could depend on Mrs. Jones for informed information about a career or college choice, a senior project topic, or a book to read on vacation. Until she retired, the libraries of Willis Unified received the support of the school board, and Susan was fortunate enough to have the help of a library technician, freeing her up from the day-to-day work, enabling her to work directly with teachers and students.

This funding allowed her to build an outstanding library collection: reading almost every book that was purchased, book-talking her way around the library with reluctant readers, talking students through senior projects, even taking on senior novel study groups when asked by teachers! She used her time to focus on creating opportunities to educate students not only in the love of books, but in research skills and the use of technology to achieve academic success.

The proposal before the board of trustees creates a classified school librarian position, meaning a non-credentialed position. This is an oxymoron because – according to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing – a school librarian is a certificated position. And, I suspect, this position will be paid from the classified salary schedule.

The proposed position, regardless of what job title is used, does not require that a teaching credential be held, that a library credential be held, or that a master's degree be held. While I assume the person chosen for that position will be dedicated to their job, it must be stated that it is probable that the level of performance will be less than that expected of a credentialed, professional librarian.

There are 12 school districts in Mendocino County. Of those 12, only Ukiah High School and Willits High School have had credentialed librarians.

Classified library techs have done outstanding work in our school libraries, but they are not "librarians" in the professional sense of the word. A classified staff person in the WHS Media Center will be hard-pressed to get textbooks circulated, library books checked in and out, materials shelved, the cataloging done, tables wiped down, the area maintained, and students monitored. I would be surprised if they will be able to arrange book talks, work from the state's Recommended Reading List and review new books to make sure that students have access to popular fiction and non-fiction! How will they also find the time to instruct in research skills, troubleshoot technology, guide students in research projects and collaborate with teachers?

Sad to say, credentialed school librarians are part of a diminishing breed even though the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, in the report on Library Standards for California Public Schools, K-12 Grade adopted by the California State Board of Education in September 2010, wrote the following:

"The school library standards maintain California's respect for local control of schools. They provide guidance to school districts for implementing strong school library programs. Such library programs improve student achievement, foster literacy, produce a technology-competent workforce, and nurture lifelong learning.

Read the rest of Letters | Over on Page 4



Top row, from left: The temporary tattoo station was a big hit. The prize table was overflowing with loot for the grads. The always-popular Velcro wall. Kelin Adamson holds a thank you card written to one of the prize sponsors.

At left: Hilary Kocher of Hilary's Henna pipes a peacock feather in henna on an ankle.

Left, below: Caleb Bacci, the winner of the red La-Z-Boy chair donated by Willits Furniture.

Left, bottom: Emily Pinnell Stewart shows off some dancing skills during the event emceed by DJ Ken Steely.

Right: The lucky \$1,000 winners, from left: Devina Cash, Dylan Avila, Nicholas Yadon and Erandy Alvarez. Photos by Maureen Moore



Sober Grad 2014

The Willits Community Center was full of excited graduates and happy-to-help volunteers last Thursday during the annual Sober Grad event.

High school graduates from all schools were welcome to attend. Those who checked in before 11 pm and stayed all the way through until 4 am were eligible to win tons of great prizes donated by businesses and individuals in the community.

It was estimated that around 70 percent of this year's high school graduates attended, but the attendee list was also heavy with more than 50 guests the graduates brought to join in the festivities, though only the grads were eligible for the prizes.

There were five big winners of the night: four students who each won a \$1,000 check, including Devina Cash, Dylan Avila, Nicholas Yadon and Erandy Alvarez, and Caleb Bacci, who won a La-Z-Boy recliner. Mountains of other prizes were given out to all the attendees, including everything from mini-fridges to iPods to cookware to camping gear.

To keep the kids entertained during the overnight event, planners create lots of fun stations and options for party guests. This year, Hilary's Henna and the temporary tattoo tables were back; the popular Velcro climbing wall was up; ping pong and air hockey tables were set; themed photos were taken by Maureen Moore; and custom-drawn portraits were done on site by Cynda Valle, Kat Emerson, Diza Hope, and Judy Hope.

DJ Ken Steely kept the music going and even encouraged several students to come up and sing karaoke.

Below, from left: Artist Cynda Valle shows Erandy Alvarez her completed portrait. The casino tables gave kids a chance to win fun graduate-themed goodies with their tokens. Pam Foster and Kendrick Alexander sang karaoke during the event. Alyssa Alvarez passed some time by playing ping pong.



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Congratulations to Steven Quitouit

Who won a \$19,000 Jackpot at Quick Hit Platinum on June 6!

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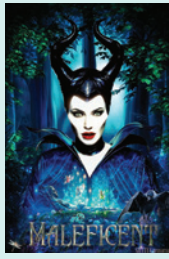
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HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2



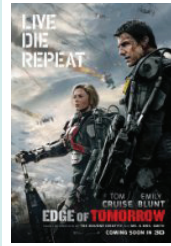
(PG) 1 hr 42 mins
(2D) Fri to Thurs:
1:50 & 6:30pm
(3D) Fri to Sun:
11:30am, 4:10 & 8:50pm
Mon. to Thurs: 4:10 & 8:50pm

MALEFICENT



(PG) 1 hr 37 mins
Fri to Sun: 11:15am, 1:30,
3:45, 6:00 & 8:15pm
Mon-Thurs: 1:30, 3:45, 6:00
& 8:15pm

EDGE OF TOMORROW



(PG13) 1 hr 53 mins
Fri to Sun: 12:30, 3:00, 5:30
& 8:00pm
Mon-Thurs: 3:00, 5:30
& 8:00pm

Movie Times for 6/13 thru 6/19

This Week's Tigtwad Tuesday Titles are in RED - All tickets: \$5



Left: the girls Summer Basketball League team.

Photo by Jody Ward

Below: Team members wash cars out in front of Yokum's Body Shop.

Photo by Johnnieann Johnstone

Coach: Eric Mehtlan.

Assistant Coaches: Mariah Escobedo, and Jody Ward.

OBITUARY |
Vernon Dale Tripp

Vernon Dale Tripp

1924 - 2014

Vernon Dale Tripp died March 6, 2014, in Willits, CA, after a short illness. Friends and family were at his bedside. He was 89 years old, just a few weeks short of his 90th birthday. Dale was born on March 24, 1924 in Spokane, Washington.

At age 10, Dale contracted poliomyelitis ("polio"), which left him with no working muscles in his left leg. He graduated from Santa Cruz High School in 1942. Unable to enlist in the armed forces due to his bad leg, in the summer of 1942, Dale rode his bicycle from Santa Cruz, CA, to Seattle, Washington (1,000 miles), to work in the shipyards alongside his father (Rama Forest Tripp, 1897-1978) as a marine wireman. He made the trip in 10 days.

Dale had been trained in drafting while he attended Santa Cruz High School. The drafting trade served Dale well throughout his life. He worked as a mechanical draftsman for many employers, including the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bethlehem Steel, Lockheed Aircraft, Insul-8 Corp. (San Carlos, CA), and Unisys (Santa Clara, CA), among others.

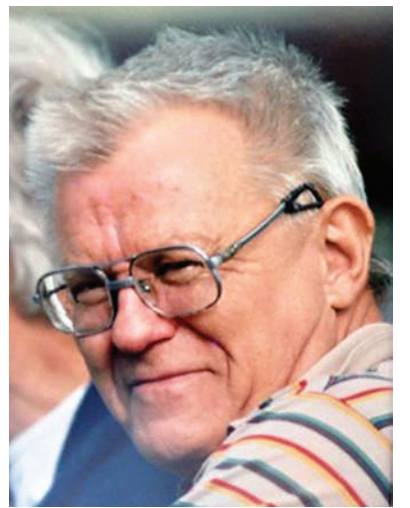
Dale had excellent lettering skills and worked as a professional sign-painter in the early 1950s.

He also had a strong sense of social justice. He worked to advance the progressive movement throughout his adult life. Dale met his first wife, Eleanor J. Wright (1918-2012), while working with a social issues committee at the Unitarian Church of San Francisco in the mid-1950s. Dale put his exceptional sign-painting skills to work for many of the anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s.

He met his second wife, JoMarie King (1927-2013), while working with a progressive organization to feed the homeless of San Jose, CA.

Dale is survived by his sister, Delores J. Braden of Willits, his daughter, Annalisa Guthridge of San Mateo, his son, Galen A. Tripp of San Mateo, his step-daughter, Donna Day, of Willits, and his step-son, Jim King of San Jose. Dale will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

There will be a memorial service for him at the Brooktrails Community Center in Willits on June 14 at 1 pm. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in his honor to The World Wildlife Fund: www.worldwildlife.org.



Vernon Dale Tripp

Summer Basketball League

Girls earn \$736 at Car Wash

Members of the Summer Basketball League joined up to participate in a car wash last Sunday, which yielded the team \$736 to help cover costs of travel, lodging and fees for their upcoming season of tournaments.

This weekend, the group will be headed to Chico State, and in the coming weekends, trips to Cardinal Newman and Windsor are also planned. They also will play local meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays with teams from Ukiah, Fort Bragg and Lake County.

The league offers middle school and high school girls



the chance to keep up their skills in the off-season as well as give them a fun thing to do for the summer.

The girls expressed their appreciation to all who attended, and their thanks to Yokum's Body Shop, which donated all the supplies needed for the car wash, including the soap, hoses and sponges.

The event was a good one, according to Johnnieann Johnstone, mother of team members Julia and Jamie: "We accepted donations for each car, and it was busy all day!"

— Maureen Moore

DESSERT WITH A DOC SEMINAR SERIES

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Nephrologist

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